

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM : BEST PRACTICES

REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE

1. REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE TO **LAW ENFORCEMENT**
2. NOTIFY **LOCAL DIOCESE** OF SUSPECTED ABUSE
3. NOTIFY **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS** OF SUSPECTED ABUSE AT **1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)**

GENERAL POLICIES

- Programs, events, and activities in which minors are present (e.g., Columbian Squires, Basketball Free Throw, Pancake Breakfasts, Fish Fries, etc.) sponsored by Knights of Columbus, require:
 - the presence of at least two leaders/members who have successfully completed all three Knights of Columbus safe environment online initial training modules or the two refresher training modules within the last three years
 - one member, typically the council's Family Director or Community Director, who has been background checked and trained through the Knights of Columbus safe environment program within the last three years must also be in attendance.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members, when counseling a minor participant, should always be in the same room as others and/or visible to others.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should not give gifts to minors without approval from their Grand Knight, as well as permission of the parent(s).
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should never supervise minors alone.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members, should always be aware of other adults present at Knights of Columbus programs, events, and activities in which minors are present and they must be alert for signs of possible misconduct.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should notify their grand knight and/or call the Knights of Columbus at 1-844-KOFC-SAFE when they recognize a policy ("boundary") violation or other possible misconduct that may impact child safety.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should always make all programs, events, and activities in which minors are present open to parents and guardians.
- **Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should NOT initiate, encourage or engage in one-on-one contact with minors outside of authorized Knights of Columbus programs, events, and activities.**

POLICIES FOR MEMBER INTERACTIONS WITH MINORS

APPROPRIATE

Physical Interactions

- Side Hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the head when

- culturally appropriate
- Touching hands, shoulders and arms
- Arms around shoulders

Verbal Interactions

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
- Encouragement
- Praise

INAPPROPRIATE

Physical Interactions

- Full-frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in isolated area
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling
- Piggyback rides
- Tickling
- Any type of massage given by or to a minor
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the minor or staff or volunteer
- Compliments relating to physique or body development
- Touching bottom, chest or genital areas

Verbal Interactions

- Name-calling
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving minors in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers
- Secrets
- Cursing
- Off-color or sexual jokes
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate minors
- Derogatory remarks about the minors or his/her family

POLICIES FOR TRAVEL AND OVERNIGHT PROGRAM

- Off-site and overnight activities are generally discouraged. However, any such event sponsored by the Knights of Columbus must be expressly pre-approved by a grand knight and the parents / guardian(s) of participating minors.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should ensure that all overnight programs, events, and activities are open to parents and guardians.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should not share a sleeping area with a minor.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should not enter rest room, dressing or sleeping facilities when in use by minors, except in cases of a dire safety or health concern.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should always protect their own privacy while showering, dressing, sleeping, and toileting.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should always respect minors' privacy while showering, dressing, sleeping and toileting.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should enforce curfews with a room check conducted by two leaders/members/parents, both male and both female, as appropriate.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should not allow minors to have members of the opposite sex in their sleeping area at any time.

POLICIES FOR MONITORING RESTROOMS

- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should be aware that most incidents of peer-on-peer abuse occur in restrooms, and they should conduct frequent restroom checks.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should scan restrooms before allowing minors to enter.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should **never allow fewer than three minors** to travel to a restroom facility together.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should allow only as many minors as there are restroom stalls to use the restroom at the same time.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should avoid sending minors of different ages into restrooms at the same time.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should remain within earshot of restrooms while in use by minors.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should require minors to ask permission before using a single-stall restroom or restroom out of earshot of the group.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should not use restrooms at the same time as minors.

POLICIES FOR MONITORING FREE TIME

- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should require minors to remain within their line of sight.
- At least two Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should always supervise minors.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of entire activity area.

POLICIES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET

- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should only communicate via email or home (not cell) phone with minors.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should limit all communication with minors to **Knights of Columbus related topics**.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should copy parents or guardians on all email and phone communications with minors.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should never encourage minors to contact them via text message or on any other social media platform.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members **should never send inappropriate, vulgar or pornographic texts or material to minors**.

POLICIES FOR PREVENTING PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should always supervise minors in order to mitigate risk of peer-on-peer abuse.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should not leave an older minor alone and in charge of younger minors.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should strictly prohibit hazing inside or outside of Knights of Columbus programs, events, and activities.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should strictly prohibit bullying, including but not limited to, derogatory name calling, singling out one minor for different treatment, ridicule or humiliation.
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should strictly prohibit games such as “Truth or Dare.”
- Grand Knights and Program/Family/Community Directors, Counselors, and members should consistently document and report all instances of bullying, hazing, inappropriate sexualized behavior and suspected abuse between minors.

POLICIES FOR OUTSIDE CONTACT WITH MINORS

- Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities.
- This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put everyone at increased risk.
- **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT LEADERS/MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE CONTACT WITH MINORS OUTSIDE ITS PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES.**
- However, if outside contact with minors is unavoidable, Knights of Columbus has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

Appropriate Outside Contact

- Taking groups of minors on an outing
- Attending sporting activities with groups of minors
- Attending functions at a minor’s home with parents present

Inappropriate Outside Contact

- Taking one minor on an outing without the parent’s written permission
- Visiting minors in your or a minor’s home without presence of parents
- A lone minor spending the night with you or other members

Office of Youth Protection: oyp@kofc.org 203-752-4558
Member Helpline: youthleader@kofc.org 203-800-4940 • 855-845-3502 (fax)
1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)

