

Darien Study Center, Inc.

Guidelines for Activities Involving Minors

These guidelines apply to all staff and volunteers of Darien Study Center who oversee or carry out activities sponsored by Darien Study Center in which minors take part, including offsite activities sponsored by Darien. The guidelines also apply to one-on-one counseling of minors who take part in these activities. A minor is anyone under the age of 18.

1. Whenever adults are with an individual minor, they should always remain within view of other people and should avoid being alone in any isolated place.

2. Priests should hear confessions and give spiritual direction to minors only in a confessional with a screen, in a room with a window in the door allowing them to be easily seen, or in a place where they are in the sight of other people (but out of earshot).

3. When staff or volunteers talk to minors alone they should do so in a room with the door open or with a window in the door allowing them to be easily seen, or someplace where they can be easily seen by other people. No individual adult may communicate by video teleconferencing with an individual minor unless the minor's parent expressly consents to the meeting, and unless the adult conducts the entire meeting from a room or location where he is in the presence of another adult who is able to see his screen.

4. No adult should ever be alone with a minor in a bedroom. No minors should be in bedrooms of the center, and it is better if they simply do not enter the residents' area of the center.

5. Any overnight activities or one-day trips involving minors should include a sufficient proportion of adults and never fewer than two. In overnight activities, no adult should share a bedroom (or tent) with minors. If possible, minors should sleep either in single rooms or in rooms with three or more.

6. In overnight activities, the priest should have his own bedroom.

7. No adult should shower or dress in the presence of minors and vice-versa. Adults should have separate showers or use the showers at a separate time. Whenever the minors need to dress with other minors present, they should be instructed to use bathrobes or at least towels. All showers should be individual showers or have individual stalls.

8. No adult should drive in a car alone with a minor, unless the parents have given their explicit approval. Longer trips alone with a minor (over half an hour) should be avoided altogether.

9. Before a minor attends an overnight activity (e.g., a retreat) the parents should be informed and their approval obtained by those responsible for the activity.

10. No adult should subject a minor to any physical or verbal abuse, including threatening, intimidating, taunting, humiliating and insulting, nor allow the participants to treat others in these ways. Participants may be disciplined when that is necessary to allow other participants to engage in the activity fruitfully.

11. No adult should invite or aid minors to smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs. The possession and use of marijuana are always prohibited, regardless of their legality.

12. Adults should avoid any physical contact that is sexual or could be misunderstood as sexual. In this area it is better to err on the side of caution. Wrestling and rough-housing should be avoided.

13. Adults should not send text messages to minors under 15 and may send such messages to other minors only if they have first obtained the parents' approval.

14. No adult should give or show to a minor pornographic or indecent reading materials, photographs, CD's, DVD's, websites, etc. In speaking about matters related to the virtue of chastity, it is best to emphasize the positive aspects of the ascetical struggle.

15. If anyone knows or reasonably suspects that abuse of a minor has taken place in any activities sponsored by Darien Study Center, they should inform the Director of Darien Study Center immediately. All those who work with minors should be familiar with the pertinent state's requirements for mandatory reporting of confirmed or suspected abuse of minors.

16. If a minor says that he has been abused, the adult should listen to him without disputing his story, ask for pertinent details (who, when, what), and tell him that he will speak to the Director. He should be encouraged to tell his parents.

I, _____, have read the above guidelines and agree to abide by them in all activities of Darien Study Center involving minors.

Signature

Date