

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER
NUMBER 82)

18 January 2021

Superintendent's Statement on the Protection of Minors

Abuse of minors (individuals under 18 years of age) by trusted teachers, coaches and other adults is a crime. The typical reaction is sadness for the children, and for their guardians is anger that anyone could commit such a crime. Regrettably, predators can be anywhere; individuals who prey on minors do not have a specific profile. Throughout the year, minors visit VMI to participate in Admissions Open Houses, attend summer camps, visit museums, and participate in other activities. In addition, every year new cadets who are under the age of 18 matriculate at VMI. All of us at the Institute must be vigilant to recognize any situation that may constitute the abuse of a minor.

Virginia Code § 63.2-1509 (A)(18) requires any employee of an institution of higher education to report immediately the suspected abuse or neglect of a minor. Failure to report as soon as possible, but in any case not longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect an offense of child abuse or neglect, carries a fine of not more than \$500 for the first failure and not less than \$1,000 for subsequent failures. In certain cases of sexual assault, knowing or intentional failure to report is a Class I Misdemeanor. In accordance with General Order 16, sexual assault includes any non-consensual contact of a sexual nature, including when the victim is unable to consent due to incapacity. Because capacity of minors to consent to sexual contact cannot be assumed, employees must report any known contact of a sexual nature by anyone with a minor.

Individuals employed by VMI who receive a report of or suspect abuse of a minor must report it to the Department of Social Services (toll-free child abuse and neglect 24-hour hotline) at 1-800-552-7096. The Department of Social Services will notify local law enforcement, including the VMI Police, if the suspected abuse occurred on Post. VMI employees are additionally required to notify the VMI Police Department directly if the incident occurred on Post. In accordance with Va. Code § 23.1-806, VMI employees who gain information regarding an incident of sexual assault of a minor must also report it to the Inspector General/Title IX Coordinator.

VMI employees should not undertake any investigation of allegations of abuse or neglect before reporting them or undertake any determination of a minor's capacity to consent to contact or activity of a sexual nature. Any individual who makes a report shall cooperate with any investigation by the Department of Social Services and law enforcement.

Each one of us at VMI, whether an employee or cadet, is in a position of trust. We must safeguard all individuals, but particularly minors, on the VMI Post and on all property under VMI control (Stonewall Jackson House, New Market Battlefield, McKethan Training Area, Lackey Park). Employees who work with cadets and others who are minors must remember a lapse in judgment or inattention to responsibilities can have serious consequences. We must not let this happen at VMI.

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We will be proactive with training our employees and cadets and we will constantly strive to strengthen our policies, procedures, and protocols.

Cedric T. Wins
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Interim Superintendent

DIST: E, Cadets
OPR: FAS