

12 Things Parents Can Do To Help Create and Maintain Safe Environments at Church and at School

The Church teaches that parents have the most serious duty, and primary right, to do all in their power to assure the physical, social, cultural, moral and religious upbringing of their children. Parenting is a difficult and demanding task. It is a task that requires the support and assistance of the entire Christian community. Parents, children and Church ministers, *must all work together to assure the safety and welfare of our most precious resource, our children.*

Parents need to take an active, and even proactive, role in the educational and social activities of their children. As a parent, you can work with your child(ren) to assure their safety. Among other things, you need to:

1. *Know your child's teachers* as well as those adults who have some supervisory role in relationship to your child(ren). Two adults should normally be present when working with your child(ren).
2. Satisfy yourself that the adults having contact with your child(ren) have been *carefully screened*. If you have doubts about whether or not an employee or volunteer was properly screened, talk with the person in charge of the activity, or your pastor, and communicate your concerns. If your doubts concern a school employee, talk with your child's principal.
3. *Visit the classrooms and places* where activities are held to assure you that these places are safe environments.
4. *Become involved* in programs and activities at church and school.
5. *Teach your child(ren)* that most people are only allowed to touch certain parts of their body, like your hands or your shoulders. But **NO ONE** should touch the private parts of your body unless they are helping you keep these parts healthy. Private areas are those parts of our bodies covered by a swimsuit.
6. *Encourage your children to speak openly about their experiences and not keep secrets about their relationships with other people.* Children need to be taught that they can and should discuss anything that happens to them that makes them feel uncomfortable, confused, or upset in any way. They need to know they can talk to a parent or another trusted adult about feelings such as these.
7. *Discourage your child(ren) from accepting inappropriate gifts.*
8. *Not allow your child(ren) to travel unchaperoned or stay overnight with adult non-family members as part of Church or school related activities except with your explicit written permission.*
9. Insist that your child(ren) not be allowed to travel without *explicit written permission*, given only after careful review of the travel arrangements.
10. *Listen carefully and with a discerning ear* to what children are saying to one another about the adults around them.
11. *Be aware of the Pastoral Code of Conduct* in effect for Church ministers and *promptly report* any violations of the same to the appropriate authorities (see *Process of Reporting and Addressing Complaints and Allegations* listed under the section entitled *Enforcement*). . Familiarize yourself, and discuss with your child, the *Diocese of Norwich Electronic Communications, Internet and Computer Use Policy*.
12. *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; and teach your children not to treat other people as objects for gratification, power, or advancement.