

BOUNDARIES FOR MINISTRIES

Diocese Of Winona-Rochester

MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

‘Maintaining boundaries’ means respecting the personal space of others. Maintaining boundaries protects young people as well as adults. Certain ways of expressing affection are more appropriate than others: as ministry providers, we need to be aware of the differences and to maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.



APPROPRIATE

- Side or shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- Handshakes
- “High Fives”
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the shoulder, back or head
(*where culturally appropriate*)

INAPPROPRIATE

- Lengthy embraces; kisses
- Comments about physique or physical development
- Showing affection while in isolated areas
- Holding children over the age of 5 on your lap
- Massages; tickling; wrestling; piggy back rides

SETTING THE TONE

It is the responsibility of all ministry providers to exhibit professional behavior in all interactions with youth, parents, and co-workers. Be mindful of your attitude during all ministry events. You are a Catholic role model and are responsible for your behavior as well as the behavior of your students, their parents, and co-workers.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

Ministry providers should take care when communicating with youth. Remember that words, as well as actions, can easily be misinterpreted. Be sure to write as if you expect everyone to read it and to maintain appropriate boundaries in all written communications.

DO...

- ⇒ Copy parents on all written and electronic communications
- ⇒ Communicate to all youth participants rather than individuals (*e.g., send group emails*)
- ⇒ Keep communications ministry-focused
- ⇒ Contact your supervisor if you receive any inappropriate correspondence
- ⇒ Consider the age of the youth when deciding upon which communication to use



DO NOT...

- ⇒ Send text messages to individual youth
- ⇒ “Friend” students on Facebook
- ⇒ Share details about your personal life with youth