

Policy on the Safety of Children in University Programs

The University of Chicago is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children who participate in University programs. This policy affirms that commitment by setting forth screening, training and conduct requirements for faculty, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees, volunteers and others who staff University programs that serve children. This policy also restates the legal obligation borne by all University faculty, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees and volunteers to report known or suspected abuse or neglect of a child. Under this policy, a “child” or “minor” is any person under the age of 18.

I. Reporting of Known or Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

All University faculty, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees and volunteers are “mandatory reporters” under the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. The responsibilities of mandated reporters are described in applicable University policies.¹ In short, the University requires all mandated reporters to immediately report to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS, 1-800-25-ABUSE) if they have reasonable cause to believe a child known to them in their official capacity may be abused or neglected. In addition, any mandated reporter who makes such a report must promptly notify the head of his or her academic unit or immediate supervisor that a report has been made, as well as the underlying circumstances that compelled the report, and memorialize in writing that the report has been made. Questions regarding reporting obligations or the circumstances under which a report is required may be addressed to the Youth Program Coordinator and/or Office of Legal Counsel. The University also maintains a hotline (800-971-4317) that enables persons to notify the University about suspected abuse or neglect of a child, including sexual abuse or misconduct, and substantive educational content may be obtained via DCFS here – <https://mr.dcfstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action>. However, making a report to the University’s hotline and to his or her supervisor does not relieve a mandated reporter of the legal duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect to DCFS.

II. Requirements for University Programs and Programs Conducted on University Premises

In addition to the reporting obligations set forth above, this policy describes screening, training and conduct requirements for faculty, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees, volunteers and others who staff University-affiliated programs and programs conducted on University premises or with University resources, regardless of University affiliation.

A. Covered Programs

“Covered programs” are University programs, activities, workshops, preparatory experiences, laboratories, tours, open houses, projects, research studies and events designed to serve children, whether for academic, pre-collegiate, experiential, athletic, educational, artistic, recreational or other purposes, and whether on or off University premises. For example, covered programs include, but are not limited to, day and overnight camps of any nature for children (e.g., sports camps, academic bridge programs), early childhood centers and instructional activities involving children. Camps and programs conducted or operated by University athletic coaches and other employees in their personal capacities are covered programs if the coach or employee’s University affiliation is identified and/or where such programs use University premises, facilities or resources.

Covered programs also include programs, camps or activities that serve children and are conducted or provided by an outside entity or contractor on University premises or that are conducted or provided on behalf of or for the University or a covered program. Entities and contractors that conduct or provide these covered programs must be required by

¹ <http://facultyhandbook.uchicago.edu/page/mandatory-reporting-suspected-child-abuse-and-neglect-and-faqs> (for academic appointees and postdoctoral researchers);

https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/fpg/policies/1000/1009_Mandatory_Reporting_of_Child_Abuse_Policy_and_FAQs_for_Staff_and_Volunteers.shtml (for staff, student employees and volunteers).

contract to comply with this policy, and to demonstrate that the appropriate screening and training in accordance with Sections II.B and II.C of this policy have been conducted before they commence services.

Covered programs that include overnight stays or use of University housing by children shall have the following additional measures in place: (i) identification to be worn by faculty, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees and volunteers and, if appropriate, participants; (ii) enforced curfews; (iii) alcohol- and drug-free housing and facilities; (iv) a code of conduct for participants; and (v) full-time residential supervision.

Exclusions. Covered programs do not include:

1. University undergraduate, graduate, professional or continuing education academic programs to which minor students are admitted and enrolled for academic credit, e.g., a seventeen-year-old who has matriculated to the College.
2. University faculty/staff / graduate residential properties.
3. Single instance visits by adolescents to meet with faculty or academic appointees to discuss academic, intellectual or career interests.
4. Single guest lectures or one-time participation in academic or research activities by academic guests.
5. University single performance or single events such as fairs, festivals, convocations or other activities that are generally open to people of all age groups, and at or in which children may be present or participate, or University events at which children will be accompanied at all times by a parent or legal guardian, except for any such performance or event that involves overnight stays or use of locker rooms. In those instances, the sponsoring unit must instead adopt measures designed to ensure the safety of participating children, including but not limited to: a requirement that volunteers must work in public places and not be alone with children; that, to the extent supervision of minors occurs as part of the event, the supervisor first must have undergone a criminal history and registered sex offender check; and that before the event, the program must compile the names and addresses of the volunteers and check the names against the national sex offender registry.
6. The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools or the schools run by the University of Chicago Charter Schools Corporation, as those entities are subject to substantial, youth welfare-specific, external regulatory oversight and thus have adopted germane training and risk management programs.
7. Formal pre-enrollment visits, including overnight stays, by prospective College students, as the Office of College Admissions has developed an appropriate set of tailored risk management measures.
8. Clinical care involving minors provided at or through the University of Chicago Medical Center, as those activities are governed by separate health care-specific standards and regulatory oversight.

NOTE: Children who are not authorized participants in covered programs, University academic classes or single event activities must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. Children thus are not permitted on campus or in University buildings as an alternative to appropriate childcare, when the child is too ill to attend school, or when the child needs quiet study space, etc. Likewise, due to safety concerns, unsupervised children may not play on campus grounds, roam University buildings, or sit unaccompanied on campus or in University buildings.

B. Screening Requirements

All persons – including faculty, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees and volunteers – who supervise a covered program and/or have direct contact with children in a covered program are subject to the screening requirements described in this section. “Direct contact” means to provide instruction, care, supervision, guidance to, or oversight and/or control over children through a covered program. The screening normally will include,

at a minimum, a reference check, and criminal history and registered sex offender check, written records of which must be created and maintained indefinitely.

The director or official who has overall supervisory responsibility for the covered program may, in addition to the initial screening, require supplemental prospective screening at regular intervals based on the nature of the program, requirements under applicable law, contractual obligations or other relevant factors. The director or official responsible for a covered program is responsible for assuring that all persons who work in or volunteer in support of a covered program have been screened as required and have subsequently been cleared to work or participate in the covered program.

If the initial or subsequent screening indicates a criminal record or registered sex offender status, the director or official responsible for the covered program, after consulting with, as appropriate, Human Resources, Office of the Provost, the Youth Program Coordinator, and/or the Office of Legal Counsel will determine whether to hire or retain the person and whether he or she may participate in a covered program. All screening will be conducted, and all information and results will be used, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and applicable policies and procedures.

C. Training Requirements

Covered programs will require all faculty members, academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, staff, student employees, volunteers and other persons participating in or serving the programs to participate in training on their status as mandated reporters and to review this policy. DCFS offers an on-line training module the annual successful completion of which can serve to satisfy this requirement so long as the certificate of completion is submitted to the germane human resources staff (<https://mr.dcfstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action>).

D. Conduct Requirements

Persons working for, participating in, or involved with a covered program should create an open, welcoming educational environment, and ensure that the safety and welfare of participating children is a paramount and shared responsibility. Indeed, positive, appropriate interactions with youth support their personal and educational development, make them feel valued, and provide the safe, caring connections that serve as protective factors for youth. Conversely, inappropriate and harmful interactions can put youth at risk for adverse emotional and physical outcomes. In this regard, persons working for, participating in or involved with a covered program may not, in connection with the program:

- engage in abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, any child;
- administer force upon a child with or without an implement or tool for the purpose of discipline (i.e., corporal punishment);
- touch a child in an inappropriate or illegal manner;
- engage in the use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs in the presence or vicinity of children;
- take photographs of any child without the express consent of the child's parent or guardian; or
- possess, produce, access or make available to children, any sexually explicit images, material or media.

In addition, it is critical to remain vigilant for child-on-child sexual abuse, which often is perpetrated by teenagers on younger youth.

Except for human subjects research approved by an Institutional Review Board, persons working for, participating in or involved with a covered program must make every effort to refrain from being alone with a child at any time in connection with the program or on “personal time.” The principal investigator in a research study for which the IRB has approved one-on-one time should structure the study to permit access and/or observation by others at all times, if feasible.

University academic or human resources officials may adopt additional, written and disseminated rules of conduct for specific programs based on the nature of the program, pedagogical and risk management considerations, legal requirements, contractual obligations and other relevant factors, so long as those rules at least comport with this Policy.

Any person who suspects or becomes aware of a violation of these or other applicable conduct requirements must immediately report it to, as appropriate, the head of his or her academic unit or immediate supervisor and provide the underlying circumstances that compelled the report. Under such circumstances, the head of the academic unit or supervisor must immediately report the matter to the Youth Program Coordinator, and the Office of Legal Counsel and, as appropriate, the Office of the Provost, Campus and Student Life, or Human Resources. Notifying the University does not necessarily satisfy legal reporting obligations, which require mandated reporters to make an immediate report to DCFS (see Section I above). On receiving a report or otherwise becoming aware of such a violation, the University will take prompt steps to assure the safety of children and to comply with all applicable legal reporting requirements.

III. Policy Violations and Reporting.

Any faculty member, academic appointee, postdoctoral researcher, staff, student employee or volunteer who violates this policy will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer arrangement. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the student disciplinary process.

IV. Questions Regarding this Policy

Questions regarding this Policy may be directed to the Youth Program Coordinator (Kenyatta L. Tatum Futterman, 773-702-8837).