

With the work of human hands and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we can answer our call to guide children, love them and protect them.

We have been called to protect.

Office for Safe Environments
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This brochure is provided as a part of the ongoing commitment of the Diocese of Norwich to create and provide learning, worship, and social environments that are safe from harm.

***Safe
Environments
in the
Diocese of Norwich***

***Recognizing
and
Setting
Boundaries:
A Guide for
Volunteers***

In the ministries and activities that we participate in, it is important to establish clear boundaries between appropriate conduct and behavior and inappropriate conduct and behavior. Those who would harm our children and young people start out with appropriate conduct and behavior and move to inappropriate. Establishing and respecting boundaries of conduct and behavior makes it easier to identify would-be perpetrators so that appropriate abuse-preventive action be taken, helps prevent false allegations of abuse, and, most importantly, helps establish a safe environment for children and young people to grow and thrive.

What Are Physical Boundaries?

Physical boundaries determine who may touch you, how much they may touch you, and where they may touch you.

What are some examples of physical boundary violations we can watch for when adults interact with children?

- Roughhousing, wrestling, or tickling
- Touching too much
- “Accidentally” touching inappropriately
- Encouraging children to pile on top of an adult
- Having children sit on an adult’s lap
- Holding or hugging when a child resists
- Hugs with too much body contact
- Massaging shoulders or feet
- Hugging from behind
- Picking up older children
- Touching in personal areas
- Leaning on or brushing up against children
- Lying down on a bed next to children

- Sitting too close and trying to hold hands or kiss

Wrestling and tickling are the most common physical boundary violations because these activities give the person an opportunity to touch a child inappropriately and claim the touch was unintentional.

Molesters want children to become accustomed to physical contact prior to sexual abuse. If other adults observe inappropriate physical contact and fail to intervene, the child may believe that other adults know and approve of the sexual abuse.

What Are Emotional Boundaries?

Emotional boundaries are how close you feel to someone, how much time you spend with that person, and what information you share with that person.

What are some examples of emotional boundary violations we can watch for between adults and children?

- Giving money or special expensive gifts
- Asking the child to keep secrets
- Talking with youths about personal things
- Talking with youths about their dating relationships or sexual activities
- Expressing feelings toward the child that are excessive
- Giving frequent compliments about a child’s body
- Pretending to be the child’s “best friend” or “father/mother figure”
- Getting upset if the child wants to spend time with other friends

- Making the child feel guilty

Child molesters often behave as if they are in a romantic relationship with a child. They work hard to gain the child’s trust and to become important in the child’s life.

What Are Behavioral Boundaries?

Behavioral boundaries determine the rules you will follow, the things you will and will not do.

What are some examples of behavioral boundary violations we can watch for between adults and children?

- Ridiculing the beliefs of a child’s parents
- Allowing children to do things against their parent’s wishes
- Offering children cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
- Allowing children to look at pornography or to visit inappropriate Internet sites
- Asking children to lie to their parents
- Asking children to keep secrets from their parents
- Speaking graphically about sexual matters
- Telling dirty jokes to children
- Allowing a child to drive without a license
- Taking children to inappropriate places. For example: taking them places without their parents’ permission, taking them to sexually oriented places

Child molesters violate behavioral boundaries so they can blackmail children or use the information against them to keep them from telling. Molesters make the child feel that he or she is to blame for participating in inappropriate activities.

