

A. Expectations and Guidelines When Working with Other People's Children

Volunteers should adhere to the "two-deep" rule at all times. Volunteers should not spend extended time alone with children without consent of the child's parent/guardian and the knowledge of the ministry leader/supervisor. The following guidelines are intended to foster safe and healthy relationships:

Expectations

1. Volunteers are not to be alone with a vulnerable person.
2. Children should not be taken into a volunteer's vehicle without parent/guardian permission and the knowledge of the pastor/ministry leader.
3. Volunteers who form a relationship with children through parish activities shall not seek out opportunities to spend time with the child off-site or through social media.
4. When events such as overnight camps or day trips to a swimming pool require adults to be with children, every effort must be made to protect the children's privacy. Girls and boys must not change together, and adults must change separately from the children.
5. On overnight trips or retreats (e.g., COR, Steubenville Retreat), whenever possible, adults should sleep in a separate room from the young people. In cases where adults share dormitories with young people, the "two-deep" rule is especially important. Every effort shall be made to respect the privacy and safety of all.
6. First-aid or emotional comfort should be given by someone of the same sex as the youth requiring attention.
7. Volunteers shall stay in view of others at all times. If you need to speak to a young person alone, remove yourself from the larger group but always remain in the view of others.
8. Physical forms for discipline must never be used.
9. Provide adequate supervision. Maintain appropriate adult to youth ratios for the activities and age group. Keeping in mind that the "two-deep" rule must always be observed, the following ratios should be adhered to:
 - a. Children ages 3 - 5 1:6
 - b. Children ages 6 - 8 1:10
 - c. Children ages 9 - 11 1:15
 - d. Youth ages 12 - 18 1:20
 - e. Overnight events for any age 1:10
10. Confidentiality needs to be respected except in the following situations, when the Ministry Leader/Coordinator should be informed of the situation:
 - a. When the person threatens suicide;
 - b. When a youth aged 16 or under reports physical, sexual or verbal abuse;
 - c. When someone's life is in danger;
 - d. When someone's physical well-being is being threatened;

- e. When someone exhibits some form of mental illness; and,
- f. A situation that is beyond your own experience and expertise.

Best Practices

1. Don't play favourites. Show a similar and appropriate level of affection for all the young people in your care.
2. Volunteers should not normally help children with toileting. For younger children who cannot manage alone, parent/guardian permission must be given before toileting or changing help is permitted.
3. In some cases, physical contact between adults and participants is appropriate in a retreat setting such as COR. This should always occur in "public", and be in keeping with the nature of the retreat or activity. Leaders must be conscious of appropriate boundaries when it comes to games with youth, and allow children to back away from your well-intentioned affection.
4. Do not permit abusive activities or language from other adults or among the youth. (e.g., initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying).
5. Ministry leaders/volunteers should provide parents/guardians of children enrolled in programs with an outline and the expectations of the program when asked. Clear communication with parents/guardians is always expected.

