

Child Sexual Abuse—Guidelines for Branch Office Service Desks

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1. These guidelines assist Service Desks to provide direction to the elders. A printed copy of this document should be made available to the following elders: (1) each Branch and Country committee member; (2) the Service Department overseer, his assistant, and each Service Desk (deskmen may share their copy with their secretary); and (3) the Legal Department overseer and his assistant. If the Branch Committee believes that anyone else should be provided with a copy, a request with complete details should be submitted to the WHQ Legal Department. Any elder who received a copy in the past and who receives a change of assignment should be instructed to return his copy to the Branch Committee. Copies of these guidelines should not be distributed to anyone in any electronic format, including any branch research library.

2. The *Shepherd* book provides bodies of elders with direction when matters involving child abuse come to their attention. The Service Desks should be thoroughly familiar with that direction. If a body of elders inquires about a case that was handled in the past or if the Service Department believes that additional direction needs to be provided to a body of elders in such a case, the Branch Committee should be consulted and provide direction on a case-by-case basis.—Prov. 15:22.

3. While references to the accused are in the masculine gender and those to the victim are in the feminine gender, these guidelines apply equally regardless of the gender of the accused or the gender of the victim. References to parents and family heads apply equally to legal guardians. Service Desks should consider each case prayerfully and carefully so that direction given to the field will reflect divine wisdom and discernment as well as love and concern for Jehovah's sheep, especially those who are victims of child abuse.—Isa. 32:1, 2; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

4. Since congregation elders are spiritual shepherds, Service Desks should remind them of the importance of being empathetic and compassionate in dealing with victims of child sexual abuse and their families. (John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 3:8) The elders should provide ongoing shepherding to comfort both the victim and her family. (*w19.05* pp. 14-20) The elders should be reminded of the direction in *Shepherd*, chapter 14, paragraphs 12 to 17.

5. In all cases, the victim and her parents have the right to report an allegation to the secular authorities. The victim or her family may need assistance that most elders are not qualified to give. For example, the victim or her family may decide to consult a mental-health professional. Neither the branch office nor the elders should discourage a victim or her family from seeking such assistance.

REPORTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

6. The Service Desk should always listen patiently and empathetically to the caller's concerns and offer Scriptural comfort. In all cases, the Service Desk should assure the caller that he or she is free to report the allegation to the secular authorities.

- (1) **The Caller Is the Victim of or Is a Witness to Child Sexual Abuse:** She should be encouraged to talk with the elders or the circuit overseer. If she prefers, she may write to the Service Department. The Service Desk should telephone the caller's local elders to confirm they are aware of the matter and to direct them to contact the Legal Department if they have not already done so.
- (2) **The Caller Is Not a Witness to the Alleged Wrongdoing, and the Alleged Victim Is Still a Minor:** The caller should be encouraged to immediately alert one of the parents and perhaps the local elders. The Service Desk should telephone the local elders to confirm that they are aware of the allegation and direct them to contact the Legal Department if they have not done so previously.
- (3) **The Caller Is Not a Witness to the Alleged Wrongdoing, and the Alleged Victim Is Now an Adult:** The caller should be assured that such accusations are taken seriously. Out of respect for the adult victim's privacy, the caller can be encouraged to have the alleged victim speak with the elders. (*sfl* chap. 12 par. 40 pt. 2) Based on what is reported, there may be a need for the elders in the accused's congregation to speak with the accused.

The Service Desk should always determine if this is the first time the branch office has been informed of the allegation. The direction in this paragraph also applies if an allegation is received in writing.

7. *When elders report a matter involving child sexual abuse*, the Service Desk should first confirm that they have previously contacted the Legal Department for legal advice. The Service Desk should instruct the elders to investigate the matter. If the investigating elders need to obtain pertinent details from elders in other congregations, there is usually no objection to their doing so. The Service Desk should inform the elders that if they have questions during the course of the investigation, they are welcome to call for further assistance. In their investigation, the elders should provide answers to the following questions:

- (1) **Regarding Each Alleged Victim:** What is the date of birth? What was the age of the victim at the time of the abuse? If baptized, what is the date of baptism? What is the impact of the wrongdoing on the well-being of the victim? If the victim is a minor, are the parents aware? What is the impact on the family of the victim and others who may be aware of what occurred? Generally, in conducting their investigation, there is no need for the elders to speak with a minor who is a victim of child sexual abuse. The

Service Desk should remind the elders that in the *exceptional* circumstance that they believe there is such a need, they should first seek direction from the Service Department.—See [Appendix A](#).

- (2) **Regarding the Accused:** Who made the accusation? How did the elders learn of the accusation? Did the accused confess to or deny the accusation? When did the alleged abuse take place? What is the date of birth of the accused, and what was his age at the time of the alleged abuse? If baptized, what is the baptism date of the accused? If baptized, was he dealt with judicially and what was the outcome? Describe what took place. Was it a single incident, or was it repeated? What were the circumstances? Was he serving as a pioneer, a ministerial servant, or an elder at the time of the alleged abuse? Has he gone on record before the elders and Jehovah regarding whether as an adult he has been involved in the sexual abuse of any other minor? How do the victim and the victim's relatives view him now? How does the congregation view him? Were the secular authorities informed? If so, what action did they take? Do they categorize him as a sex offender? To what degree is there notoriety? How is he viewed in the community? For example, does his name appear on a public list of sex offenders?

8. If the victim or another minor is still in danger of abuse, the elders should report the matter to the secular authorities even if there is not a legal obligation to do so. To determine whether the elders should make a report, the Service Desk should ask: Does the victim live in the accused's home? Are there any other minors living in the accused's home? Do the accused's day-to-day activities put him in close proximity to minors? Does the accused's employment bring him into contact with minors? If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes," the Service Desk will direct that a report be made to the secular authorities and will transfer the callers to the Legal Department for direction on proper reporting procedure.

EVALUATING THE FACTS

9. Once the Service Desk has obtained the facts regarding an allegation of child sexual abuse, the following must be determined: (1) whether serious wrongdoing was Scripturally established (see [paragraphs 11-12](#)), (2) whether the congregation will view the wrongdoing as child sexual abuse (see [paragraph 13](#)), and (3) whether restrictions will be imposed by the branch office (see [paragraphs 14-16](#)). In all cases, after the matter is concluded, the Service Department should send a letter to the body of elders explaining how the individual will be viewed by the congregation and whether restrictions will be imposed. The Service Department should retain a copy of any such letter sent to a body of elders. If the accused is disfellowshipped, there would be no need to send a letter until he is reinstated.

10. Even though the letter from the Service Department is addressed to the entire body of elders, it should be sent only to the *jw.org* email addresses of the coordinator of the body of elders and the secretary. The letter should direct the coordinator of the body of elders to have the letter read at a meeting of the body of elders. Other elders may review this letter during the meeting, but they should not make copies of it. The secretary should ensure that any elders who are not at the meeting are given opportunity to read the letter, but a copy should not be sent (electronically or hard copy) to any other elder on the body. Only one copy of this letter should be printed and should then be placed in a sealed envelope in the congregation's confidential file.

11. For an accusation of serious wrongdoing to be established from a Scriptural standpoint, there must be sufficient Scriptural evidence, either a confession or testimony from two credible witnesses. (*sfl* chap. 12 pars. 40-42) Suspicions do not constitute sufficient evidence. If

there is a credible witness to child sexual abuse occurring *before* the accused was baptized and a credible witness to child sexual abuse occurring *after* the accused's baptism, the matter would be handled judicially. Similarly, if there is a credible witness to child sexual abuse occurring *while* the accused was disfellowshipped and a credible witness to child sexual abuse occurring *after* the accused's reinstatement, the matter would be handled judicially.

12. In some situations, an accusation of serious wrongdoing cannot be Scripturally established. However, depending on the nature of the allegation, the local elders may need to be instructed to remain vigilant with regard to the conduct and activity of the accused during congregation activities. In some cases, a publisher may adamantly deny an accusation of child sexual abuse. Even so, he may be convicted by the secular authorities and, as a result, be viewed by the community as a threat to children. In such cases, the branch office may impose restrictions.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE FROM A CONGREGATION STANDPOINT

13. In addition to what is stated in chapter 14 of *Shepherd*, the following factors should be considered:

- (1) **Sexual Misconduct Involving Only Minors:** Such conduct is not generally considered by the congregation as child sexual abuse. However, cases in which one minor is significantly older than the other or in which the younger minor was not a willing participant or in which one minor has been involved with multiple minors must be carefully evaluated. In certain cases, branch-imposed restrictions may still be warranted.
- (2) **Age of the Adult and Age of the Minor:** The Service Department needs to consider the ages of both the adult and the minor. From a legal standpoint, the definition of adult varies according to the country or area in which one lives. In some countries, one is viewed as an adult when he reaches 18 years of age. The Bible does not specify an age when one reaches adulthood. From a congregation standpoint, cases in which the minor and the adult are close in age and the minor was a willing participant may be viewed differently than cases in which the adult is significantly older than the minor.
- (3) **Child Pornography:** Showing pornography to a minor is considered to be child sexual abuse. Although *viewing* child pornography is not considered to be child sexual abuse from a congregation standpoint, it is still a serious violation of Jehovah's standards. A person involved in viewing child pornography should be strongly counseled. Depending on the frequency and the extent of his viewing, he could be subject to congregation judicial action. In such cases, the Service Department may decide that branch-imposed restrictions are warranted.—See *Shepherd* chapter 13.

BRANCH-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS

14. When it is established that an individual is guilty of child sexual abuse from a congregation standpoint (see [paragraphs 9-13](#)), the Service Department should communicate in writing the direction outlined in [paragraphs 17](#) and [23](#), all of the restrictions outlined in [paragraphs 18-20](#), and the steps outlined in [paragraphs 21](#), [22](#), and [24](#). Such branch-imposed restrictions serve to protect children. (Acts 20:28, 29) The restrictions may also assist the individual to avoid compromising or tempting situations. These branch-imposed restrictions should not be confused with those imposed by a congregation judicial committee. Branch-imposed restrictions remain in effect unless the body of elders is informed otherwise by the Service Department. Service Department oversight should review and approve any letter that imposes or lifts branch-imposed restrictions.

15. Restrictions are imposed when (1) it is determined that a publisher (baptized or unbaptized) who is guilty of child sexual abuse is repentant and will remain in the congregation, (2) one disfellowshipped for child sexual abuse is reinstated, (3) a publisher (baptized or unbaptized) who denies an accusation of child sexual abuse is convicted by the secular authorities, or (4) one viewed as a child molester by the community or the congregation becomes a publisher or is baptized. In all of these situations, as long as he is viewed negatively by the victim, the victim's family, the congregation, the elders, or the community, the branch office must impose restrictions on his activity in the congregation and in the field ministry.—Gal. 6:7.

16. The elders may learn that a publisher, perhaps one currently in an appointed position, was guilty of child sexual abuse **many years ago**. In such an exceptional case, the branch office should weigh all of the facts before determining whether branch-imposed restrictions are warranted. If restrictions are imposed, the individual would not continue to serve in any appointed position. The following questions serve as a guide to assist the branch office in determining whether restrictions are warranted: How did the elders learn of the matter? Did the wrongdoing take place decades ago? What were the circumstances? What was his age and the age of the victim at the time? Was he in an appointed position when he committed the wrongdoing? Did he seek the assistance of the elders at the time? Is there a cry of complaint from the victim, the victim's family, or from others who know of the wrongdoing? How widely known is the matter? How do the community and the secular authorities view him? For example, does his name appear on a public list of sex offenders? Has he gone on record before the elders that he has not been involved with any other minors? Has he established a pattern of fine works that demonstrates that he can be trusted? There may be other relevant factors unique to the case under consideration.

17. In all cases when the branch office imposes restrictions, the individual **would not qualify for privileges, even seemingly minor privileges, for decades, if ever**. In such cases, he could not be considered as exemplary or as one who is "free from accusation," "irreprehensible," "having a fine testimony from people on the outside."—1 Tim. 3:1-7, 10; 5:22; Titus 1:7.

18. **Congregation Activity:** Since the individual is not exemplary, he should **not be given any responsibility** that could be viewed as an assigned duty or task, even though some assignments might be considered minor. He may present student assignments on the mid-week meeting provided that his doing so will not be offensive to those in the congregation who know of his past wrongdoing. If the part requires an assistant, the assistant should always be an adult. He should not be used to assist with accounts, literature, or territories. He should not be used to serve as an attendant, to carry or adjust microphones, or to operate audio/video equipment. He should not represent the congregation in prayer, nor would he be used as the reader at the Congregation Bible Study or *Watchtower* Study or to conduct a meeting for field service. He does not qualify to auxiliary pioneer or regular pioneer. His home should not be used for congregation meetings or meetings for field service. Although he could assist with the cleaning and general care of the Kingdom Hall where he attends meetings, he should not be approved to work on other Kingdom Halls or Assembly Halls. He cannot use the Kingdom Hall for his wedding.

19. **Field Service Activity:** He may not qualify to share in the field ministry for a period of time. If he qualifies, he should be informed that **each time he shares in the ministry he is required to be accompanied by an elder who is aware of the restrictions on his activity**. (In the rare circumstance that a congregation has no elders, the individual is required to be in the company of a ministerial servant who has been made aware of the individual's past

abuse of a minor.) The individual is never to share in the ministry alone nor is he to work alone with his own minor children. He should never be left alone with a child. The individual should let the elders know ahead of time of his desire to share in the ministry so that arrangements can be coordinated. He should be willing to adjust his schedule in order to comply with this requirement, since the elders may not always be able to accommodate his request. He should also be informed that he should not use the telephone, Internet, or any other electronic media to share in the ministry. Neither should he share in letter writing.

20. An elder should conduct the meeting for service where the individual attends. The individual should not be in a group that includes minor children other than his own and is *required* to be accompanied by an elder who is aware of the restrictions on his activity.

21. **Alerting Parents:** Parents have the Scriptural responsibility to protect their children. When the branch office determines that restrictions should be imposed on an individual, the Service Department should also direct the elders to **provide appropriate cautions to parents of minor children**. At the same time that parents are being alerted, two elders should explain to the individual that parents in the congregation are being informed. When informing parents, the elders should not reveal confidential details. Two elders should alert the family head of a minor of the need for caution. Depending on the number of elders, it may not be necessary for the same two elders to inform all family heads. This should not be a group meeting. Two elders should meet with each family head. The elders should adhere closely to the following wording: “The elders want to assist you to care for your Scriptural responsibility to protect your children. (Deut. 6:6, 7; Eph. 6:4) Thus, please review with your children the information found on pages 170-171 in the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. With that counsel in mind, we encourage you to ensure that your child is never alone with [Name of Person]. (Prov. 22:3) Other parents of minor children who are in the congregation are receiving this same information by means of a visit from the elders. Thus, there should be no need for you to discuss this matter outside of your immediate family. Please remember that [Name of Person] should be treated in a Christian manner.” The elders should be alert to inform the family head of any new family in the congregation if the family has minor children.

22. **Informing a Marriage Mate or Fiancée:** An individual who is guilty of child sexual abuse has a **responsibility to share this critical information with his mate or fiancée** if he has not already done so. The same would apply to an individual who is courting. (Heb. 13:18; *fy* p. 25) If she is the parent or guardian of a minor child, the elders should inform her as directed in [paragraphs 20](#) and [21](#).

APPROPRIATE CAUTIONS

23. While the elders do not monitor the actions of individuals outside of congregation activities, two elders should kindly but frankly talk to an individual who has branch-imposed restrictions. The individual should be **strongly cautioned to avoid compromising situations** with children. For example, he may be helped to see the practical wisdom of (1) refraining from displays of affection for children, such as hugging or holding them on his lap; (2) never being alone with a child (other than his own); (3) not allowing children to spend the night in his home; and (4) not cultivating friendships with children, even refraining from communicating with a child electronically, such as by email or text message. Thus no one would have a basis to misconstrue his actions.

IF AN INDIVIDUAL DOES NOT ADHERE TO BRANCH-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS

24. All congregation elders should be advised to be vigilant in monitoring the individual's conduct at the Kingdom Hall, in the field ministry, and during any other congregation activities. The body of elders should be informed that if the individual does not comply with branch-imposed restrictions, two elders should immediately call the Service Department, since there may be a Scriptural basis to deal with him judicially.

25. When two elders telephone the Service Department because an individual is not adhering to branch-imposed restrictions, the Service Desk should obtain the facts by asking such questions as the following: What is the individual doing that is raising concern? How often has he been counseled? What is his attitude? If the individual displays a defiant attitude and has failed to respond positively to repeated counsel regarding his association with minors, judicial action may be warranted on the basis of "brazen conduct."—Gal. 5:19; 2 Pet. 2:7, 10-12.

WHETHER TO REMOVE BRANCH-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS

26. If the body of elders recommends that branch-imposed restrictions be removed, the Service Desk should first gather the facts, considering the same factors that were reviewed when restrictions were imposed. What has changed since restrictions were first imposed? How much time has passed since the wrongdoing occurred? Has it been decades? Was there one victim or multiple victims? Was it a single incident, or was it repeated? What were the circumstances? What was his age and the age of the victim at the time? Is there no longer a cry of complaint about him? How is this evident? Was he prosecuted by the secular authorities? If his name appeared on a public list of sex offenders, has his name been removed from the list? How do the community and the secular authorities view him now? How do the victim and the victim's relatives view him now? How do those in the congregation view him? (There is no need for elders to conduct interviews to determine what the current feeling is toward the individual. Doing so might bring up painful memories and cause further harm. Rather, from their own observation, the elders are to describe the current relationship between the victim and the individual, if possible.) What convinces the body of elders that the accused has rejected his former course and does not pose a danger to minors? Has he stated explicitly to the elders that he has not abused any other minors? Has he been cooperative with the restrictions that have been imposed on him? Has he established a convincing record of righteous conduct that merits trust? Even if decades have passed since the wrongdoing, he would not qualify for any privileges (including minor privileges) if his receiving such would be offensive to his victim, to the victim's relatives, or to others who know of the wrongdoing.

27. If decades have passed since the wrongdoing, there is no outcry from the victim, the victim's relatives, or from others who know of the wrongdoing, and the individual continues to manifest a good attitude and qualifies in every other way, a letter approved by the Service Department oversight may be sent confirming that minor privileges may be extended gradually. This will allow the elders to see more clearly how the congregation and perhaps the community view him. He would not qualify for any privileges (including minor privileges) if his receiving such is offensive to his victim, to the victim's relatives, or to others who know of the wrongdoing.

WHEN A PERSON WITH BRANCH-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS MOVES TO ANOTHER CONGREGATION

28. When two elders call the Legal Department to report that a person who is under branch-imposed restrictions has *moved to another congregation*, the Legal Department will provide

legal advice and then transfer the call to the Service Department. The Service Desk should inform the elders what material needs to accompany their letter of introduction to the new body of elders. This material should include the person's *Congregation's Publisher Records* (S-21), the letter from the branch office outlining the branch-imposed restrictions, and any record of congregation judicial action taken for child sexual abuse. The letter of introduction should include the statement: "[Name of Person] is under branch-imposed restrictions. If you have not done so already, two elders should call the Legal Department for advice regarding this individual as soon as you receive this letter." **No copies of any correspondence or records about the person (electronic or hard copy) should be retained in the previous congregation's file.**

29. The elders should take care that confidential correspondence between congregations is sent securely. If the new congregation is *within the branch territory*, the elders should be instructed to send the letter of introduction and other material to the new body of elders within one week. The letter addressed to the body of elders should be sent only to the jw.org email addresses of the coordinator of the body of elders and the secretary. The Service Desk should provide the elders with these addresses. Confidential information should not be sent using outside email providers. The elders should not send to the branch office a copy of the letter of introduction or any other material. If the new congregation is *outside the branch territory*, see [paragraph 34](#).

30. When the elders call the Legal Department to report that a person under branch-imposed restrictions has *moved into the congregation*, the Legal Department will provide legal advice and then transfer the call to the Service Department. The Service Desk should then send a new letter addressed to the new body of elders conveying the branch-imposed restrictions. (See [paragraph 10](#).) The letter should include the direction outlined in [paragraph 21](#) about informing parents of minor children. Once the new body of elders receives this letter from the branch office, they should destroy the letter addressed to the previous body of elders.

WHEN AN ACCUSED INDIVIDUAL NOT UNDER BRANCH-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS MOVES TO ANOTHER CONGREGATION

31. In some cases, an individual may have been accused of child sexual abuse but the charge was not Scripturally established and the branch office did not impose restrictions. (See [paragraph 12](#).) When two elders call the Legal Department to report that such a person has *moved out of the congregation*, the Legal Department will provide legal advice and then transfer the call to the Service Department. The Service Desk will then assist the elders in determining whether any information regarding the accusation should be sent to the new congregation. The following factors should be considered: How long has it been since the accusation was made? Did the secular authorities investigate the accusation? If so, what was their finding? Has anything changed since the original accusation was investigated? A consideration of these and other factors relevant to the case will help the Service Department determine what, if any, information regarding the uncorroborated accusation should be sent to the new congregation. If in the collective judgment of the elders and the Service Department there is reason to believe that the individual poses a threat to children, the new body of elders should be informed of the accusation. (See [paragraphs 9-12](#).) If the new congregation is *outside the branch territory*, see [paragraph 34](#).

DISFELLOWSHIPED AND DISASSOCIATED INDIVIDUALS

32. When two elders call the Legal Department to report that a disfellowshipped or disassociated person who is attending meetings and who engaged in or has been accused of child

sexual abuse is *moving to another congregation's territory*, the Legal Department will provide legal advice and then transfer the call to the Service Department. (*sfl* chap. 14 par. 26) The Service Desk should direct the two elders to communicate orally about the matter with two elders from the new congregation within one week. This will help the elders of the new congregation to be vigilant if the disfellowshipped or disassociated person attends Christian meetings. The elders should not send any information in writing to the new congregation. In all cases, the congregation where the disfellowshipping or disassociation occurred will retain the confidential file until the person is reinstated. After reinstatement, the records should be forwarded to the person's present congregation.—*sfl* chap. 22 par. 9.

33. When the elders call the Legal Department to report that a disfellowshipped or disassociated person who is attending meetings and who engaged in or was accused of child sexual abuse has *moved into the congregation*, the Legal Department will provide legal advice and then transfer the call to the Service Department. The Service Desk will confirm whether the elders in the new congregation have communicated orally with two elders from the previous congregation.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER BRANCH OFFICES

34. If the individual has moved to another congregation *outside the branch territory*, the elders should be instructed to send the letter of introduction and any other material to the local Service Department within one week. The Service Department should immediately forward to the new branch office (1) the letter of introduction and (2) the Service Department's brief summary of the case including any branch-imposed restrictions. No records should be kept by the previous congregation or branch office. The Service Department of the new branch should immediately generate a letter of direction, such as branch-imposed restrictions, and forward the letter of introduction to the new body of elders. (See [paragraph 10](#).) The same procedure should be followed when a disfellowshipped or disassociated person who has moved to a congregation in another branch territory requests reinstatement. As an exception, if an individual lives in another branch territory part-time, the involved congregations should have a letter of direction from their respective branch offices and each Service Department should have a brief summary of the case.

APPENDIX A—MEETING WITH A MATURE MINOR WHO IS A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Generally, elders should be able to obtain necessary information from the parents. Thus, there is usually no need for the elders to speak with a minor who is a *victim* of child sexual abuse. Has the accused already confessed to the wrongdoing? Is there more than one alleged victim and thus already sufficient evidence? In such cases, there is no need to meet with the minor.—*sfl* chap. 12 pars. 40-42; chap. 14 par. 18.

2. If the elders believe there is an exceptional need to speak with a *mature* minor who is a *victim* of child sexual abuse, the Service Desk should consider the following factors with the elders: (1) What would be the purpose of such a meeting? (2) Is the minor baptized? (3) Does the minor wish to speak with the elders? (4) How do the parents view the accusation? (5) Are the parents agreeable to such a meeting? If, after considering these and other relevant factors, the Service Desk agrees there is an exceptional need to speak with the mature minor, the meeting should include two elders and another adult publisher in the congregation, preferably the parent(s). If one of the parents is the accused, the accused parent would not be involved. If neither parent can be present, then another adult publisher in the congregation who is a confidant of the victim should be included.

3. In all cases where it is determined that there is a need for two elders to speak with a minor and another adult publisher in the congregation, the elders should be reminded of the following:

- (1) Seek to imitate Jesus' tenderness.—*w15 2/15* pp. 7-9 pars. 11-17.
- (2) Be kind and unhurried.—Ps. 34:18; 1 Thess. 5:14.
- (3) Invite the minor to explain what happened. Listen without interrupting.—Isa. 32:2; Jas. 1:19; *w05 6/1* p. 32.
- (4) Avoid inadvertently intimidating the minor.—John 15:15; 1 Pet. 5:3.
- (5) If at any time the parents, the minor, or the minor's confidant determine that the meeting should conclude, be respectful of their wishes.—Phil. 4:5.

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