

# YOUTH PROGRAM GUIDELINES



NOTE: These guidelines are considered a living document and are subject to change as we continue to improve this resource. The most current version of these guidelines will always be available at [risk.richmond.edu/youthprotection](http://risk.richmond.edu/youthprotection).

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## INTRODUCTION

All members of the University community are expected to maintain the highest standards of behavior when interacting with minors. The following guidelines have been established to assist programs with implementing quality youth programs. As each program is unique, these guidelines do not prescribe what the protocols should be, but instead offer direction to Program Directors for the development of protocols to govern their youth program operations.

## PROGRAM PLANNING

Planning a successful youth program requires a significant effort. Program Directors should use the [Youth Protection Program Planning Checklist](#) alongside these guidelines and the Youth Protection Policy to plan and organize their respective youth programs. Please consult with the [Office of Risk Management](#) for further guidance.

### Communication

Effective communication and interaction with parent(s)/guardian(s) are critical components of each program. Provide all parent(s)/guardian(s) with a full program description (e.g., general itinerary, program rules, Standards of Behavior, contact information for the Program Director and Program Staff). This will allow parent(s)/guardian(s) to assess the program, acknowledge the risks associated with the program, and provide informed consent. Ensuring that parent(s)/guardian(s) have a good understanding of the program and encouraging engagement will result in smooth program operations.

### Age-Based Considerations

The age of program participants correlates with specific needs in terms of supervision and risks associated with activities. A mixed age group presents the following unique risks to be addressed:

- Pre-K Aged Children (ages 0-5) need help with basic needs including feeding, toileting, and safely navigating movement between locations. They require very close supervision and a structured schedule.
- Elementary Aged Children (ages 6-11) are more able to care for their own basic needs, but require somewhat more structured activities, and close supervision at all times.
- Middle and Early High School Aged Teens (ages 12-15) may be able to manage their time more freely than younger children, but still require supervision at all times.

- Older Teens (ages 16-17) may come and go to a program independently and may be able to successfully participate in less structured, more ambitious activities safely. Supervision is still required while participating in the program.

## Supervision

Ensuring the safety and protection of minors is the primary concern of every program and implementing strong accountability procedures is a key step towards safe program operations. Supervision needs may vary depending on the nature of the activity or program. Knowing the location of all participants is a baseline safety requirement. This may include taking and re-taking attendance, especially when near high-risk areas. At no time should a participant or group of participants be left alone or without direct supervision, including when in the Dining Hall or other eateries, retail locations, or Weinstein Center for Recreation.

In accordance with American Camp Association, the following supervision ratios should be maintained at all times:

Length of Stay	Age Group	Staff to Participant Ratio
Day	5 years and younger	1:6
	6 – 8 years	1:8
	9 – 14 years	1:10
	15 – 17 years	1:12
Overnight	5 years and younger	1:5
	6 – 8 years	1:6
	9 – 14 years	1:8
	15 – 17 years	1:10

## Physical Environment

Seek out appropriate environments for the program age group. Assess potential hazards and plan routes around high-risk spaces (Westhampton Lake, construction zones, etc.) and be sure to have a plan for indoor activities in the case of inclement weather or poor air quality.

## Laboratories

Minors visiting laboratories must be provided with and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) before being allowed into the research area. All hazardous chemicals and materials must be properly stored or contained during the visit.

## Accommodating Special Needs

The [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) requires that youth programs provide reasonable modifications of their policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to enable participants with disabilities to fully participate, unless the program can demonstrate that the necessary modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services and activities offered by the program. The necessary arrangements must be determined on a case-by-case basis through collaborative communication with the participant's parent/guardian, medical professionals, and the [Office of Disability Services](#).

## Virtual Programs

The Youth Protection Policy applies to all youth programs, including virtual programs. All virtual programs should utilize University of Richmond approved software. The following safeguards serve as guidelines for interacting with minors in a virtual environment:

- Two adults are required in all meetings. One of the adults must act as the "meeting host."
- The host must send the meeting link, call in number, and meeting ID to registered participants and their parents/guardians. Only Program Staff, participants, and their parents or guardians should receive the link.
- The meeting host should utilize the 'Waiting Room' feature until both adult hosts are logged in.
- The meeting host controls all muting, video functions, chat, etc., and should handle the back-end technology troubleshooting (e.g., assisting users who cannot log on) and communication with participants before and during the meeting.
- The meeting host is the first line of defense against inappropriate behavior and must act quickly to advise and/or disconnect participants who violate expectations or meeting norms.
- Keep conversations professional and focused on programmatic and educational purposes.
- Ensure that comments or chat features are limited to participants and personal information is not shared.
- The private chat function must be disabled.
- No virtual session should be recorded.

## Residential Programs

To ensure the safety and well-being of participants for residential programs, the following safeguards should be observed:

- On-campus residence halls are preferred for overnight stays due to the ability to control access to the building and general greater safety of the campus environment. If hotels or other facilities are used, Program Staff need to be vigilant about security and maintain awareness of others near minor rooms.
- If rooming participants two or more to a room, they should be housed by age and gender and each participant must have their own bed. This will mitigate potential issues of inappropriate behavior based on age and gender differences and should help protect against bullying.
- Program Staff should be housed in separate rooms but interspersed around the participants' rooms. This will allow staff to be close enough to resolve issues and be readily available to participants as needed. Program Staff should not share bathrooms with participants.
- Program Staff should not enter participant's rooms alone. If it is necessary to enter a room to check on a participant, two staff members should be present at all times. In emergency situations, when another staff member is not available, the door must remain open at all times.
- Conduct a thorough orientation to the facility and inform participants about emergency exit locations, safety protocols and common meeting areas in the event of an emergency or building evacuation.
- Ensure that participants know who to contact if they have an emergency while at the facility.

## INCIDENT REPORTING

There are a number of incidents that require reporting and maintaining records of reports. All programs will retain detailed documentation of accidents, disciplinary incidents, loss of property, medical incidents, and incidents related to the Clery Act. Incidents shall be reported as directed below.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

All University of Richmond employees, contractors, and volunteers are Mandated Reporters and have the individual responsibility to immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect of minors. There are no exceptions. Mandated Reporters who know of or suspect child abuse or neglect must immediately report the knowledge or suspicion to ALL of the following:

- University of Richmond Police at (804) 289-8715
- Virginia Department of Social Services Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at (800) 552-7096
- Office of Risk Management via the [Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Form](#)

## Peer-to-Peer Abuse

It is important to prioritize peer-to-peer abuse prevention in program development. Remember that peer-to-peer abuse can occur between minors. This includes children of the same or different genders and ages. No minors are too old or young to be at risk of engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior with their peers. "Natural curiosity" is still considered sexual abuse and must be reported.

## Other Incidents and Behaviors of Concern

The following adverse incidents should be reported to the Office of Risk Management using the Youth Program [Incident Report Form](#):

- Illnesses or injuries requiring more than standard first aid or any transports to medical facilities
- Property damage
- Behaviors of concern (threats to harm others, suggestions of violence, etc.)
- Violations of local, state, or federal laws

## STAFFING

### Screening

The screening and selection process is a way to identify risky behavior traits that are not always apparent through a background check alone. Program Directors should screen prospective staff using applications, personal statements, interviews, and reference checks to assess the candidate's motivation, attitude, and approach toward working with minors.

## Background Checks

Program Directors and Program Staff are not permitted to have direct contact with a minor until all requirements of the Youth Protection Policy have been met. Background check requests should be sent to the [Office of Risk Management Program Manager](#). The request must include the full legal name and email address of each person requiring a check. Please allow five (5) business days for processing.

## Training

Training equips adults to provide a safe environment for youth, foster positive development, and reduce risk of harm.

Required training for Program Directors and Program Staff:

- United Educators – Protecting Children: Identifying and Reporting Sexual Misconduct

Optional training courses available include:

- United Educators – Protecting Children: Hiring Staff Who Work With Minors
- United Educators – Protecting Children: Shine a Light Video
- United Educators – Boundary Training for Educators

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared. The University has the potential for impact from natural disasters and human-caused events. Please view the [Emergency Preparedness](#) webpage for guidance on how to respond in crisis situations.

## UR Alert

The University uses UR Alert to provide critical, safety information via text messages, email, and phone calls. Program Directors and Program Staff are encouraged to register for [UR Alert](#) to stay informed of any emergency impacting campus.

Additionally, the URSpiderSafe phone app ([iPhone](#), [Android](#)) is available for additional campus safety resources.

## Emergency Planning Contacts

For assistance in planning for emergencies, contact the following resources:

- Emergency Management: (804) 289-8844
- Environmental Health & Safety: (804) 289-8721
- University Police: (804) 289-8715

## Missing Persons

If a minor is discovered missing from the program, contact the University of Richmond Police immediately at (804) 289-8911 and provide the child's name, age, physical description, and last known location.

## External Communications

Direct all media inquiries to [University Media and Public Relations](#) in the event of a crisis. All communications with external constituents regarding an incident should be coordinated with University Media and Public Relations.

## CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT

Programs must have established procedures for checking in and checking out participants. These procedures should include the following considerations:

- Designate a specific point of entry and exit to maintain access control.
- Maintain a list of authorized persons who are allowed to pick up the participant.
- Keep a log of the drop-off and pick-up dates and times, including the name of the authorized person who picked up the participant each time.

## PROGRAM REVIEWS

The Youth Protection Policy authorizes the Office of Risk Management (ORM) to conduct site visits of youth programs for the purpose of evaluating compliance.

Program site visits may be initiated by regularly scheduled compliance checks, reports submitted to ORM, observed behaviors, or industry trends.

During the site visit, ORM will evaluate the program based on established criteria and general risk management practices. Based on site visit results, ORM will advise the program on methods to remedy identified concerns and comply with the Youth Protection Policy and other applicable University policies.

The Program Director will be provided with a summary of the site visit findings.

## MEDICAL TREATMENT

All programs should have clearly defined procedures for managing situations requiring first aid and medical emergencies. Prior to the start of program activities, parent(s)/guardian(s) should complete a Medical Information and Release Form. No program should allow a minor to participate without this completed form. This form should accompany the participant when seeking medical care.

## MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

When possible, all medication should be administered at home. If it is not possible for medication to be given at home before the participant attends the youth program, the participant's parent/guardian is required to disclose their intention to bring medication to the program by completing the Self-Administration of Medication Form.

All over-the-counter medications must be in the original product packaging. Prescription medication must be in the original product packaging and clearly labeled with the medication name and dosage instructions, the participant's name, and the prescribing physician's name and telephone number.

It is not permissible for a participant to share any medications with any other participant.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Program Directors shall set program specific rules governing participant and Program Staff behavior, establish a process for investigating alleged violations of the rules, and determine who will make disciplinary decisions. Once the programs have clearly defined these rules and procedures, Program Directors shall inform parent(s)/guardian(s) and request parent(s)/guardian(s) to complete the Standards of Behavior Agreement. No programs will allow a minor to participate in activities without a completed form.

Programs must not tolerate acts of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or intimidation. Bullying is any persistent act or conduct that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Programs are expected to respond expeditiously to take appropriate action to reported rule violations.

All discipline must be constructive and not humiliating or isolating. Discipline should be standard and fair across the program and disciplinary issues should be communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s). Physical punishment is not an appropriate form of discipline and IS NOT allowed. Typical forms of corrective discipline include verbal reminders of the Standards of Behavior,

temporarily removing the minor from an activity, or removal from future program activities. If removed from participation, minors must still be supervised.

Programs should collect, retain, and report detailed information about the disciplinary action, such as participant(s) involved, the nature of violation, the action taken to protect the alleged victim, and the disciplinary action taken.

## TRANSPORTATION

Program Directors and Program Staff responsible for driving a vehicle must meet the necessary criteria outlined in the [University Fleet Safety Policy](#) and are not permitted to transport minors alone or in a personal vehicle, except in an emergency.

## JOB SHADOWING

Job Shadowing is an educational experience where a minor can learn about a particular occupation or profession by accompanying an employee as they perform the targeted job. Job Shadowing activities are typically varied, short-term, or one-time events.

Job Shadowing is considered a University Program. A University employee serving in their official capacity that hosts a minor on campus for a Job Shadowing opportunity serves as the Program Director and must adhere to the minimum requirements outlined in the Youth Protection Policy.

Minors who participate in job shadowing should not be a replacement or substitute for employees, perform work that should be done by employees, or otherwise circumvent the University's policies and procedures related to hiring and employment. These minors are engaged without compensation from the University, promise of future employment, or other material benefits.

The following are prohibited activities:

- Operate University-owned vehicles, other heavy equipment and/or power machinery (except office equipment);
- Serve alcohol or work at an event in which alcohol is provided;
- Be provided key access to a University building or facility;
- Have access to cash, cash equivalents, checks, credit card account information, non-public financial information, or other protected or sensitive data or confidential information.

Minors must be supervised at all times by the University employee hosting the job shadowing assignment.

## OVERNIGHT VISITS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Sponsoring Units hosting unaccompanied minors for overnight visits must ensure Program Staff are aware of their responsibility as Mandated Reporters and use reasonable discretion in the selection of any student hosts who will interact with the minors. Minors must be supervised at all times.

## REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student Organizations registered with the University that engage in direct contact with minors as part of a program are obligated to adhere to the stipulations outlined in the Youth Protection Policy and these guidelines.