

Summary of Safe Practices for Congregations for Preventing Child Abuse (from The Diocese of Virginia's Policy Manual for Misconduct Prevention and Response)

1. The best way to prevent child sexual abuse in the church is to make sure that there are always two or more unrelated adults with children at all times.
2. Watch for physical, behavioral, and emotional boundary violations.
3. These safe practices are not meant to inconvenience adult employees and volunteers but to protect children. They can also help protect adults from unfounded accusations. Here are some behaviors that can lead to false allegations:
 1. a) Meeting alone in isolated places.
 2. b) Wearing provocative or revealing attire.
 3. c) Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without others present.
 4. d) Giving special or secret gifts.
 5. e) Keeping secrets about the relationship.
 6. f) Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection.
4. Team Teaching and Chaperoning
 1. a) Concerted effort should be made to recruit sufficient volunteer teachers to permit two unrelated teachers in every class. At least two unrelated adults should be present in the parish nursery as well.
 2. b) Youth activities both on and off the church grounds should have two or more adult leaders who are known to the church and unrelated. If there are both boys and girls participating in the activity then both male and female leaders should be present.
 3. c) Community organizations using the church facilities should follow the same guidelines.
5. Open Doors: Parents of the children being served as well as the clergy, and professional staff of the church have the right to visit and observe the program at any time, unannounced.
6. Driving
 1. a) Drivers should never be alone with a child other than their own.
 2. b) Drivers going to or from the church for a church activity must be at least 18 years old and must have a valid state driver's license.
 3. c) Drivers must have no record of convictions for the past five years for drunken driving, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license, or reckless endangerment.
7. Individual Pastoral Care
 1. a) While one-on-one pastoral care is a fundamental part of ministry, care must be taken to see that it is conducted in an environment that provides visibility by other adults.

2. b) Another adult should know the volunteer's or staff member's whereabouts and whom he or she is meeting with.
 3. c) No one should engage in secretive and private relationships with children or young people.
 4. d) As a general rule, there should be no more than 3 to 5 private meetings with any one child or young person per year.
8. Pornography – It is the policy of the Diocese of Virginia that no church computers or other technology may ever be used to access pornography.