

Protection of Minors

Issuing Offices: University Office of Human Resources and University Ethics Office

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I. Policy Statement

The University of Illinois recognizes a fundamental obligation to protect minor children, the youngest and potentially most vulnerable members of our community, when they are on University premises, participate in University programs, or are in the care of University staff. The University complies with applicable federal and state laws to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, discover, and achieve their full potential. This includes compliance with the [“Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act”](#) of Illinois, which mandates that University personnel must immediately report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect of minors (children under the age of 18) directly to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as soon as abuse or neglect is suspected. The duty to report under Illinois law applies to the suspected abuse or neglect of any individual under the age of 18 who is known to the employee, volunteer, or other designated individuals in his or her professional or official capacity. ***This includes both (a) minors who are currently enrolled at the University or accepted for enrollment (e.g., a 17 year-old student enrolled as an undergraduate); and (b) minors who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment as students at the University but who participate in a University program designed for minors or who otherwise become known to University personnel in their official or professional capacity.*** All University of Illinois employees, volunteers, and other designated individuals must complete an education program that explains the mandatory reporting requirement.

All individuals conducting programs involving minors must make safeguarding children their highest priority and comply with safeguard measures outlined herein. Several of the requirements listed below apply only in the context of University programs designed for minors and do not apply to minor children who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University. Despite the fact that certain requirements, as specified below, do not apply in the context of minor students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University, this policy nonetheless ***does*** require University personnel to report the suspected abuse or neglect of ***any minor*** known to the employee, volunteer, or other designated individuals in his or her official capacity, ***including those minors who are enrolled at the University or who have been accepted for enrollment at the University.***

II. Expectations for Responsibility and Cooperation

1. All members of the University of Illinois community are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and adhering to this policy and any related University policies.
2. Employees, volunteers, and other designated individuals who either will provide direct supervision or care for, or have regular interaction with minor children who are not enrolled or

accepted for enrollment at the University may only serve in such capacity after completion of successful criminal background and sex offender registry checks.

3. University personnel will complete a designated education program(s), sign the reporter acknowledgement of understanding, and carry out reporting obligations as mandated by this policy and state and federal law.

4. The duty to protect minors and report any suspected abuse or neglect applies to all University personnel regardless of position, title, or responsibilities.

5. All members of the University community are expected to cooperate in investigations of alleged child abuse/neglect and alleged violations of this policy.

III. Website Address For This Policy

This policy and related procedures are published on the University Human Resources website at <http://www.hr.uillinois.edu/> in the *Policy Library* section.

IV. Principles

Specific principles of this policy include:

1. Mandatory Reporting Education and Acknowledgement

- a) The Illinois “Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act” (ANCRA) mandates that all personnel of an institution of higher education must immediately report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect of minors (children under the age of 18) directly to the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-800-25ABUSE as soon as abuse or neglect is suspected.
- b) All University employees, volunteers, and other designated individuals must complete the University-approved education program(s) and acknowledge their understanding of their mandatory reporting obligation under ANCRA.
- c) All University employees, volunteers, and other designated individuals must sign the mandated acknowledgement certifying their understanding of reporting responsibilities under ANCRA.
- d) As noted above, the duty to report under ANCRA applies to the suspected abuse or neglect of any individual under the age of 18 who is known to the employee, volunteer or other designated individuals in his or her professional or official capacity. This includes minors who are currently enrolled at the University or accepted for enrollment, as well as those minors who are not enrolled as students at the University.
- e) “Other designated individuals” are individuals affiliated with the University other than University employees and volunteers whom the University has identified as having occasion to come into contact with minors in connection with their official or professional duties or other responsibilities in connection with a University-sponsored program or activity.

2. Mandatory Reporting Duties

- a) All University personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that a minor child known to them in his or her professional or official University capacity may be an abused or neglected child must immediately make a report to DCFS at 1-800-25ABUSE. This duty to report includes (but is not limited to) the requirement that University personnel report any suspected abuse that they witness occurring on University premises or at a University-sponsored event. In addition to making a verbal report to DCFS, the employee must follow any additional directions given by DCFS to complete the report. The employee must also promptly notify University Police (UIC: 312-996-2830; UIS: 217-206-6690; UIUC: 217-333-1216) that a report has been made.
- b) In emergencies or when an incident involves injury, all members of the University community are expected to call the police and the appropriate University office.

3. Criminal Background Checks

- a) Employees, volunteers, and other designated individuals who are responsible for the supervision or care of children, or whose duties would require close contact with minors who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University, must undergo a criminal background check and sex offender registry check prior to employment, volunteering, or participation in those duties. Background checks and sex offender registry checks will be conducted in accordance with Campus Background Check Policies.
- b) Such checks may be repeated periodically, as deemed appropriate by the campus or hiring unit.
- c) If the results of an individual's criminal background check or sex offender registry check include a sexually based offense or crime involving a child, then the individual may not be permitted to serve in a role or program involving minors who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University.
- d) If the results of an individual's background check include any other crime or offense, then the supervisor responsible for the department or program must consult with their campus Human Resources Office to determine if such crime or offense will prevent serving in the intended capacity.
- e) In the event of extenuating circumstances, such as the need for numerous volunteers with short lead time, an alternative to background checks may be allowed. The alternative method may only be utilized for volunteers, temporary or seasonal extra help, or student workers, and may only be considered for one-time or occasional events of limited duration that do not require any overnight accommodations for minors. Campuses hosting such events must ensure that any non-background checked individuals are conducting activities in public, in groups (i.e. not one-on-one or alone with minors), and under the supervision of a successfully background checked employee. The alternative method includes 1) recording the names and contact information for the individuals prior to the program date, 2) checking the individuals against the online sex offender registry and disqualifying anyone who is listed in the registry, and 3) requiring individuals to show a valid photo ID upon program check-in.

4. Campus and Program Safeguards

- a) Each campus must maintain a current report of activities and programs that involve minors not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University. Activities and programs to be

recorded on the report include, but are not limited to camps, summer programs, lessons, performances, and tutoring. The report must at a minimum detail program location/facility, dates and times, age range of participants, and planned number of participants. For each program listed, contact information must be provided for two responsible individuals who will make arrangements for the safety of minors and other participants in the event of an emergency.

b) Each campus must protect the health and safety of children by not permitting minors who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University in areas which may be hazardous or not suitable for minors, including but not limited to laboratories, food preparation areas, construction sites, mechanical shops, animal facilities, clinical areas, and art studios. Under limited circumstances children may be permitted in certain areas for supervised educational opportunities, such as “open house” events, school field trips, or programs that have obtained prior approval through the appropriate office at their campus.

c) Each campus must document minimum standards or safeguards for other health and safety considerations for programs that involve minors who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University, including but not limited to: appropriate levels of supervision; plans for first aid, inclement weather, or emergencies; and guidelines for overnight stays.

5. Retaliation Will Not Be Tolerated

Retaliatory acts against members of the University community who make good faith reports or complaints under this policy, and/or who cooperate in investigation and handling of such complaints, even if it is found that no violation of the policy has occurred, will not be tolerated and may be unlawful. In accordance with the [University Whistleblower Policy](#), any member of the University community who believes that he or she is the subject of retaliation or reprisal should contact the appropriate office as designated in the Procedures. The University will promptly investigate all complaints of alleged retaliation or reprisal.

6. Sanctions for Violation of Policy

The University will provide remedial action on all findings of violation of this policy. Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy may result in discipline in accordance with University policy, up to and including termination of employment and/or dismissal from the University. Knowingly making a false report or complaint under this policy, or knowingly providing false or intentionally misleading information during an investigation, may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and/or dismissal from the University.