

# Loreto Sisters

## Guidance on Boundary Violation

Within the Loreto Order there are codes of behaviour for adult-to-child interactions which should not be breached. Those ministering with children must be aware of the boundaries, parameters and limits of these relationships, where a child and their parents or guardians entrust their welfare and safety to a member of Loreto personnel. Behaviour which is inappropriate but which does not meet the threshold of abuse must always be taken seriously and addressed.

All concerns relating to the abuse of a child which reach the threshold must be reported to the statutory authorities.

The following table describes behaviours under a number of headings where boundaries for children are considered to be violated by an adult.

Area	Boundary violating behaviour by an adult involving children
Communication	<p>Inappropriate language around children and young people.</p> <p>Comments on a child’s appearance (positively or negatively).</p> <p>Has sexual conversations with children and young people.</p> <p>Uses discriminatory language about a child.</p> <p>Has ‘pet names’ for children.</p> <p>Humiliates a child.</p> <p>Shares sexual jokes with children.</p> <p>Uses obscene gestures or language when addressing children.</p> <p>Sends texts or messages of a personal nature using digital media.</p> <p>Shares inappropriate images with children.</p> <p>Sharing inappropriate personal details with children.</p> <p>Photographing, videoing or audio recording a child when not authorised to do so.</p> <p>Using personal electronic equipment to communicate with children, when it has been advised against communicating with children in this way.</p> <p>Sharing personal internet sites with children.</p> <p>Creating or using personal chat-rooms with children.</p>
Physical Contact	<p>Touching a child inappropriately.</p> <p>Physically punishing a child.</p> <p>Physical restraint of a child, unless in rare circumstance where an adult has to restrain a child to stop them running into traffic, diving into shallow water, hurting themselves or in a medical emergency.</p> <p>Meeting a child in secret.</p>

Location	<p>Meeting a child on their own.</p> <p>Inviting a child to Church personnel's home or other location where the child will be on their own.</p> <p>Entering toilet, changing room or shower which are occupied by children and where supervision is not appropriate.</p> <p>Tutoring a child in a location which is inappropriate and where there is a lack of transparency and lack of consent from parents or guardians.</p>
Gifts/Favours	<p>Targeting an individual child for special attention.</p> <p>Giving gifts or money to a child.</p> <p>Singling a child out for special duties or responsibilities.</p>

Concerning behaviours are those that are considered 'pre-offending behaviours'. Depending on a detectable pattern, these behaviours might also be considered to constitute 'grooming'. Abuse may not have occurred yet, so a conversation with the offending adult may be a good and safe option, and in many cases can help to prevent behaviour becoming abusive. Prevention efforts are greatly improved when adults are able to recognize suspicious attitudes and patterns of behaviour and to take action. When adults know when and how to safely confront someone who is engaged in pre-offending behaviours, they can help stop abuse before it occurs. It may be that this behaviour is detected via a complaints process or through whistleblowing.

If the behaviour is abusive, report it. If you are unsure whether the behaviour constitutes abuse, consult the DLP or the statutory authorities.

**Action steps to address Boundary Violations:**

- Think about what is making you uncomfortable, then write it down.
- Discuss your concerns with the DLP or province leader.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to confront the behaviour yourself.
- Choose a private time and place where you can talk to the subject without interruption.
- Do not accuse or jump to conclusions, but do ask direct questions.



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