



## Guidelines for Supervising Minors

The University has adopted the best practices included in these Guidelines in order to ensure that minors participating in a University-sponsored activity are protected from physical injury, sexual abuse, and neglect. Departments responsible for the administration of programs and activities involving minors (i.e., non-enrolled students under the age of 18) are encouraged to implement these best practices.

The Guidelines are issued in conjunction with the Protecting Children Training module required for all University employees, volunteers, and students who regularly work with children. For additional information, see the [Protection of Minors Policy](#).

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### Conduct of Adults Supervising Minors

Adults authorized to work in a University-sponsored program intended for minors must treat the children under their care respectfully at all times, regardless of their actions or behavior. Minors will also be treated fairly regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the University's **Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy**.

Adults are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with any minors participating in a University-sponsored program. Adults must also avoid any one-on-one interactions with program participants; another adult, preferably, or another minor should always be present during such interactions.

Adults who work in a program involving minors will not do any of the following in the presence of the children they supervise:

- Use profanity,
- Tell off-color jokes or banter suggestively,
- Discuss personal problems or sexual experiences,
- View sexually suggestive materials or make those materials available to minors,
- Comment on other peoples' bodies, or
- Use alcohol or narcotics or offer alcohol or narcotics to minors.

In addition, adults will not permit any of the following interactions between minors:

- Bullying,
- Hazing,
- Derogatory name-calling,
- Ridicule or humiliation,
- Truth or Dare similar games, or
- Prohibited touching (see below).

### **Physical Contact with Minors**

Physical contact between adults and minors should be limited to the following types of contact:

- Handshakes.
- High-fives and hand slapping.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Side hugs.
- Holding hands while escorting children below the age of eight (8).
- Other brief contact intended to comfort a distressed child below the age twelve (12) so long as another adult witnesses the contact.
- Teaching a physical technique that literally requires hands-on instruction, such as playing a musical instrument or learning an athletic activity, provided the instructions are conducted either in the open or in an interior space with doors and windows open and in a building open to the public at the time of the contact.
- Assisting disabled minors who need assistance with a major life function, so long as at least one other person is present and observing.
- Any contact to aid an injured minor or a minor in imminent danger of physical harm (such as a struggling swimmer).
- Separating minors involved in an altercation.

#### **The following types of contact are not permitted:**

- Frontal hugs.
- Kisses.
- Lap sitting.
- Massages or rubs.
- Piggyback rides.
- Tickling.
- Wrestling.
- Any intended affection unwanted by the minor.
- Any touching of a sexual nature, including touching a minor's chest, buttocks, or groin.
- Any touching conducted in private (i.e., where no other adults or children are present).

### **Disciplining Minors**

No adult associated with a University-sponsored activity involving minors should ever use physical punishment to manage a minor's behavior. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, or hitting.

### **Grooming**

No adult shall partake in "grooming behaviors", which are defined by the Department of Justice as "a form of child sexual abuse that can involve the targeting and isolation of the victim, in order to gain the trust of the victim through a controlling relationship to manipulate, exploit, and abuse the victim." Examples of such behavior may include private direct messaging on social media (please refer to the "Telephone and Electronic Communication" guidelines on communication with minors), creating opportunities to be alone with the child, giving special privileges, fixating on a child rather than the adults around them, buying gifts, or engaging in behaviors that are sexually abusive.

## Walking with Minors

Parents or guardians should be informed in advance of any walk for minors under 8 years of age that includes crossing a street used for automobile traffic. Parents and guardians should be informed of known traffic hazards and what steps will be taken to mitigate those hazards. Parents and guardians should provide written permission before their children under the age of 8 participate in such a walk.

When walking off-campus as part of an activity, minors under age 12 should wear identifying lanyards, badges, vests, or shirts. At least one adult should lead the procession and permit no minor to walk ahead. At least one adult should follow the procession and permit no minor to lag behind. The procession should stop on a regular basis for a head count. Unless safety considerations dictate otherwise, the procession should not advance until all minors are accounted for.

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## Transportation

Parents and guardians should be informed in advance if their child will be transported in an automobile, van, or bus or by public transportation in connection with a University-sponsored activity. Parents and guardians should provide prior written permission for all such transportation.

**The adult driving the minor must be an authorized driver for the University.** To become an authorized driver, please see the **Vehicular Use Policy**.

Whenever possible, a University automobile or van should be used for transporting minors rather than a privately owned vehicle. The following guidelines should be followed in connection with any transportation involving minors:

- **Automobiles**

No adult should drive one minor except in an emergency. If a minor will be transported alone in a vehicle with the driver, the driver must inform their supervisor and the minor's parent or guardian in advance of driving the minor.
- **Buses and Similar Transportation**

For minors who are age 12 or under, adults should be seated throughout the bus, van, or similar transportation for easier supervision, with at least one adult in the middle of the bus and one in the far rear. Adults should sit in an aisle seat so they can get up to supervise minors, as necessary. Minors should be seated by grade or age group. Disruptive minors should be seated next to an adult. Adults should take a head count or roll call before loading and after unloading a vehicle, and unless safety considerations dictate otherwise, should not proceed until all minors are accounted for.
- **Public Transportation**

Minors under age 12 should be restricted to one area of the bus or train for easier supervision. Adults should stand or sit on the periphery of the area to which minors on public transportation are restricted. They should take a head count or call roll before boarding public transportation and upon leaving public transportation, and unless safety considerations dictate otherwise, should not proceed until all minors are accounted for.
- **ADA/ESA Animals**

If a person in need of a service/support animal will be in the vehicle, please ensure that the minor is supervised at all times, especially when in the presence of the animal. The minor shall not disrupt the

service/support animal and the parents/guardians of the child shall be notified at least 3 days in advance. Changes to transportation arrangements shall be made at the parent/guardian's discretion.

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### **Supervision of Bathroom Use**

Adults should use staff-only bathrooms. If no staff-only bathrooms are available, adults should use bathrooms when no minors are present. If adults must use a bathroom when a minor is present, at least one other adult or minor should also be present.

For minors aged 12 and under, adults should escort two or more minors to the bathroom for group bathroom breaks. The adult should not send in more than the number of stalls and/or urinals in the bathroom. As one minor exits the bathroom, another may enter. The supervising adult should stand by the doorway and ensure that minors leave the bathroom in a timely manner. If a minor under age 12 must use a bathroom alone, the minor should use a single-stall bathroom. If the only bathroom available has multiple stalls, the adult should assign one minor to stand outside the bathroom and wait for the other minor to finish. If the minor needing the bathroom, the other minor standing outside, or both do not return in a timely manner, the adult in charge of the activity should promptly check on them.

For minors age thirteen (13) or older, an adult supervising the activity should give permission for the minor to leave the activity to use the bathroom. The adult should note when the minor left for the bathroom and when the minor returned. If the minor does not return in a timely manner, the adult in charge of the activity should promptly check on the minor. During periods of transition from one activity to another, minors do not need permission to use bathrooms, but adults should randomly monitor bathrooms to ensure minors are not lingering or acting inappropriately in them.

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### **Supervision of Locker Room Use**

Adults should not change clothing or shower in locker rooms at the same time as minors, nor should they watch minors undress or shower. While minors shower, at least one adult in charge of the activity should be within earshot of the minors to ensure that no adults are showering with them and that the minors are respectful of one another.

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### **Overnight Stays**

Written permission must be obtained in advance from the parent or guardian of any minor staying overnight in University housing. The written permission should include the parent's or guardian's contact information in the event of a medical emergency involving the minor.

Minors staying overnight are subject to all of the security, supervision, and behavioral rules and procedures applicable to University students living on campus. See [\*\*Student Residential Policies\*\*](#).

Children under the age of 13 may not be signed in as a guest to the residence halls unless prior approval has been established in writing by the Assistant Dean for Community Living or designee. Otherwise, children under the age of 13 may only visit students briefly in the lobby and/or informal lounge areas. As with all guests, the USF resident host is solely responsible for any person under 18 or teenagers (age 13-18) whom

they register as a guest. The University is not responsible and/or liable for the safety/welfare or care of visiting minors in the residence halls.

If a minor will be sharing a room with a University student, another University student (or other authorized adults) or another minor must also share the room so that at least three individuals will be occupying the room overnight.

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### **Release of Minors at the Conclusion of an Activity**

Departments should supervise minors until they are picked up by an adult authorized in advance to take custody of the minor. Departments shall not release a minor to the custody of another adult unless advance written consent is received from the minor's parent or guardian.

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### **General Staffing Ratios for Camps and Similar Activities**

The ratio of staff responsible for supervising camps and similar group activities should meet the following minimum levels:

<b><u>Age or Minors</u></b>	<b><u>Staff to Minors Ratio</u></b>
5 years or younger	2 to 6
6-8 years	2 to 8
9-14 years	2 to 10
15-18 years	2 to 12

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### **Outside Contact with Minors**

The following guidelines shall govern outside contacts between an adult who works in a University-sponsored program designed for minors:

#### **In-Person Meetings**

An adult should not meet in person, outside of the program activity, with any individual minor unless another adult who is part of the activity (preferably the adult's supervisor) has approved the meeting in advance.

Outside meetings with groups of minors participating in a program may be held by an adult provided:

- The adult has obtained written permission from the parent or guardian of each minor participating in the outside activity, and
- The outside activity is held in a public place such as a restaurant, museum, or stadium.

#### **Telephone and Electronic Communication**

An adult may communicate through electronic media to groups of program participants; however, unless the adult copies or otherwise includes another adult associated with the program (preferably their supervisor), the adult should not:

- Send or respond to text messages or emails from an individual minor involved in the program,
- Communicate with a minor on social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, or X, or
- Call an individual minor involved in the program on the telephone.

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## **Gifts**

An adult may give a token gift to each minor participating in the activity; however, an adult associated with the activity may not give an individual gift or gifts to a minor in the program (regardless of value), unless approved in advance by both:

- The parent or legal guardian of the minor and
- The University administrator or coach who has overall responsibility for the program.