Annual Child Protection Briefing

This is a Safe Environment.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

A continuing education briefing provided for staff members of the Archdiocese of New York.

September, 2012

Code of Conduct: A review

Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in dealing with minors

No covert or overt sexual behaviors with any minor (including avoiding any profanity, sexual comments, jokes, or the display of such material).

Watch out for warning signs that might indicate problems.

Tell a supervisor about any sexual talk or behavior by minors toward myself or another adult .

Never share personal space, such as sleeping quarters, alone with children or young people.

No giving of gifts to minors; items of minimal value like classroom rewards or motivational awards are acceptable.

Always be with another adult or be in the proximity of another adult when working with minors in unsupervised settings.

Never use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when working with

Maintaining Proper Professional Boundaries

Adults have to make sure that their relationship with minors is clearly professional in nature, and proper boundaries are maintained at all times. Here are some specific things that adults should avoid:

Excessive familiarity or intimacy between adults and minors.

Relating to minors as if they were peers or friends. It is perfectly fine for an adult to be "friendly" with a minor, but they should not be "friends" with children.

Acting as a "surrogate parent" or "confidant" to a minor with whom they are working.

Giving excessive attention or favorable treatment to a minor or group of minors, such that there is the appearance that there is a "special" relationship with the adult, or that a minor is a "favorite" of the adult.

Electronic Communication: Some Quick Guidelines

The use of a private email account or a private cell phone to communicate with a minor is never permitted.

Adults are permitted to have email communications with a minor through an official email account of an Archdiocesan institution. Only matters relating to an official activity are communicated, and a proper professional relationship must be maintained at all times.

Text messaging a minor is never permitted, except if it is necessary for safety or during an official trip

"Do's and Don'ts" Regarding Social Networking Sites

Many of our parishes, schools and programs would like to have some kind of social networking site (e.g., Facebook) to keep in contact with the children and to publicize their activities, However, some restrictions are necessary to protect both adults and minors.

Here are the basic rules for Church-sponsored social networking sites:

1. The administrator of the program or institution (e.g., the principal) should appoint an adult to be the moderator of the site. No minor may moderate an official social networking site.
2. Access to the site is strictly restricted to those who are actively involved in the program. For example, in Facebook, the best approach is to set up a "Page" for the parish or school, and then make sure that only your students or their parents are permitted to be "Fans".
3. Access to the site is subject to the invitation and approval of the moderator. This way, minors who are not associated with the program and random adult participants cannot get access to the site.
4. Private direct communications ("chat" or private messages) may not take place between adults and minors. For example, by setting up a "Page" for "Fans", the settings can be used to ensure that all communications are public.
5. To the fullest extent possible, the moderator must use the privacy settings to block private direct communications ("chat" or private messages) .
6. The moderator of the program oversees the content of the site. Anything that is indecent, false, derogatory, or offensive must be removed by the moderator.
7. No personal information or photographs of minors should be posted without the written permission of the minor's parent

or guardian. This would include phone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses, etc.

Social networking sites are tempting and common targets for predators. By restricting access to the site and