

Augusta University

Policy Library

Programs Serving Minors Policy

Policy Manager: Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Management

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety and well-being of minors visiting our campus is of the highest concern. This policy requires that programs implement controls designed to enhance the safety and protection of minors who are participating in Augusta University-sponsored programs, or in programs operated by outside entities held in university facilities.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other:

REASON FOR POLICY

Augusta University (AU) offers a variety of athletic camps, science camps, clinics, after-school programs, IRB-approved research studies, enrichment classes and activities that bring non-student minors on campus and are of great educational value, benefiting both the institution and the larger community. These programs and activities provide institutions with the opportunity to challenge, educate and mentor young people and to introduce them to their campus in a positive and meaningful way and more abundant during the summer, when school is not in session. Augusta University is committed to best practices that will provide a safe and healthy environment for everyone who participates, volunteers, or works in these activities.

DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

- Authorized Adult – Individual(s), paid or unpaid, who is (are) authorized to supervise or regularly chaperone minors. An authorized adult must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- Background Check – A report that includes criminal history, sex offender registry and/or child abuse/neglect database records in accordance with the [University System of Georgia](#) and [Augusta University’s Employment Procedures Policy](#).
- Mandatory Reporter - Any person who is required by Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5) to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities. Mandatory Reporters include, but are not limited to, faculty/teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, psychologists, law enforcement personnel, and other persons who participate in providing care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to minors.
- Minor - For the purpose of this policy, a person under the age of eighteen (18) who is not enrolled as a student at Augusta University.
- One-on-one Contact - Direct interaction between any individual and a minor without at least

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one other authorized adult, parent, or legal guardian present.

- Programs – Programs and activities offered by any unit, virtual and in-person, (e.g., academic, administrative, or athletic) of the university, or by non-university groups using university facilities.
- Program/Activity Administrator: Any individual who has primary and direct operational responsibility for the overall content and execution of a program/activity and who serves as the primary point of contact.
- Program/Activity Staff: Individuals, whether paid, volunteer, or for academic credit, who have care, custody, control, and/or direct contact or interaction with minors involved in programs/activities. This includes, but is not limited to, university administrators, faculty, staff, students, volunteers, and third parties when operating a program/activity.
- Sponsoring Unit – Any unit of the university that offers a program or gives approval for the use of university facilities.
- Third Party: An individual, organization, or entity external to the university, to which the university allows use of its facilities to operate a program/activity.
- University-sponsored Program – A program or activity operated by an affiliated Augusta University department or Augusta University student organization where the minors participating in the program are supervised by Augusta University authorized adults.
- Visitors – Any individual with non-contractual or other relationships with the university and who are not employees, faculty, or enrolled students, specifically those with non-custodial care of minors.

APPLICABILITY

This policy provides minimum operational requirements for programs and activities involving minors and applies broadly to all programs and activities where Augusta University is given the care, custody, and control of one or more minors. However, this policy does not apply to the following:

- Program/Activities for minors enrolled in undergraduate or graduate academic coursework;
- Events or visits to campus where minors are supervised by their parent/guardian;
- Events at the university that are open to the general public or invited guests where parents/guardians are expected to provide supervision of minors;
- Admissions and recruitment activities;
- Minor employees; and
- All employees and students hosting family members, friends, or other guests.

Although exempted, these areas are expected to manage best practices internally. Programs/Activities such as IRB-approved research, virtual programs, and those with medical components may be subject to meeting the requirements of this policy as well as additional training. This policy shall supplement, rather than replace, any existing safety and security measures, policies, or codes of conduct currently in place or hereinafter enacted.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

1. Sponsoring Unit's Approval & Pre-assessment

- a. The Sponsoring Unit's Dean, Director, Vice-President, or Department Head, as applicable, must approve all university programs/activities, including those operated by a Third Party in Augusta University facilities.
- b. The Program or Activity Administrator must address the following considerations in advance of the program/activity's approval. (See "Program Checklist", as found on the [Programs Serving Minors website](#).)
 - Alignment of the program/activity with the university's mission;
 - Response protocols for accusations of misconduct;
 - Appropriate staffing and supervision ratios, with special regard to avoiding one-on-one contact between minors and program/activity staff;
 - Appropriate subject matter and fully planned activity itinerary;
 - Program/Activity Staff Code of Conduct and guidelines;
 - Appropriate training program/activity staff;
 - Minor Code of Conduct, applicable forms, waivers, and any supplemental program/activity guidelines;
 - Program/Activity orientation and information for minors and parents;
 - Transportation arrangements;
 - Housing arrangements with special consideration for overnight program/activities;
 - Contracts for Auxiliary Services for Food Services;
 - Safety and security planning including, but not limited to:
 - Basic first aid;
 - Emergency response and notification plans;
 - Reporting protocols for injury and/or illness; and
 - Inclement weather plan;
 - Insurance;
 - Any licensing or exemption required by a government agency; and
 - Record retention policies.

2. Registration

After review and approval by the Sponsoring Unit's Dean, Director, Vice-President, or Department Head, as applicable, the program/activity must be registered with the Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Management.

To register, go to the Augusta University Programs Serving Minors webpage and complete the listed steps. Ongoing programs should be registered annually.

3. Requirements for Employees and Volunteers

Employees and volunteers who are reasonably anticipated to have direct contact or interaction with minor program participants must have a completed background check and complete “Programs Serving Minors training” before they begin working with minors at Augusta University.

a. Background Investigation & Additional Screening

- i. Program/Activity Administrators must be in receipt of background check clearance on all Program/Activity Staff prior to involvement. The background check must include a state and federal criminal history check, covering a minimum of seven (7) years, and sex offender registry checks, in accordance with the [University System of Georgia](#).
 - a. Frequency of background checks for employees: If the program/activity staff member is an employee of AU, he or she must have an initial background check completed and on file. Thereafter, the background check must be rerun and completed every three (3) years.
 - b. Frequency of background checks for non-employees: If the program/activity staff member is not an employee of AU, then the program/activity staff member must have the background check completed on an annual basis.
- ii. Individuals volunteering or employed in licensed childcare programs shall undergo a criminal background check as mandated by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning and applicable state laws and federal laws.
- iii. Additional Screening: Depending on the nature of the program/activity, additional screening of program/activity staff beyond background checks may be advisable, including in-person interviews and/or reference checks.

b. Arrest Disclosure

Program/Activity Staff must self-report any arrest, charge, or criminal conviction occurring after the date of the background check to their Program/Activity Administrator, prior to returning to any program/activity. Additionally, all Augusta University employees are subject to the [University policy](#) that requires completions of an Arrest Charge, Conviction, Plea, or Drug Offense Disclosure Form within 72 hours of the incident.

c. Training

Program/Activity Staff must complete Programs Serving Minors training prior to any involvement in the program/activity. At a minimum, the training shall address mandatory reporting requirements, responsibilities and expectations, relevant institutional policies, safety and security procedures, and Staff Code of Conduct.

All program/activity staff and authorized adults must make all reasonable efforts to remove minors from dangerous or potentially dangerous situations, irrespective of any other

limitations or requirements.

d. **Code of Conduct**

All Program/Activity Staff must review and abide by the Programs Serving Minors Policy Code of Conduct (See “Program Checklist”, as found on the [Programs Serving Minors website](#).)

4. **Requirements for Third Parties**

Third-party organizations or agencies that utilize Augusta University facilities or space to host programs or activities involving minors must comply with the Programs Serving Minors Policy. In particular, Third Parties must:

- a. Certify that all their Program/Activity Staff have undergone background checks, which would, at a minimum, satisfy the HRAP requirements listed above;
- b. Comply with Augusta University’s Facility Use Procedures involving minors. The Facility Use Agreement must contain the following:
 - i. Certification that background investigations have been performed by a qualified vendor.
 - ii. Certification that all personnel have been trained regarding appropriate interaction with minors.
- c. Possess documentation of appropriate insurance coverage for the sponsored event.

5. **Records Retention**

All records should be retained in accordance with Board of Regents policies on record retention. Copies of all required forms and documentation pertaining to minors should be retained for a period of three (3) years after the minor reaches the age of eighteen (18). Records pertaining to program/activity staff should be retained for five (5) years.

6. **Reporting**

- a. **Injury:** In order to maintain a safe environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, it is important that the university be informed, at the earliest possible date, of any injuries that occur at a university facility or to faculty and staff in the course of their work responsibilities.
- b. **Child Abuse and Mandatory Reporters:** Any Program/Activity Staff or other Mandatory Reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, shall immediately report the suspected abuse to the Augusta University Police Department, the appropriate supervisor or Program/Activity Administrator, who must take immediate action, and the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. By reporting, you are not necessarily making an accusation; you are merely reporting facts for trained professionals to evaluate and investigate. All employees must appropriately report suspected child abuse. Do not attempt to investigate a matter further or gather additional information before reporting.
 - i. ***If you suspect child abuse, or simply have an idea or uneasy feeling about a possible abuse situation, immediately report the situation to ALL of the following:***

1. The Augusta University Police Department at 706-721-2911; AND
 2. The Program/Activity Administrator; AND
 3. The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services at 1-855-GACHILD.
- ii. A Mandatory Reporter must ensure that the Division of Family and Children Services is notified of the suspected abuse immediately and in no case later than 24 hours after the program/activity staff (or other reporter) first had a reasonable cause to suspect the abuse.
7. **Accountability & Sanctions.** Violators of this policy will be held accountable for their actions under the Programs Serving Minors Policy, Code of Conduct, University policy, and applicable law. Sanctions for violations may include, but are not limited to, suspension of university funding, non-renewal or termination of the program/activity, suspension, dismissal, or termination of university employment or program/activity staff status, or removal or barring from university facilities. Site visits and audits may be conducted on all programs/activities to uphold compliance with this policy and to encourage the use of best practices when dealing with minors.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Augusta University [Programs Serving Minors website](#)

RELATED POLICIES

[Minors in the Laboratory or Other Potentially Hazardous Areas Policy](#)

[Use of Libraries by Minors](#)

APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 6/10/2024

President, Augusta University

Date: 6/11/2024