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# MINORS ON CAMPUS



Mississippi University  
for Women

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# **Minors on Campus Training**

Protecting minors and vulnerable adults through safe programs, supervision, and reporting.

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# Purpose of This Training

- **Explain mandated reporting responsibilities**
- Help create safe and supportive programs
- Establish University supervision standards
- Help prevent unsafe situations before harm occurs

**Mandated Reporting  
protects children from  
abuse.**

**University Reporting  
protects programs  
from becoming  
unsafe.**

**This training is an overview and does not replace the requirement to read and follow the full Minors on Campus Policy.**

# Required Expectations

**YOU ARE REQUIRED TO READ THE FULL POLICY.**

- Read the full policy.
- Complete the acknowledgment and training quiz.
- Follow all program-specific procedures and expectations.
- Complete required background checks and minors documentation.

# Mandated Reporting

# What Is Mandated Reporting?

- **Mandated reporting is required by Mississippi law.**
- This includes reporting suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or serious safety concerns.
- This is separate from University supervision standards.

# **Minor and Vulnerable Adult Definitions *for Mandated Reporting Purposes***

## **Minor**

- Any person under the age of 18.
- Includes children participating in camps, programs, activities, events, dual enrollment, or campus visits.

## **Vulnerable Adult**

- Any person 18 years of age or older who is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation due to physical or mental impairment, disability, illness, advanced age, or similar circumstances.

# Duty to Report

All University employees and Authorized Adults are required to immediately report any known or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a minor or vulnerable adult in accordance with Mississippi law, including Mississippi Code Annotated § 43-21-353 and § 43-47-7, and to take the following steps to ensure proper reporting.



# Duty to Report

- **Inform University Police (662-241-7777) or another appropriate law enforcement agency (911). If the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation presents an imminent danger, contact should occur immediately.**
- Report to the appropriate state agency:
  - For minors: Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS) Abuse Hotline at 800-222-8000 or online reporting
  - For vulnerable adults: Mississippi Department of Human Services Adult Protective Services at 844-437-6282 or online reporting;
- Inform the Center for Education Support (CES) at 662-241-6088 or [supervisionofminors@muw.edu](mailto:supervisionofminors@muw.edu).

# Duty to Report

Failure to comply with the reporting requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, removal from participation in University programs or activities, and potential criminal penalties pursuant to Mississippi law and University policy, including fines up to \$5,000, imprisonment up to one year, or both.



# **What falls under mandated reporting?**

**Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation,  
Human Trafficking**

# What are some indicators of abuse?

**Emotional and verbal abuse** is anything said or done that is hurtful or threatening to a child and is the most challenging form of maltreatment to identify. Examples include:

- Name-calling (“You’re stupid”)
- Belittling (“I wish you were never born”)
- Destroying child’s possessions or pets
- Threatens to harm child or people they care about (“I’m going to choke you” or “I’ll break your arm”)
- Locking a child in a closet or box
- Rejecting a child
- Isolating a child

# What are some indicators of abuse?

**Sexual abuse** is any inappropriate touching by a friend, family member, anyone having ongoing contact, and/or a stranger. Examples include:

- Touching a child's genital area
- Any penetration of a child
- Allowing a child to view or participate in pornography
- Prostitution, selling your child for money, drugs, etc.
- Forcing a child to perform oral sex acts
- Masturbating in front of a child
- Having sex in front of a child

# What are some indicators of abuse?

**Physical abuse** is any contact that results in bodily harm, such as bruising, abrasions, broken bones, internal injuries, burning, missing teeth, and skeletal injuries. Examples include:

- Hitting or slapping a child with an extension cord, hands, belts, fists, broom handles, brushes, etc.
- Putting child into hot water
- Cutting the child with a knife or any other sharp object
- Shaking or twisting arms or legs or yanking a child by the arm
- Putting tape over a child's mouth
- Tying a child up with rope or cord
- Throwing a child across a room or down the stairs

# What are some indicators of abuse?

**Neglect** means not meeting the basic needs of the child and is the most common form of maltreatment:

- Medical – not giving a child life-sustaining medicines, over-medicating, and not obtaining special treatment devices deemed necessary by a physician
- Supervision – leaving child/children unattended and leaving child/children in the care of other children too young to protect them (depending upon the maturity of the child)
- Clothing and Hygiene – dressing children inadequately for weather and persistent skin disorders resulting from improper hygiene
- Nutrition – lack of sufficient quantity or quality of food, letting a child consistently complain of hunger, and allowing the child to rummage for food
- Shelter – having structurally unsafe housing, inadequate heating, and unsanitary housing conditions

Resource: Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS)  
Child Abuse Prevention Resources  
<https://www.mdcps.ms.gov/programs/child-abuse-prevention>

# Safety Concerns That Must Be Reported

- **Physical Abuse:** Unexplained injuries, excessive discipline, assault
- **Sexual Abuse or Sexual Exploitation:** Inappropriate touching, sexual conversations, pornography, exploitation, grooming
- **Neglect:** Inadequate supervision, lack of food, shelter, medical care, abandonment
- **Emotional Abuse:** Threats, humiliation, intimidation, degrading treatment
- **Human Trafficking or Exploitation:** Controlling behavior, isolation, unexplained gifts, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, inability to leave a situation
- **Safety Concerns:** Serious injuries, dangerous living conditions, substance use involving minors, or any situation where a minor or vulnerable adult may be at risk

**You do not have to determine whether abuse occurred. If you have reasonable cause to suspect a minor or vulnerable adult is unsafe, report it immediately.**

# If Abuse is Disclosed

- DO: Listen, stay calm, report concerns immediately. Make notes or email yourself with what you remember.
- DO NOT: Investigate, promise secrecy, or ask leading questions.
- You do not need to be certain abuse occurred, only have reasonable cause to suspect it.

# What will they ask?

- Name, approximate age, race, and gender of the child.
- The child's home address, where they currently are, and school information.
- Names and addresses of the parents, guardians, or individuals responsible for the child's care.
- What specifically happened?
- If the child is injured, you will be asked about the extent of the injury, including location and type (bruises, burns, fractures).
- "How, When, and Where"
- The name of the alleged offender and their relationship to the child.
- Is the child in immediate danger?
- Names of any other people who may have witnessed the abuse or have information.
- Other adults or children living in the home.
- They will ask for your name, phone number, and address. While reports can be made anonymously, providing this information helps investigators if they need clarification.
- Your relationship to the child (e.g., teacher, neighbor, family member).
- If you report in good faith, you are immune from civil or criminal liability.
- Your identity is protected by law and will not be disclosed except to law enforcement or by court order.

# Reporting Procedures

- **Make sure they are safe first!**
- **ALWAYS contact emergency services if immediate danger exists.**
- Follow Mississippi mandated reporting procedures.
- Notify appropriate University leadership and the Program Director.
- Document concerns according to program procedures.

# Reporting Authorities



<https://www.mdcp.ms.gov/programs/child-abuse-prevention>



<https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/aging/adult-protective-services/>

# **University Standards for Safe Programming**

# University Supervision Standards

- Prevent unsafe situations before harm occurs.
- Maintain appropriate supervision and accountability.
- Create consistent expectations for staff and volunteers.
- Protect minors, vulnerable adults, and Authorized Adults.
- Reduce opportunities for misconduct, boundary violations, or false accusations.
- Promote safe, professional, and respectful program environments.
- Support compliance with University policy and Mississippi law.

# University Supervision Standards

- ***ALL events with minor children must be registered through Minors on Campus.***
- Some events and programs are exempt from further policies because supervision is already in place.
- Other events are required to be a Registered Covered Program and must follow compliance requirements.

# Why Some Activities Are Exempt

**The W regularly welcomes minors to campus through public events, performances, academic visits, festivals, competitions, family activities, and other community events. In many of these situations, supervision remains the responsibility of the parent, guardian, caregiver, school group, or sponsoring organization rather than the University.**

Exempt Programs may include:

- Public campus events open to all ages
- Activities where parents or guardians remain present and are responsible for supervision.
- Accredited school groups that provide their own supervision and policies
- Athletic competitions without significant additional programming
- Programs already regulated by separate licensing or oversight agencies

# Registered Covered Programs

**Programs involving minors where The W or the sponsoring organization has direct supervision responsibility.**

**These programs must complete University compliance requirements, including:**

- Program registration
- Training and acknowledgements
- Background checks
- Supervision standards
- Emergency procedures
- Required participant documentation and records

# Program Accountability

- **EVERY PROGRAM WITH MINORS HAS A REGISTERED PROGRAM DIRECTOR. We also have a campus sponsor.**
- Program Directors are responsible for emergency and crisis procedures, participant records, medical and allergy information, accommodations, supervision plans, and staff preparation.
- Programs must maintain appropriate staffing, supervision, and safety practices at all times.
- Authorized Adults must complete required training, acknowledgments, and background check requirements before working with participants.
- Programs must clearly communicate expectations, safety procedures, and conduct standards before activities begin.
- Incidents, injuries, behavioral concerns, and policy violations must be documented and reported appropriately internally, to parents, and to other agencies as needed.

# Who Is an Authorized Adult?

An Authorized Adult is any individual approved to work with, supervise, instruct, transport, coach, mentor, house, or otherwise interact with minors as part of a University-sponsored activity.

- Faculty and Staff
- Student employees
- Resident Assistants or Program Assistants
- Graduate assistants
- Volunteers
- Coaches
- Camp counselors
- Contractors
- Guest instructors or speakers
- Other individuals designated by the University
- Important Reminder: If you interact with minors as part of your University role or program responsibilities, these standards apply to you.

# Authorized Adult Responsibilities

- Maintain appropriate supervision and professional boundaries at all times.
- Follow all University safety standards, program rules, and reporting requirements.
- Immediately report known or suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or safety concerns.
- Avoid prohibited conduct, including one-on-one contact in non-public areas and private communication with participants.
- Complete all required training, acknowledgements, and background check requirements before working with participants.
- Help create a safe, respectful, and accountable environment for all participants.

# One-on-One Contact and Visibility

- Avoid isolated one-on-one situations.
- Meet in visible locations with open sight lines.
- Avoid one-on-one digital contact.  
**(Including email and social media.)**
- Avoid private transportation situations whenever possible.
- Maintain accountability and supervision.

# Electronic Communication Expectations

- Use approved communication methods.
- Do not engage in private texting, messaging, or unofficial communication with participants.
- Do not create personal social media relationships with participants. (Even after camp, remember they are minors!)
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Copy another adult (program staff or a parent/guardian) on all communications.

# Digital Safety and Online Conduct

- Cyberbullying, exclusion, harassment, and inappropriate online behavior can occur quickly online.
- Screenshots, recordings, and disappearing messages can create safety and privacy concerns.
- Online behavior connected to a program should be addressed just like in-person behavior.
- Report digital threats, bullying, harassment, or boundary concerns to the Program Director.

# Digital Professionalism

- Protect participant privacy and confidentiality.
- Do not discuss participants or program matters on social media or in private group chats.
- Assume anything posted online may become public.
- Authorized Adults should exercise professional judgment in their online presence and digital interactions.
- Professional and ethical responsibilities continue after a program ends.

# Privacy and Overnight Expectations

- Respect privacy in bathrooms, showers, and changing areas.
- Authorized Adults and minors should have separate sleeping and bathroom accommodations unless immediate family.
- Follow overnight supervision and curfew procedures.

# Watch for Grooming and Boundary Violations

- Avoid favoritism, excessive attention, or gift giving.
- Avoid wrestling, tickling, roughhousing, or inappropriate touching.
- Do not ask participants to keep secrets.
- Maintain professional interactions at all times.
- Be alert to attempts to isolate participants from groups or supervision.
- Report concerning behavior, boundary violations, or suspected grooming immediately.

# Boundary Violations are not Always Physical

## Warning signs may include:

- Repeatedly focusing attention on one participant
- Asking participants about romantic or sexual topics
- Encouraging inappropriate personal disclosures
- Creating "inside jokes" with specific participants
- Using authority to pressure participation in uncomfortable discussions
- Dismissing concerns when participants express discomfort
- Treating participants differently based on personal preferences
- Report concerns even when physical contact has not occurred.

# Why Grooming Matters

Most abuse investigations do not begin with physical contact. They often begin with:

- Boundary violations
- Favoritism
- Private communication
- Inappropriate conversations
- Participant discomfort
- Patterns of targeting specific participants
- When adults repeatedly test boundaries, the concern is not a single incident. The concern is the pattern.

**If you see a pattern, say something.**

# Safe Environments

## Activities, conversations, demonstrations, and examples should:

- Support the educational, athletic, or program purpose
- Be age-appropriate
- Respect participant dignity
- Avoid unnecessary embarrassment or discomfort
- Avoid targeting select participants
- Participation in personal disclosures should always be voluntary.

# Emotionally Safe Environments

**Participants should feel safe to ask questions, make mistakes, disagree respectfully, seek help, report concerns**

Behavior that undermines emotional safety includes:

- Mocking or belittling participants
- Persistent targeting of a participant
- Excessive criticism unrelated to performance
- Manipulation, intimidation, or coercion
- Creating environments where participants fear embarrassment or retaliation
- Repeatedly singling out a participant, even under the guise of humor or classroom discussion.

# Recognizing When to Step Away

**Authorized Adults should recognize when additional support, supervision, or a different adult may be needed.**

- A participant repeatedly seeks personal attention or emotional support beyond your role.
- You find yourself becoming overly invested in a specific participant.
- A participant develops an inappropriate attachment or dependency.
- A conflict becomes personal, emotional, or difficult to manage objectively.
- You feel frustrated, overwhelmed, angry, or unable to respond professionally.
- A participant's needs exceed your training, authority, or expertise.

**Remember: Being a trusted adult does not mean handling every situation alone. Knowing when to seek help, involve others, or step away is a sign of professionalism, not failure.**

**Sensitive concerns should be shared with supervisors and designated leadership, not peers, student leaders, or staff without a need to know.**

# Professional Judgment

**Authorized Adults are expected to exercise sound professional judgment when selecting instructional materials, activities, discussions, guest speakers, videos, and professional boundaries involving minors.**

- **Age appropriate**
- **Educationally relevant**
- **Consider the age, maturity, and developmental level of participants.**
- **Not designed to provoke, embarrass, shock, or test boundaries**
- **Avoid unnecessary sexual content**
- **Avoid compelling personal disclosures**

# Professional Judgment Matters

**Not every concern involves abuse. Some behaviors may still be inappropriate, unprofessional, or harmful even when they do not meet the legal definition of abuse.**

**If a reasonable parent, supervisor, or colleague would question the appropriateness of a comment, activity, discussion, or interaction, **seek guidance immediately.****

# When in doubt:

- **Stop the activity**
- **Consult a supervisor**
- **Document concerns (email trail)**
- **Report boundary issues promptly**

This could apply to:

- A teacher of minors discussing inappropriate sexual topics
- A coach humiliating athletes
- A camp counselor creating favorites
- A theater director asking students to disclose personal trauma
- A staff member repeatedly targeting one participant

# What other type of items should I report?

- Staff should immediately notify a supervisor and document any statement, behavior, communication, or item that suggests a risk to the **safety of the participant or others.**
- **This policy primarily addresses adult risks, but safety to themselves is another important part of supervision.**

# **If It Threatens Safety, Report It**

## **Report immediately if a participant:**

- Threatens to hurt themselves
- Threatens to hurt someone else
- Mentions weapons or threatening dialogue
- Reports abuse or neglect
- Appears to be in a mental health crisis
- Possesses drugs, alcohol, or dangerous items
- Creates or participates in harmful online activity targeting others

# Reporting Expectations

- Call campus police or 911 if danger exists.
- Document observable facts, direct quotes, dates, times, and witnesses rather than opinions or conclusions.
- You should immediately report to your supervisor within your program.
- **Your program should always review reporting expectations as part of training. Program Directors are responsible for addressing concerns brought forward by participants, staff, volunteers, or parents.**
- If direction or further escalation is needed, contact the Center for Education Support director.

# **Be curious.**

## **But do NOT investigate.**

- Ask open ended questions when appropriate.
- Validate the situation.
- Be reflective when you listen to demonstrate empathy and confirm understanding.
- Always repeat a summary to show understanding.
- Never promise confidentiality or privacy.

**Protecting participants  
takes priority over  
protecting a program,  
activity, or colleague.**

# Ask Yourself One Question

*Do I think a child or vulnerable adult may be abused, neglected, exploited, or trafficked?*

## **YES** → **This is Mandated Reporting.**

- Call law enforcement if needed.
- Report to CPS/APS.
- Notify the Program Director and CES.
- Then follow University procedures.

## **NO** → **Is this a violation of University policy or a safety concern?**

- Report to the Program Director.
- Report to CES if appropriate.
- Document the incident.

# Next Steps

- Read the full policy.
- Complete the acknowledgment and training quiz.
- Follow all program-specific procedures and expectations.

**Thank you for helping  
us keep our campus safe!**

