

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
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Superintendent's Statement on the Protection of Minors

Abuse of minors (individuals under 18 years of age) while under the care of 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, summer camps, museums, and other activities. Their parents and guardians have entrusted VMI with their safety and 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 requires any employee of an institution of higher education to report within 24 hours the suspected abuse of a minor. Failure to report 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.

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. VMI employees are additionally required to notify the VMI Police Department directly if the incident occurred on Post. VMI employees should not undertake any investigation of the allegations before reporting them to Department of Social Services.

Each one of us at VMI, whether an employee or cadet, is in a position of trust. We must safeguard all visitors, 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 minors must remember a lapse in judgment or inattention to responsibilities can have serious consequences. Some of the nation's most trusted institutions have been tainted with serious cases of the abuse of minors – we must not let this happen at VMI.

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

J.H. Binford Peay, III
General, U.S. Army (Retired)
Superintendent

DIST: E, Cadets
OPR: FAS