Child & Teen PROTECTION

Ideas for Safer Programs Online

Most sexual abuse of children/teens occurs in isolated, one-on-one settings.

The internet can be an isolated, one-on-one interaction between adults and children or between older and younger children.

To protect children from sexual abuse, adults need to take actions that minimize the opportunity for harmful, one-on-one communication. The church's policies that protect children in your program should extend to online activities, too.

Clergy, volunteers, and parents/guardians should respect the same boundaries and guidelines.

TEXTING / PRIVATE MESSAGING

Know your church's policy on texting/messaging with minors. Be sure that all communication between adults and children is observable by other adults. All communications should be saved and visible to a parent/guardian or supervisor.

SCHEDULE INTERACTIONS

Publish times for online lessons and other gatherings with students. Provide parents/guardians and supervisors with schedules. Parents/guardians and/or supervisors should be aware of contact with students outside of scheduled program times.

TWO-ADULT RULE

The "2-Adult Rule" applies for online interaction. No isolated, 1-on-1 interactions through video, chat, or messaging apps.

CLEAR GUIDELINES

Provide clear guidelines for clergy, volunteers, and parents/guardians that describe which apps/programs will be used and in the manner of their use. Set limits on contact to the scheduled times and methods. Give clergy, volunteers, and parents/guardians explicit permission and a mechanism to report violations of the guidelines.

RESTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING

No adults should follow children/teens on social media without parent/guardian and/or supervisor consent. No private messaging through social media apps.

TALK ABOUT SAFETY

Equip parents/guardians with general internet safety information. Discuss ways parents/guardians can talk with their children/teen about safety. Encourage parents/guardians to monitor child/teen internet usage and consider "screen-free" times.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina
cbfsc.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.d2l.org/safe-digital-learning-plans | www.connectsafely.org
www.fosi.org | www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/home