

Supervision of Minors on Campus

Mississippi University for Women is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of minors who are entrusted to our care or visit our campus. The purpose of this policy is to describe requirements placed on administrators, faculty, staff, students, volunteers and others working with minors and to ensure their protection.

MUW hosts a wide variety of university sponsored or sanctioned activities for non-enrolled minors such as camps, conferences and other educational activities. These activities are located on-campus and off-campus under University supervision. In addition, minor children or relatives of employees not involved in university sponsored/sanctioned activities are often visitors in the workplace. It is imperative that non-enrolled minors on campus be overseen in a fashion that is appropriate and intended to keep them healthy and safe while visiting the university. This policy is intended to provide guidance for university personnel/departments involved in university sponsored/sanctioned activities.

Programs and activities within the scope of this Policy: Programs operated by university or third party entities, programs taking place on campus and programs under the direction and authority of the university at locations off campus. This policy applies to such programs and activities whether they are limited to daily activities or involve housing of minors in residence halls. Exceptions to this policy include: (1) undergraduate and graduate programs in which minors are enrolled for academic credit; (2) events on campus which are open to the general public and which minors attend at the sole discretion of their parents or guardians; (3) campus tours or visits by minors considered to be prospective students; and (4) other programs as may be designated from time to time by the appropriate university official in advance and in writing as exempted from this policy.

Departmental leadership is responsible for ensuring their programs and activities involving minors are compliant with this policy. Any questions regarding clarification of this policy should be directed to University Counsel and the Office of Outreach and Innovation.

Minors on Campus – Duty to Report

All University employees and volunteers are required to immediately report any known or suspected child abuse and to take the following steps to ensure proper reporting:

1. Inform University Police (662-241-7777) or other appropriate law enforcement agency (911), and if the suspected assault or abuse presents an imminent danger to a minor, contact should occur immediately; and
2. Report the activity to the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) by calling the abuse hotline (800-222-8000) and provide a written report to MDHS notifying who is believed to be involved and what was observed; and
3. Inform the Director of Outreach and Innovation (662-241-6101).

Failure to comply with the reporting requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Additionally, anyone who fails to notify the Department of Human Services may be subject to criminal penalties pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated §43-21-353.

Definitions

Adult: Any person 18 years of age or older.

Authorized Adult and/or Program Staff: Individuals, paid or unpaid, 18 years or older, who interact with, supervise, chaperone, or otherwise oversee minors in program activities. This includes but is not limited to faculty, staff, volunteers, graduate and undergraduate students, interns, employees of temporary employment agencies, and independent contractors/consultants. The Authorized Adult's role may include positions as counselors, coaches, chaperones, instructors, etc. For purpose of this policy, the term "Program Staff" is also assigned this definition. This does not include temporary guest speakers, presenters and other individuals who have no direct contact with program participants other than short term activities supervised by program staff.

Minor: Any person under the age of 18 who is not enrolled at the University. Students who are "dually enrolled" in university programs while also enrolled in elementary, middle and/or high school are not included in this policy unless such enrollment includes overnight housing in University facilities. Minor is also referred to as a "participant" in this policy.

One-on-One Contact: Personal, unsupervised interaction between any authorized adult and a minor without at least one other authorized adult, parent or legal guardian present. One-on-One contact includes transportation of a minor by an agent or employee of the University in the course and scope of performing university duties or as part of a program. One-on-one contact also includes electronic communication, such as social media, email and texting.

Covered Program: Programs and/or group activities designed for, marketed for, and which include minors as participants offered by the University and by non-University groups using the University's facilities. Programs do not include:

- University undergraduate or graduate academic programs in which the only Minors participating are students enrolled at the University or another institution of higher education
- University events (e.g., fairs, festivals, artistic events) that are open to the general public and for people of all age groups
- Activities that require a parent or guardian to be present at all times
- On-campus events sponsored by an accredited educational institution which has its own policies to supervise and protect minors
- Athletic competitions which involve no significant, substantive programming beyond the competition itself

Program Director: The individual employed by the Sponsoring Unit responsible for the administration of any University-sponsored or University-affiliated Program

Sponsoring Unit: The academic or administrative unit of the university which offers a program or gives approval for housing or use of facilities.

Non-Public Area: Places that are not common areas, cannot be observed from common areas, and which are not monitored by video surveillance equipment approved by the University Police Department. For purposes of this definition, a "common area" is an area where one would normally

anticipate others are present but only during business hours or such times as one would reasonably anticipate others would be present.

One-on-One Contact Prohibited

No Authorized Adult or Program Staff shall have one-on-one contact with minors in a non-public area. Therefore, other than in cases outlined as follows, all activities involving minors must be supervised by at least two Authorized Adults or by a parent or legal guardian of the participants. In the case of electronic communications, Authorized Adults/Program Staff must not have any direct electronic communications with minors without another Authorized Adult, parent, legal guardian being included in the communication.

Factors to be considered in determining requirements for supervision are: 1) the number, age, and gender of participants; 2) the activities involved; 3) type of housing, if applicable; and 4) age, gender, and experience of Authorized Adults.

It is acceptable for an individual Program Staff member to provide program services to a group of participants, i.e., classroom instruction or outdoor activities, if the activity is conducted in an open or public area where the group is visible to others outside the group at all times. This includes classroom or meeting activities where open doors or windows allow for a clear line of sight. Likewise, it is acceptable for an individual Program Staff member to interact with an individual minor as long as the interaction occurs in an open or public area (common area), or in non-public settings that are visible from common areas during normal business hours or such other times one would reasonably anticipate others would be present. This includes meetings in private offices during normal business hours where open doors or windows allow for a clear line of sight from the common area.

Requirements for Programs with Minors

Covered Programs are required to:

1. Register the program with the Office of Outreach and Innovation
The registration process includes listing all coordinators, employees, and volunteers who will be involved in the program(s).
2. Complete criminal background checks for each Authorized Adult
A comprehensive background investigation is an important step in providing a safe, secure and productive work and educational environment for employees, students, visitors, and other members of the university community. All Authorized Adults who work with a Covered Program are required to submit to a criminal background check and must receive clearance to participate before they may care for, supervise, work with, or otherwise come into contact with Minors who participate in the Covered Program. The criminal background check will be administered under the direction of Human Resources, for University employees, or the Office of Outreach and Innovation. Payment of the background check for non-University employees is the responsibility of the individual unless specifically authorized for processing and/or payment by the Sponsoring Unit.
3. Complete the online Child Abuse Prevention course
A Covered Program shall require all of its employees and volunteers to follow all University policies and to be trained on appropriate conduct with or around children, protecting children

from abuse and neglect, and reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training must be completed before the Authorized Adult may care for, supervise, work with, or otherwise come into contact with Minors who participate in the Covered Program. Training must be completed annually.

Requirements for Sponsoring Units Offering or Approving a Program Involving Minors

It shall be the responsibility of all sponsoring units offering or approving a program which involves minors to require the covered program to follow all University policies.

Additionally, the sponsoring unit shall be responsible for:

1. Requiring all authorized adults to undergo and pass a current, University-approved background check
2. Requiring all authorized adults to participate in annual, mandatory training before beginning work with minors and each should sign an acknowledgement that they have read and understand the policy.
3. Ensuring that the ratio of program staff to program participants reflects the gender distribution of the participants, and, at a minimum, meets the following standards in accordance with the American Camp Association:

Standards for resident camps are:

- One staff member for every five campers ages 4 and 5
- One staff member for every six campers ages 6 to 8
- One staff member for every eight campers ages 9 to 14
- One staff member for every ten campers ages 15 to 17

Standards for day camps are:

- One staff member for every six campers ages 4 and 5
- One staff member for every eight campers ages 6 to 8
- One staff member for every ten campers between ages 9 to 14
- One staff member for every twelve campers ages 15 to 17

Exception to the above ratios may be permitted if Covered Program is abiding by another state agency's regulatory requirement, i.e., Child Parent Development Center may abide by regulations adopted by the Department of Health for child care.

4. Requiring the covered program to assign a staff member who is at least 21 years of age to be accessible to participants at all times.
5. Obtaining from the program staff a copy of the following forms:
 - a. Registration
 - b. Liability Waivers
 - c. Media and Photo Releases
 - d. Medical Information, Authorization and Release forms
6. Ensuring that the covered program has established a procedure for notification of the Minor's parent or legal guardian in case of an emergency, including medical or behavioral problems, natural disasters, or other significant Program disruptions. [Authorized adults within the

program, as well as participants and their parent/legal guardian, must be advised of this procedure in writing prior to the participation of the minors in the program.]

7. Obtaining a list of program participants and a directory of program staff. This list shall include: staff or participant's name; local room assignment (if applicable); gender, age, address, and phone number(s) of parent or legal guardian, as well as emergency contact information.
8. For residential programs, ensuring that the covered programs policies address: An age-appropriate curfew for the participants; in-room visitation to be restricted to participants of the same gender; guest visitation (other than parent/legal guardian of participant) to be restricted to building lobby and/or floor lounges and only during approved hours specified by the Program; and separate sleeping accommodations for adults and minors other than the minors' parents, legal guardians or other members of the minors' immediate family.
9. Requiring medical authorization forms to include:
 - i. A statement informing the parent/legal guardian that the University does not provide medical insurance to cover medical care for the minor (unless the Program provides such insurance)
 - ii. A statement authorizing the release of medical information (HIPAA) and authorizing emergency medical care in case the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached for permission
 - iii. A list of any physical, mental or medical conditions the Minor may have, including any allergies that could impact his/her participation in the program
10. Removing any program staff suspected of abuse or assault against a minor from continuing to participate in the program until such allegation has been resolved. Sponsoring Unit is also obligated to report any incidents of actual or suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with this policy.