Working with Minors:
Information for Those Participating in University-Run or Affiliated Programs or Activities Involving Minors

The University of Memphis community has a strong interest in how our society cares for children and the most vulnerable among us and wants to do what it can to prevent the victimization of child and adolescent minors and promote their safety. To further this goal, this packet contains important information that individuals must review if they are participating in a University sponsored or affiliated program/activity.

You are receiving this information because you have been identified as participating in a covered program or activity. You must review the information in this packet and return the attached certification indicating that you have read the packet and agree to comply with the requirements it describes. You must also determine whether you may be a mandated reporter and agree to comply with the obligations imposed by law and by the University on mandated reporters. You may also be required to review additional materials that are germane to your specific situation.

This informational packet contains the following:

1) Guidelines for working with minors that will help you to maintain safe and positive interactions and reduce the risk of mistaken allegations;
2) Minors on Campus Power Point presentation (if a volunteer);
3) Staff:Participant Ratios
4) Steps to take if you suspect that a minor has been abused or neglected or is otherwise unsafe, including information about how to report your suspicions or ask questions;
5) An acknowledgement form that you must sign to certify that you have read and understood the information and will comply with your obligations as a mandated child abuse/neglect reporter.
GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS

Do:

• Maintain the highest standards of personal behavior at all times when interacting with minors.
• Whenever possible, try to have another adult present when you are working with minors in an unsupervised setting. Conduct necessary one-on-one interactions with minors in a public environment where you can be observed.
• Listen to and interact with minors and provide appropriate praise and positive reinforcement.
• Treat all minors in a group consistently and fairly, and with respect and dignity.
• Be friendly with minors within the context of the formal program or activity while maintaining appropriate boundaries.
• Maintain discipline and discourage inappropriate behavior by minors, consulting with your supervisors if you need help with misbehaving youth.
• Be aware of how your actions and intentions might be perceived and could be misinterpreted.
• Consult with other adult supervisors or colleagues when you feel uncertain about a situation.

Don’t:

• Don’t spend significant time alone with one minor away from the group or conduct private interactions with minors in enclosed spaces or behind closed doors.
• Don’t engage in inappropriate touching or have any physical contact with a minor in private locations.
• Don’t use inappropriate language, tell risqué jokes, or make any sexually suggestive comments around minors, even if minors themselves are doing so.
• Don’t give personal gifts to, or do special favors for, a minor or do things that may be seen as favoring one minor over others.
• Don’t share information with minors about your private life or have informal or purely social contact with minor program participants outside of program activities.
• Don’t strike or hit a minor, or use corporal punishment or other punishment involving physical pain or discomfort.
• Don’t relate to minors as if they were peers, conduct private correspondence or take on the role of “confidant” (outside of a professional counseling relationship).
• Don’t date or become romantically or sexually involved with a minor. Don’t show pornography to minors or involve minors in pornographic activities.
• Don’t provide alcohol or drugs to minors or use them in presence of minors.
REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

EVERY PERSON HAS AN OBLIGATION TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE!

Mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect.
Tennessee Code Annotated 37-1-403(i)(1) requires all persons to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. “Any person who has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition, shall report such harm immediately if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicated that it has been caused by brutality abuse, or neglect or that, on basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect.”

What to do if you suspect that a minor has been abused or neglected or is otherwise unsafe.
If you know, suspect, or receive information indicating that a minor has been abused or neglected, or if you have other concerns about a situation involving the safety of minors, follow the procedures below.

- **Emergencies**
  In case of an emergency, immediately call University of Memphis’s Police Services emergency number at 901.678.HELP(4357) or 911.

- **All Other Reports of Known or Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Minors**
  Anyone participating in a University-run or affiliated program or activity involving minors who knows, suspects, or receives information indicating that a minor has been abused or neglected, or who has other concerns about the safety of minors **MUST** inform University Police Services who will determine appropriate next steps.

  - Anyone who knows or suspects abuse or neglect of minors may also notify the Memphis Police Department, Shelby County Sheriff’s Office or the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 877-237-0004.

Failure to report abuse is a violation of the law and a Class A misdemeanor, carrying a sentence of up to three months imprisonment, a fine or both. Those who report and “act in good faith” are immune from any civil or criminal charges which may result. The reporter has the right to remain confidential and anonymous.

Questions
If you have any questions about your obligations or what you should do in a situation that makes you uncomfortable, contact University Police Services.
Statement of Acknowledgment
Minors on Campus

I, ________________________ (name), certify that I have read and understand the University of Memphis’s policies regarding minors on campus.

I have also reviewed and affirm receipt of the Guidelines for Working with Minors and the Power Point presentation training on Minors on Campus. I agree to comply with University policy and all of the guidelines with which I have been presented including the duty to report child abuse.

I understand that under Tennessee law I must report any suspected child abuse and that failure to report suspected child abuse to the authorities is against the law.

I understand that as a person who interacts with minors under the auspices of UoM, I may be required to undergo a criminal history background check with results acceptable to UoM. I certify that I have never been convicted of a crime related to the abuse or neglect of minors or entered a guilty plea or other plea associated with a crime related to the abuse or neglect of minors.

_______________________________________
Printed Name

_______________________________________
Signature

_______________________________________
Name of Program/Activity

_______________________________________
Date