

# Southmont Foundation

## Code of Conduct for Activities Involving Minors

Every human being is a child of God. Christian charity should guide all interactions between all individuals in activities of Southmont with minors. Christian charity demands refined speech, refined behavior, and refined respect for other persons and their dignity.

Southmont has zero tolerance for any abuse of minors, perpetrated by any adult or minor in connection with activities of Southmont.

For purposes of this code a minor refers to any person under the age of 18. Personnel of Southmont refers to any person who conducts or otherwise actively participates in any activity involving one or more minors on the premises of Southmont or organized or sponsored by Southmont. Personnel of Southmont does not refer to parents who participate in activities with their children but do not otherwise organize or conduct the activities.

This Code of Conduct applies to all personnel of Southmont, other adult participants, and minors in their interactions with minors, regardless of whether the interactions occur during or outside of a scheduled activity of Southmont...

Without exception, all personnel of Southmont must read and sign a copy of this **Code of Conduct for Activities Involving Minors** and cooperate, as necessary, with a criminal records check.

For clarification about any standard in this code or about anything not specifically addressed here, speak with the Activity Director.

1. We do not tolerate any abuse of minors in connection with activities of Southmont whether perpetrated by another minor or an adult. Abuse of a minor will result in disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal or termination from activities of Southmont and Southmont's cooperation with law enforcement.
2. Whenever an individual adult is with an individual minor, they should always remain in view of other people and avoid being alone in any isolated place. When meeting in a room, they should meet with the door open or with a window in the door allowing them to be easily seen.
3. 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). Priests should hear the confessions and give spiritual direction to females only in a confessional with a screen.
4. Priests will not provide spiritual direction to minors through electronic means. Spiritual direction may only be provided in person.
5. No adult should ever be alone with a minor in a bedroom. No minors should ever be in an adult's bedroom, and it is better if they do not enter the adult residents' area of a building.

6. In overnight activities, the Priest should have his own bedroom.
7. Any overnight activities or one-day trips should include a sufficient ratio of personnel of Southmont to minors, and never fewer than two personnel of Southmont.
8. In overnight activities, no adult should share a bedroom (or tent) with minors. Minors should sleep either in single rooms or in rooms with three or more.
9. Adults and minors should have separate bathrooms, showers, and/or changing areas, or use the bathroom, showers, and/or changing areas at separate times. No adult should use the bathroom, shower, or dress in the presence of minors and vice-versa. Whenever 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. There should never be two minors alone together in a bathroom, changing area, or showering area, unless adults are supervising. Whenever supervision is necessary, at least two adults should stand outside the bathroom entrance, shower room, or changing area, and at least two adults should enter the bathroom, shower room, or changing area together.
10. An adult should never be alone in a vehicle with a minor. If adults need to drive minors, there should be a minimum of three people in the car (two adults and one minor, or one adult and two minors). The only exception may be an emergency, such as driving a minor injured during an activity to an Emergency Room or Urgent Care.
11. Before a minor attends an overnight activity, personnel of Southmont must obtain written approval from the minor's parent.
12. Adults and minors must never taunt, intimidate, belittle, bully or otherwise verbally abuse other minors.
13. Adults must avoid any physical contact that is sexual or could be misconstrued as sexual. In this area, it is better to err on the side of caution. Wrestling and rough-housing should be avoided.
14. Adults must never invite or aid minors to smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs. The possession and use of marijuana are always prohibited, regardless of its legality.
15. Personnel of Southmont may exchange activity-related text messages with high school students (not with younger students), but only after obtaining general approval from the minor's parent.
16. Personnel of Southmont may speak by phone or audio chat with a minor, but only after obtaining general approval from the minor's parent. Personnel of Southmont may interact with minors through video calls only within view of other personnel of Southmont or if the minor is within the view of his or her Parent. Prior to the minor's completing 7th grade, for each audio or video interaction Personnel of Southmont must first speak with the minor's Parent before asking to speak with the minor.
17. Personnel of Southmont and a minor may meet with each other outside of regularly scheduled activity hours, but only after obtaining general approval from the minor's Parent and only if all other policies are followed.
18. Adults are prohibited from giving gifts to minors, unless a minor's Parent has approved a particular gift for their child.

19. Adults must never give or show to a minor pornographic or indecent media or materials. In speaking about matters related to the virtue of chastity, it is best to emphasize the positive aspects of the ascetical struggle.
20. The access, display, production, possession, or distribution of pornography through any of Southmont's property or equipment, or in association with any activities of Southmont, is strictly prohibited.
21. Anyone who knows or reasonably suspects that a minor has been abused in connection with any of Southmont 's activities must immediately inform the Activity Director or call Southmont 's reporting Helpline, 646-742-2741.
22. Southmont takes every suspicion or allegation of abuse seriously and will cooperate with civil authorities to investigate suspected or alleged abuse. Personnel of Southmont are required to cooperate with any outside or internal investigation of suspected or alleged abuse of minors. Failure to cooperate may be grounds for termination from activities of Southmont.
23. If a minor says that he/she has been abused, personnel of Southmont should listen calmly without disputing the story, ask for pertinent details (who, when, what), and tell him/her that he/she will speak to the Activity Director. The minor should be encouraged to tell his/her Parent.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above code of conduct and agree to abide by it in connection with all activities of Southmont..

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Signature

Date

Approved September 29, 2022