

Guidelines on Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation For Youth Advisors

One of the hardest things for us to accept and understand is the fact that there are people who sexually molest or abuse children and young people. The facts, however, are undeniable: Sexual victimization is a very serious problem. Given the number of kids who attend youth groups and retreats we can no longer deny our responsibility to report suspected abuse to child protective service

Child abuse is a serious criminal offense. As a youth advisor for an extended period of time or a chaperone for just the weekend event, you are charged with the responsibility of caring for our young people, and may from time to time be placed in sensitive situations, making yourself vulnerable to charges of child molestation. If you take these simple precautions, however, you need not be afraid of groundless accusations:

- Have other youth advisors present when supervising showers, changing, or other circumstances in which the young person may be dressing or undressing.
- Respect the privacy of the individuals.
- A young person has the right to reject displays of affection if he or she feels uncomfortable about them., i.e. the passing or the peace at Eucharist or other worship times. Not every young person comes from a background in which affection is openly displayed. Respect the person's wishes.
- Protect your own privacy. In some instances of camp or youth group living, advisors will be rooming with the young people, therefore caution must be taken when discussing sensitive subjects with the guys or girls in your living quarters, and should not go into details of your private life.
- In all counseling situations, you should observe the "two-person" rule, which is that you should always be in a situation that you are in the line of sight or another person, preferably another advisor.
- Other --

Sexual exploitation should not be confused with physical contacts that are true expressions affection. A warm and healthy relationship can exist between a youth advisor and a young person advisors respect the young persons and place reasonable limits on their physical interaction. Youth advisors have the fiduciary responsibility of knowing their boundaries.

COVENANT FOR SEXUAL RESPONSIBILITY

For the purposes of this covenant, I, the undersigned, understand that the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Southern Virginia define sexual misconduct in the following ways with the noted addition:

•**Abuse:** Sexual involvement, activity*, or contact by a cleric or other church worker or volunteer with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent.

•**Harassment:** Sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference, unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements, in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, or colleague relationship between the persons involved.

•**Exploitation:** A betrayal of trust in a pastoral relationship by the development, or the attempted development, of a sexual or romantic relationship between the cleric or other church worker and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral and fiduciary relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.

(* The word *activity* has been added by the Diocese of Southern Virginia.)

I agree to abstain from any behavior that constitutes sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual coercion or sexual harassment of children or adults while I minister in any institution related to the Diocese of Southern Virginia, regardless of whether I work as a paid employee or volunteer.

I understand that if I engage in such behavior I will participate in a disciplinary process that may include termination of employment as well as criminal prosecution.

I have read and understood the "Guidelines on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation For Youth Advisors."

Print full name

Signature

Date

DIOCESAN YOUTH MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES

No young person should be denied the opportunity to participate in any Diocesan Youth Event for financial reasons, however

The diocese has very limited funds available and should not be counted on as supplemental tuition unless the Rector or Assistant Rector has worked out an arrangement with the Coordinator for Diocesan Youth Events.

All requests for financial assistance must come through a person's home parish clergy only. Persons needing assistance for tuition to the events must contact their home clergy if they need financial assistance.

Requests for diocesan funds may only come through the Parish Clergy. If your young person needs financial assistance, or if someone from your parish would like to offer scholarship assistance

Please contact the
Youth Missioner
for more information.