

Laws and rules are at the service of a community as well as individuals. Given the unique needs of children and teenagers in relation to the rest of the Christian community, it is not surprising that in the Church we place the needs of our children and teenagers first. Our laws and rules are at the service of our children and teenagers.

Teenagers can also help create and maintain safe environments. As a teenager, you need to be aware that:

1. *Your body is your own.* No one should touch you in a way you do not want to be touched. If another person touches you inappropriately, that person is wrong and should be reported to the proper authorities.

*You should not accept expensive gifts from non-family members.* You should not accept food, drinks, or rides from people you do not know well.

2. When attending Church functions, expect to be *chaperoned at all times and*

*have behavioral expectations made clear to you.* If this is not occurring, then either the people in charge or your parents must be told. When attending an activity you need to advise the adult(s) in charge before you leave the activity.

3. You must not stay overnight in church-owned or operated facilities without *chaperones* and *the written permission* of your parents.
4. Adolescents must not bring, consume or abuse *drugs or alcoholic beverages*. Any Church ministers, employees, or volunteers who provide drugs or alcohol to teenagers are *acting illegally* and must be *reported promptly* to both Church and civil authorities.
5. *Be cautious* when dealing with *overly friendly adults*, those who place themselves on the same level as adolescents, those who seem to relate better to adolescents than to adults, those who suggest activities of which parents would not approve. Similarly, exercise caution around any adult who takes pictures extensively of adolescents, or offers explicit pornographic materials to teenagers. Such behavior should be reported immediately to parents or other

trusted adults. Overlooking or thinking of such behavior as harmless can pose a real threat to everyone in the community.

6. Church personnel have certain limitations on their behavior. Church ministers, workers, and volunteers are not allowed to give expensive gifts to young people. They are not allowed to travel unchaperoned with young people. They are not allowed to touch young people in unacceptable ways. Generally, except in certain limited situations, it is expected that there will be at least two adults present for youth activities. If you observe violations of these rules by Church personnel, you should *report* those violations to your parents or appropriate Church authorities (see *Process of Reporting and Addressing Complaints and Allegations* listed under the section entitled *Enforcement*).
7. *Reporting violations* of this *Pastoral Code of Conduct* may not be an easy or popular thing to do. However, the purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assure the safety of people young and older. The Church personnel who may be disregarding these provisions are wrong and may pose a real threat to the health and safety of others. None of us can look

the other way and pretend we do not see what is happening.

8. Discuss with your parents, the *Diocese of Norwich Electronic Communications, Internet and Computer Use Policy*. Abide by this policy.
  
9. *Strive to live lives of truth, holiness, and virtue*, treating all human beings as human persons and not as objects for gratification, power, or advancement.



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Revised November 2014

# 9 Things

## Teenagers Can Do To Help Create and Maintain Safe Environments at Church and at School



"Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14

## Diocese of Norwich