

TESTIGOS CRISTIANOS DE JEHOVÁ

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LB October 3, 2016

TO THE BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Minors

Dear Brothers:

In recent years we have heard of many cases of abuse of minors, perpetrated even by ministers of various religious confessions. Consequently, the authorities are taking ever more strict precautions to assure the protection of minors.

Recently the “Central Registry of Sexual Delinquents” (*Registro Central de Delincuentes Sexuales - Real Decreto 1110/2015, de 11 de diciembre-*) has been set up, which will include persons who have been convicted of offenses of abuse of minors. Relative to the creation of this Registry, the law requires that all persons whose activity, whether professional or not, “involves habitual contact with minors” establish that they have no criminal record for abuse of minors. This can be done by obtaining certification from the Central Registry of Sexual Delinquents.

In what ways might this affect our congregation activities? In contrast with other religious confessions, we have no religious instruction classes for children, nor are any activities organized exclusively for children, such as summer camp, or similar. In fact, “the faithful and discrete slave” recommends that parents be the ones who study weekly with their children, that they sit together with them at meetings and that they accompany them in the preaching work. Therefore, it is not necessary that the elders obtain favorable certification from the Central Registry of Sexual Delinquents to continue performing their duties in the congregation.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, situations may arise in which an elder, or another brother or sister assigned by the elders, may have frequent contact with a minor. For example, an adult may conduct a Bible study with a minor that is not a son or daughter, or they may preach together regularly or with certain frequency. In view of the increasing sensitivity of this matter, it would be appropriate for the elders to take some precautionary steps in such situations:

- If an elder conducts a Bible study with a minor, or counsel must be given or a personal problem treated with a minor, this should be done in plain sight of other persons. Or the elder should be accompanied by another adult, preferably one of the parents.
- If there are other brothers that for theocratic reasons have frequent contact with minors that are not family members, please suggest that they follow this policy.

On the other hand, although the law in Spain considers that one not yet 18 years old is a minor, these preventive measures could possibly not be required in the case of those mature minors approaching legal age. Being guided by the above recommendations will avoid unfounded accusations and will protect the reputation of our organization.

Receive an expression of our brotherly love, as along with you we continue making every effort to be of “the sort who have faith for the preserving of our lives”. Hebrews 10:39.

Your brothers,

Testigos Cristianos de Jehová

c. circuit overseers