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

The Georgetown University 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 programs or activities involving minors that 1) the University operates; 2) that others operate in University facilities; or 3) that Georgetown students, faculty or staff are involved with in the community.¹

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) 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;

3) Advice on the signs of child abuse and neglect from the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency; and

4) An acknowledgement form that you must sign to certify that you have read and understood the information and will comply with your obligations if you are a mandated reporter.

¹ This packet describes requirements applicable to Georgetown undergraduate students, including those under the age of 18, who participate in programs involving minors.
Guidelines for Working with Minors

Those associated with programs or activities involving minors should observe the following "dos" and "don'ts" in order to maintain a safe and positive experience for program participants, encourage parental confidence, and avoid mistaken allegations.  

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 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 the presence of minors.

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2 These guidelines are not meant to inhibit medical, psychiatric or other professional interactions with minors where professional standards apply.
Reporting: 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 described below:

**Emergencies:**

In case of an emergency, immediately call Georgetown’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) at (202) 687-4343, the Georgetown Law Center Department of Public Safety at (202) 662-9325 or the Metropolitan Police Department at 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 or a non-University program or activity operating on campus 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 the Office of Compliance and Ethics (OCE) by calling (202) 687-6493 or using the University's Compliance Helpline, which is accessible at [http://compliance.georgetown.edu](http://compliance.georgetown.edu) or by calling 888-239-9181. The Helpline is available 24 hours a day.

OCE, with support from other appropriate offices as necessary, will help determine appropriate next steps.

In addition, one should promptly notify his or her supervisor, program director, dean, or vice president, when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Anyone who knows or suspects abuse or neglect of minors may also notify the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (MPD) and/or the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

**Questions:**

If you have questions about your obligations or what you should do in a situation that makes you uncomfortable, contact the Office of Compliance and Ethics at (202) 687-6493.

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3 Those who encounter minors through a Georgetown University Law Center legal clinic may be subject to different obligations and should consult with their clinical director if they have suspicions or concerns about mistreatment of a minor.
Reporting: Additional Obligations for Mandated Reporters

In addition to the reporting obligations described above that are imposed by the University on those participating in programs involving minors, certain individuals are “mandated” reporters who have additional obligations under District of Columbia law.

If you are a "Mandated" Reporter:

District of Columbia law designates individuals in certain occupations and professions as mandated reporters. If you are a mandated reporter, you must report known or suspected mental or physical abuse or neglect of a child known to you in your professional or official capacity to either the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (MPD) at 911 or the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). The CFSA hotline can be reached at (202) 671-7233 and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you are a mandated reporter under DC law, you also must complete the Mandated Reporter Training offered by the CFSA, which is available at: [http://dc.mandatedreporter.org/](http://dc.mandatedreporter.org/).

Mandated Reporters Under DC Law:

Mandated reporters include physicians, psychologists, medical examiners, dentists, chiropractors, nurses, law-enforcement officers, school officials, teachers, athletic coaches, social service workers, day care workers, mental health professionals, and others.4 Georgetown employees or students who are working with minors in their professional or official capacity and who have questions about whether they may be considered mandated reporters under DC law should contact their supervisor, program director, dean or vice president. The Office of University Counsel is also available to provide advice and can be reached at (202) 687-6457.

Even if you are not a mandated reporter you may report known or reasonably suspected child abuse to the MPD, CFSA or both.

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4 Pursuant to D.C. Code § 4-1321.02(b): “Persons required to report such abuse or neglect shall include Child and Family Services Agency employees, agents, and contractors, and every physician, psychologist, medical examiner, dentist, chiropractor, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, person involved in the care and treatment of patients, law-enforcement officer, humane officer of any agency charged with the enforcement of animal cruelty laws, school official, teacher, athletic coach, Department of Parks and Recreation employee, public housing resident manager, social service worker, day care worker, human trafficking counselor as defined in § 14-311(2), domestic violence counselor as defined in § 14-310(a)(2), and mental health professional as defined in § 7-1201.01(11).”
Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

Nationally and in the District of Columbia, most reports and substantiations of child maltreatment are neglect, followed by physical abuse and sexual abuse.

**Neglect** occurs when parents or caretakers do not provide proper supervision, control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care necessary for healthy development. By itself, lack of financial means to provide for a child is not neglect.

Physical signs may include:
- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate or ill-fitting clothing.
- Being left alone or with people unable to provide proper supervision.
- Obvious lack of necessary medical treatment.

Behavioral signs may include:
- Chronic hunger or sleepiness.
- Delayed language development.
- Clinging behavior or development of indiscriminate attachments.
- Frequent complaints of feeling unwell.
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school.

**Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury of a child by a parent or caretaker.

Physical signs may include:
- Bruises, welts, or swelling.
- Sprains or broken bones.
- Burns.
- Lacerations or abrasions.
- Bite marks.
- Unexplained or repeated injuries.

Behavioral signs may include:
- Attempts to hide injuries.
- Difficulty sitting or walking.
- Wariness of physical contact with adults.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Depression or self-mutilation.
- Fear of parent(s) or caregiver(s).

**Sexual abuse** is exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child.

Physical signs may include:
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Torn, stained, or bloody clothing.
- Genital pain or itching.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy.

Behavioral signs may include:
- Precocious sexual knowledge or behavior.
- Extremes—hostile and aggressive or fearful and withdrawn.
- Self-mutilation.
- Substance abuse.
- Running away.

To report child abuse and neglect in the District, call 202-671-SAFE.
Certification

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the foregoing *Information for Those Participating in University-Run or -Affiliated Programs Involving Minors*. I have had an opportunity to raise any questions I have about this information and have done so if necessary.

I agree to take any necessary further steps to determine whether I may be a mandated reporter. If I am a mandated reporter, I will complete required training and comply with all reporting and other obligations for mandated reporters under DC law.

_____________________________  __________________________
Signature                      Date

_____________________________
Printed Name

Program/Activity in which you are participating: