

Archdiocese of Mobile

Children and Adolescents Protection Program

Appropriate and Inappropriate Contact with Minors

1. No form of physical discipline is acceptable and is prohibited as a way of behavior management of minors as directed by the Archdiocese.

2. Appropriate affection is important for a child's development and is a positive part of Church life and ministry. There are forms of affection between Church personnel and minors that are regarded as appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
 - Side hugs
 - Shoulder to shoulder or "temple" hugs
 - Pats on the shoulder or back
 - "High-fives" and hand slapping
 - Verbal praise
 - Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors
 - Arms around shoulders
 - Holding hands while walking with small children
 - Sitting beside small children
 - Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
 - Holding hands during prayer
 - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (Example: This gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities.)

3. Some forms of physical affection have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In an effort to provide the safest possible environment for minors, the following examples of affection are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
 - Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
 - Kisses on the mouth
 - Holding minors over two years old on the lap
 - Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
 - Showing affection in isolated areas of the program such as bedrooms, staff only areas, or other private rooms
 - Sleeping in bed with a child
 - Touching knees or legs of minors
 - Wrestling with minors
 - Piggyback rides
 - Any type of massage given by minor to adult
 - Any type of massage given by adult to minor
 - Any form of unwanted affection
 - Compliments that relate to physique or body development