



SAFETY TIPS

Each year as we begin the activities of our schools, religious education, athletics and youth ministry programs, there are some safety items parish leadership needs to be attentive to in keeping with our pledge to create safe environments.

1. **Be Visible.** In the coming and going times of programs, parents and those responsible for the children whom we serve should find the presence of the principal, director of religious education, youth minister, coach, or teacher a reassuring presence as they drop off/pick up the young people.
2. **Be Attentive.** Teachers, coaches, and all those engaged with serving young people need to be attentive to their surroundings. All visitors are asked to check in with the office in accord with the procedures set forth locally.
3. **Be Outside.** Pay particular attention to parking lots, pick up areas, etc. especially during the months of the year when darkness comes early. If outside lighting is provided please check that the lights are functioning properly.
4. **Be Aware.** Review the exit strategies with the young people so that they know the regular departure route for when the program is over, and so they know the route to use in the event of an emergency. Provide directions for where the group would re-assemble once outside. (i.e., "We will all gather at the large tree at the end of the driveway, so go there quickly.")
5. **Be Familiar.** Be sure you are familiar with the parents who pick up the young people so that if something irregular occurs you can attend to it promptly.
6. **Be Repetitive.** Review some of the critical policies often: two adult rule, observable space when working with the young people, the use of hall monitors, the utilization of the buddy systems with the very young ones are just a few of the important policies.

7. **Be Organized.** Chapter three of the FSGC manual details guidelines for events, outlines for a crisis plan, includes helpful information in planning any event with young people and contains permission slips and attendance rosters for your use.
8. **Be Prepared.** While we know our schools have a crisis plan in place for emergencies, have we ever considered how we would “lock down” a facility, or secure a program area if we were challenged to do so by a catastrophic event. Do you know who needs to be notified and how to notify him/her? Do you know how you would account for those in your care?
9. **Be Vigilant.** This includes being vigilant about the facility, knowing where children are suppose to be and how they are to get there, knowing what areas are lit and when, and which areas are monitored and which are restricted.
10. **Be Professional.** Always conduct yourself in accord with the standards expressed in the volunteer covenant/ethical standards for church personnel.

Some tips for parents in dealing with internet use:

1. Talk to your child/children about internet safety and establish family rules about using the internet.
2. Monitor your child’s use of the internet, knowing who she or he talks to on line and what they talk about.
3. Periodically ask your child if he or she has received any inappropriate e-mails or pop-ups and prepare how you will respond.
4. Teach your children about physical, emotional and behavioral boundaries. Help them set “online” boundaries.
5. Help your children take control of what they do online, especially when chatting online. Listed below are just a few tips that will help:
 - a. If you are on a page, and you know you shouldn't be there, leave.
 - b. If you think you shouldn't be there, but you're curious, leave anyway.
 - c. If someone starts chatting with you about sex or parts of your body, end the conversation.
 - d. If someone persists in asking you things you don't want to share, end the conversation.
 - e. If someone uses bad language that is offensive to you, end the conversation.
 - f. If your first instinct is to look away from the screen, look away, and hit the "Home" button.
 - g. Don't be afraid to tell an adult about what you've seen online.