

Ministerial Standards for Educators and Educational Volunteers Who Have Regular Contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Individuals

Dos

Do know that pedophiles among Catholic educators and educational volunteers are very much a small minority, but that a small number have put you in a very stressful situation regarding your relationships with children and/or vulnerable individuals.

Do know that it is not your fault. You are also a secondary victim of the pedophiles who have abused our children and/or vulnerable individuals.

Do know that you are right to feel uneasy and uncomfortable because of it.

Do know that you have a responsibility to protect yourself because the public often views you with caution. This is a side effect of the secondary abuse that you are experiencing as a result of pedophiles.

Do learn and comply with the Child Abuse Reporting Procedures under both the *Archdiocesan Policy* and Georgia law. Have these policies easily accessible in your office for reference.

Do know and comply with the Behavioral Guidelines, Guidelines for the Supervision of Minors, and Guidelines Specific to Employees contained in the *Archdiocesan Code of Conduct*. Have these policies easily accessible in your office for reference.

Behavioral Guidelines, Which Should be Observed to Protect You and Those to Whom You Minister

Do love the children and/or vulnerable individuals with a carefully disciplined love.

Do make sure that any physical contact with a child and/or vulnerable individual is done in a manner that is beyond reproach and is in a very public place.

Do treat every “child” (defined under the *Archdiocesan Policy* and Georgia law as a person “under 18 years of age”) and vulnerable individual with the dignity he or she deserves by virtue of his or her creation by God in His image and likeness.

Do avoid being alone with a child and/or vulnerable individual in a closed room unless you are the child’s and/or vulnerable individual’s parent or legal guardian. Protect yourself by having the door open/or closing a “see-through,” glass-paneled door if the child and/or vulnerable individual insists on privacy with you.

Do have a parent or another adult around if the child and/or vulnerable individual does not need privacy.

Do offer comfort and solace to those who are upset or grieving. Try not to do it by physically holding or hugging a child and/or vulnerable individual, if possible, unless you are the parent and/or legal guardian of the child and/or vulnerable individual.

Do use only chaste language when speaking with a child and/or vulnerable individual.

Do dress modestly at all times, particularly when in the presence of a child and/or vulnerable individual.

From time to time you may find yourself unavoidably left with a child and/or vulnerable individual because of a parent or guardian's failure to arrive at your facility on time to pick up that child and/or vulnerable individual at the conclusion of an Archdiocesan-sponsored program. While this is always a difficult and frustrating situation, it must be understood by all concerned that the safety and welfare of that child and/or vulnerable individual under those circumstances continues to be the moral and legal obligation of you and those associated with your program on behalf of the Archdiocese. In view of the foregoing, the following guidelines are set forth to provide you with an overview of how such situations should generally be handled:

- Under no circumstances should any child and/or vulnerable individual be left unattended. That child and/or vulnerable individual remains your obligation until such time as a family member or other responsible adult takes physical custody of that child and/or vulnerable individual.
- All reasonable efforts should be undertaken to contact the parent or legal guardian or other responsible family member of the child and/or vulnerable individual to arrange for the child's and/or vulnerable individual's pick up.
- In the event those efforts are successful but the adult appearing to pick up the child and/or vulnerable individual is neither the parent nor the designated emergency contact person according to current records, you must confirm the identity of the adult and their relationship to the child and/or vulnerable individual. Obviously, you must conclude through the use of sound judgment that the adult is an appropriate person to take custody of the child and/or vulnerable individual.
- In the event that all of these efforts are unsuccessful, you should call the local police authority and report the abandonment of the child and/or vulnerable individual and request the police to come to your facility to take custody of the child and/or vulnerable individual. The timing and decision to call local police authorities is to be based on your good judgment and professional assessment of the situation.
- You should not undertake to transport the child and/or vulnerable individual in your automobile to another location unless you have the written permission of the parent or legal guardian, there is a medical emergency, or the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative.
- In the event that a parent or guardian's failure to pick up a child and/or vulnerable individual in a timely manner is a repeated or consistent problem, this matter should be handled like any other disciplinary issue involving breach of program policies and procedures.

This may result in the parents being directed to withdraw their child and/or vulnerable individual from the program.

Don'ts

Don't blame yourself for this Church crisis. It is not your fault. The pedophile is the cause of the crisis, not you.

Don't isolate or remove yourself from the children and/or vulnerable individuals. They need you. You are an important person in their growth and development in their relationship with God and the Church.

Don't ignore your own feelings about the way your life has been impacted by the media coverage of abuse of children and/or vulnerable individuals in the Catholic Church. Make time for prayer and spiritual direction. Do what it takes to remain healthy and spiritually strong.

Behavioral Guidelines, Which Should be Observed to Protect You and Those to Whom You Minister

Do not physically or emotionally abuse any child and/or vulnerable individual, including, but not limited to, physically or emotionally punishing a child and/or vulnerable individual.

Do not sexually abuse or exploit any child and/or vulnerable individual, as that term is defined under Georgia law, section 1.5 of the *Archdiocesan Policy*, or canon 1395.2 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.

Do not permit any child and/or vulnerable individual to enter your home or living quarters unless accompanied by a parent or guardian unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative. If you teach at the parish/school and have a child and/or vulnerable individual who is enrolled in the parish/school ask another responsible adult, preferably not related to you, to assist you with supervision during a social event held at your home.

Do not permit a child and/or vulnerable individual to have possession of a key to any Archdiocesan facility.

Do not take an overnight trip alone with any child and/or vulnerable individual unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative.

Do not dress or undress yourself in the presence of a child and/or vulnerable individual or allow a child and/or vulnerable individual to dress or undress in your presence unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative.

Do not allow a child and/or vulnerable individual to sleep in the same room with you unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative.

Do not provide any child and/or vulnerable individual with alcohol, tobacco, legal or illegal prescription or non-prescription drugs unless you are the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent or legal guardian.

Do not accompany a child and/or vulnerable individual, who is not accompanied by a parent or guardian, to any place that serves alcohol unless you are the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent or legal guardian.

Do not provide any child and/or vulnerable individual with pornography or permit a child and/or vulnerable individual to have pornography in his or her possession in your presence.

Do not pay for or otherwise accompany a child and/or vulnerable individual to watch any movie or video that does not have a PG-13 rating, and never on your own unless you are the parent or legal guardian. If you teach at the parish/school and have a child and/or vulnerable individual who is enrolled in the parish/school ask another responsible adult, preferably one who is not related to you, to assist you with supervision during any social event.

Do not accompany a child and/or vulnerable individual to an amusement park or other recreational activity unless accompanied by the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent or guardian or unless it is a school-sponsored field trip. If you teach at the parish/school and have a child and/or vulnerable individual who is enrolled in the parish/school, ask your spouse or another responsible adult, preferably one who is not related to you, to assist you with supervision during any social event.

Do not agree to meet children and/or vulnerable individuals at any social event outside of parish/school time unless you are the parent and/or legal guardian of the child and/or vulnerable individual.

Do not use profanity or sexually expressive or vulgar language, but particularly when in the presence of a child and/or vulnerable individual.

Do not allow music to be played which contains profanity, sexually expressive or vulgar language.

Do not tutor a child and/or vulnerable individual at your home unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative.

Do not drive a child and/or vulnerable individual in your automobile unless you have a written permission slip from the parent or guardian, there is a medical emergency, the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative, or you are the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent or legal guardian.

Do not allow a child and/or vulnerable individual to remain in the presence of only one other person, who is not the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent or guardian.

Do not meet with a child and/or vulnerable individual in a room without a window or without the door being open unless you are the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent child and/or vulnerable individual or legal guardian.

Do not give to or accept personal gifts, with more than an intrinsic value, from children and/or vulnerable individuals unless you are the child's and/or vulnerable individual's parent or legal guardian.

Do not discuss your personal life with students unless you are the child and/or vulnerable individual's parent or legal guardian.

Do not discuss the personal lives of fellow clergy, educators, employees and volunteers with children and/or vulnerable individuals.

Do not accept a baby-sitting or a house-sitting assignment of any duration for any child and/or vulnerable individual.

Do not visit children and/or vulnerable individuals at their homes without the written permission of the parents and/or legal guardians.

Do not call children and/or vulnerable individuals at home either on land lines, cell phones or pagers unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative or the parent or legal guardian has given you written permission to communicate with the child and/or vulnerable individual in this fashion.

Do not e-mail children and/or vulnerable individuals at home or provide them with your personal e-mail address unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative or the parent or legal guardian has given you permission to communicate with the child and/or vulnerable individual in this fashion

Do not date currently matriculated children and/or vulnerable individuals, regardless of their age.

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that on _____ I received a copy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta's "Ministerial Standards for Educators and Educational Volunteers Who Have Regular Contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Individuals" effective September 30, 2004. I have read the "Ministerial Standards" specific to this ministry and agree to conduct myself in conformity with the Standards as they may be amended in the future. I also understand that this acknowledgment form will be kept in my personnel/volunteer file.

Name: _____

[please type or print]

Signed: _____

School/Organization: _____

Date: _____

Check one:

_____ Principal

_____ School Personnel

_____ Director of Religious Education

_____ Educational Volunteer Who Has Regular Contact with Children and/or

Vulnerable Individuals