**UC Davis Standards for Youth Protection**

The safety of youth participants and student organizers in activities hosted on the UC Davis campus is the highest priority of the University of California. To provide a safe, educational and enjoyable activity, the following best practice standards should be followed by any student organization hosting an activity for minors. These standards are designed to protect youth participants, your members and your organization.

While your activity may be targeted to older youth and may not include every component addressed here (e.g., overnight, transportation), it is in the best interest of your organization to confirm all those standards that do apply and train all members involved in any way in the youth activity to know and uphold them. Student organization leaders should not assume that their members are knowledgeable about youth protection issues or hold the same standards and values expected by the University. Although it may seem that your activity does not provide the opportunity for many of the behaviors outlined below, it is imperative that your members grasp the importance of following the highest standards when interacting with youth and take every precaution to insure safety.

Your organization should also comply with all youth protection policies required by educational institutions with which you are partnering.

**I. CONDUCT WITH YOUTH**

The following policies are intended to assist staff and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with youth.

1. Youth participants will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Youth will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.
3. Staff and volunteers will follow the program’s policies regarding contact with youth participants outside of the program.
4. Staff and volunteers will avoid affection with youth participants that cannot be observed by others.
5. Staff and volunteers will not use profanity or tell off-color jokes.
6. Staff and volunteers will not discuss their sexual encounters with or around youth participants or in any way involve youth participants in their personal problems or issues.
7. Staff and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth participants.
8. Staff and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth participants.
9. Staff and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on program property. If educational materials are utilized for programmatic and curriculum needs, parental or guardian consent should be obtained by program administration.
10. Staff and volunteers will not have secrets with youth participants.
11. Staff and volunteers will not stare at or comment on youth participants’ bodies.
12. Staff and volunteers will comply with the program’s policies regarding interactions with youth participants outside of program.
13. Staff and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth participants.
14. Staff and volunteers will avoid working one-on-one with youth participants in a private setting. If one-on-one is necessary, staff and volunteers will follow the program’s specific policies regarding 1:1 interaction.
15. Staff and volunteers will not abuse youth participants in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
    * Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
    * Verbal abuse: degrading, threatening, cursing
    * Sexual abuse: inappropriate touch, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
    * Mental abuse: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
    * Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter
16. Youth participants are prohibited from engaging in the following:
    * Hazing
    * Bullying
    * Derogatory name-calling
    * Games of Truth or Dare
    * Ridicule or humiliation
    * Sexual activity
17. Staff and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other staff and volunteers, other adults, or youth participants to a supervisor who can be reached at <insert telephone number you have identified as point of contact> or University of California’s confidential hotline, EthicsPoint, **800-403-4744**. <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/23531/index.html>
18. Staff and volunteers will report allegations or incidents of abuse to the proper state authority. Please refer to the specific guidelines of your state regarding mandated reporting.
19. Staff and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of child abuse, indecency with a child, or injury to a child.

**A. Physical Contact**

Each program should implement a physical-contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth, staff, and volunteers from misunderstandings.

The following guidelines should be utilized to develop procedures for staff and volunteers working with youth:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Appropriate Physical Interactions* | *Inappropriate Physical Interactions* |
| * Side hugs * Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs * Pats on the shoulder or back * Handshakes * High-fives and hand slapping * Verbal praise * Pats on the head when culturally appropriate * Touching hands, shoulders, and arms * Arms around shoulders * Holding hands (with young participants in escorting situations) | * Full-frontal hugs * Kisses * Showing affection in isolated area * Lap sitting * Wrestling * Piggyback rides * Tickling * Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg * Any type of massage * Any form of affection that is unwanted by the participant or the employee or volunteer * Compliments relating to physique or body development * Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas |

**B. Verbal Interactions**

Staff and volunteers should be prohibited from speaking to participants in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Staff and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with or around youth.

The following guidelines should be utilized to develop procedures for staff and volunteers working with youth:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Appropriate Verbal Interactions* | *Inappropriate Verbal Interactions* |
| * Positive reinforcement * Appropriate jokes * Encouragement * Praise | * Name-calling * Discussing sexual encounters or involving youth in the personal issues of staff and volunteers * Secrets * Cursing * Off-color or sexual jokes * Shaming * Belittling * Derogatory remarks * Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth * Derogatory language |

**C. Discipline of Youth**

Staff and volunteers should be prohibited from using physical punishment for the behavior management of youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by youth. Staff and volunteers will have age-appropriate expectations and guidelines that minimize the need for discipline.

The following guidelines should be utilized to develop procedures for staff and volunteers working with youth:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Inappropriate Discipline Practices* | |
| * Hitting * Spanking * Shaking * Slapping * Using physical exercise as a consequence * Withholding food, light, or medical care * Name-calling * Shoving | * Pulling hair or ears * Biting * Pinching * Shaming * Derogatory remarks * Ostracizing * Mechanical tape or rope restraints * Punishment for toileting accidents * Angry yelling |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Appropriate Discipline Practices* | |
| * Set expectations * Establish routines * Plan and create productive environment * Use tangible incentives that educate and influence behavioral change * Explain and interpret situations * Teach youth to express themselves verbally * Define standards for your program | * Provide choices for decision making * Identify undesired behavior, explain desired behavior * Use consequences strategically * Be firm, decisive * Remove yourself from escalating power struggle * Be clear and simple with directions * Be respectful |

**D. One-on-One Interactions**

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth. Youth Activity programs should aim to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibit private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the program administration. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, staff and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

|  |
| --- |
| *Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions* |
| * When meeting one-on-one with a participant, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others. * Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes. * If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by. * Inform other staff and volunteers that you are alone with a youth participant and ask them to randomly drop in. * Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted. |

**E. Out of Program Contact**

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off site and after program ends for the summer. This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put program staff, volunteers, youth, and our program at increased risk.

The following guidelines should be utilized to develop procedures for staff and volunteers working with youth:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Appropriate Outside Contact* | *Inappropriate Outside Contact* |
| * Taking groups of youth participants on an outing * Attending sporting activities with a group of youth participants * Attending functions at a youth participant’s home, with parents present * Sending postcards to the youth participant’s home | * Taking one youth participant on an outing without the parents’ written permission * Visiting one youth participant in the youth participant’s home, without a parent present * Entertaining one youth participant in the home of a program employee or volunteer. * A lone youth participant spending the night with a program employee or volunteer |

When outside contact is unavoidable, ensure that the following steps are followed:

1. Supervisors should identify for staff and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
2. Ensure that the employee or volunteer has the parents’ permission to engage in outside contact with the youth participant. Consider requiring the parents to sign a release-of-liability statement.

**F. Electronic Communication**

Electronic communication provides a venue for private communication between counselors and youth. Therefore, with electronic communication policies, our program stresses transparency in all interactions.

1. **Option One – Electronic Communication Prohibited**

The following guidelines are for programs that prohibit electronic communication between adults and youth.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Appropriate Electronic Communication* | *Inappropriate Electronic Communication* |
| * None | * Sending or replying to text messages from youth * Communication through social networking sites (like Facebook, Twitter, etc.) * Sending or replying to emails from youth * Sending or replying to instant messages |

1. **Option Two – Electronic Communication Guidelines**

The following guidelines are for programs that allow electronic communication between staff or volunteers and youth. Parents and youth should also be provided with information about these guidelines

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Appropriate Electronic Communication* | *Inappropriate Electronic Communication* |
| * If electronic communication is utilized on a regular basis for programmatic needs, parents should be informed * Parameters should be set by program administration pertaining to communication hours etc. (i.e..no texting after 7pm) * Sending and replying to text messages from youth ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth’s parent * Communication that involves discussions around program objectives, curriculum, work appropriate * Communicating through “group pages” on Facebook or other designated public forums * “Private” profiles for staff and volunteers which youth cannot access | * Communication that is outside of the scope of the program objectives, curriculum, etc. * Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments * Sexually oriented conversations * Private messages between staff and volunteers and youth * Posting inappropriate comments on pictures |

**G. Gift Giving**

Molesters routinely groom youths by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the youth. They might instruct the youth to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the youth to keep secrets from parents. For this reason, staff and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youth participants, and only under the following circumstances:

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift
2. Parents should be aware of general activities, including gift giving

**II. Supervision of Youth Activities Programs**

It is generally accepted that monitoring and supervision are critical functions of abuse prevention and provide protection to youth participants, staff, volunteers, and the program itself. When interactions are monitored, allegations of abuse or wrongful acts are more easily and accurately investigated and resolved.

The following guidelines should be utilized to develop procedures for staff and volunteers working with youth:

**A. General Supervision**

1. Administrative and Supervisory Visits to Program – Program directors and program leadership should regularly visit all programs to ensure that all activities are well-managed and that program policies are observed by all in attendance.
2. Ratios – Each program needs to establish ratio requirements that are directly related to the goals and design of the program. The employee- or volunteer-to-youth participant ratio should be adjusted for programs that serve youth participants with special needs.

The recommended supervision ratio for on‐site programs is one Activity Worker for every ten youth (1:10). The recommended supervision ratio for overnight or off‐site events is one Activity Worker for every eight youth (1:8). These ratios will change depending on the age of the participants and programmatic needs. For instance, if the youth are younger than 3rd grade (or 8 years old), the recommended ratio is one Activity Worker for every five youth (1:5). NOTE: these ratios may change for specific activities and programs. See the American Camp Association supervision standards: <http://www.acacamps.org/standards>.

1. Mixed Age Groups – In most incidents involving one youth participant abusing another youth participant, the youth participants are from different age groups. Each program is responsible for establishing specific guidelines for additional monitoring and supervision of activities that involve youth participants from different age groups.

**B. Facility Monitoring**

Building and cabin architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, risk is managed. In order to ensure that all of the program’s buildings and cabins are properly and consistently monitored, designate a program employee(s) who will complete a site-inspection checklist at various times throughout the day.

**C. Monitoring Higher Risk Activities**

1. **Bathroom Activities**

Most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, the following

supervision guidelines are recommended:

* + Option 1: Group Bathroom Breaks
    1. Whenever possible, program staff and volunteers should take groups of two or more youth participants to the bathrooms for “group bathroom breaks.” One adult should not escort one youth participant; always use the “rule of three” or more. Junior counselors or counselors in training should not escort youth participants to the bathrooms.
    2. If the bathroom has only one stall, only one youth participant should enter the restroom at a time while the other youth participants wait outside with staff and volunteers. If there are multiple stalls, staff and volunteers should only send in as many youth participants as there are stalls.
    3. Staff and/or volunteers should then stand outside of the bathroom with the door ajar in order to hear what is going on inside the bathroom.
  + Option 2: Monitoring Program Bathrooms
    1. In some program settings, group bathroom breaks are not always feasible. In these circumstances, youth participants should ask permission before using the bathrooms, so that staff and volunteers know who is going to the restroom and when.
    2. Program staff and volunteers should randomly and periodically monitor bathrooms to ensure that youth participants are not lingering there. It is important that staff and volunteers periodically check restrooms so that youth participants know that an adult could walk in at any time.

1. **Shower Activities**
   * Staff and youth participants must shower at different times.
   * Create shower schedules that will permit supervision of the youth participants while staff shower.
   * Develop shower procedures that ensures the safety of all youth participants. Depending on program, this may include:
     1. While youth participants shower, at least one employee should stand in the bathroom doorway and within earshot of the youth participants.
     2. Ensure that only one youth participant is in each shower
2. **Transition Times and Free Times**

Transition times and free-choice times (or free times) pose a higher risk for incidents becauseduring these times, staff and volunteers may not be assigned a particular group of youth participants to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following supervision guidelines:

* + Designate certain areas at program as off-limits during these times by setting specific and narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
  + Depending on program, ensure that all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise during transition times and free times. This “zone monitoring” ensures that all accessible areas are monitored. Assign more staff to high-risk areas and activities (i.e., water activities, playgrounds, isolated areas, etc.).
  + Require supervisors to conduct periodic sweeps of the entire activity area. If youth participants are lingering outside of the planned activity area, the supervisor should encourage these youth participants to join an activity.
  + Depending on program, require the presence of an upper-level program director during free times.
  + Depending on program, consider utilizing a “sign-in and sign-out” protocol. This may be most effective with older youth participants.

1. **Night Games and Evening Activities:**

Night games and evening activities are often high risk because youth participants of mixed ages interact in a less structured environment. The following guidelines can help to decrease those risks:

* + Apply the same procedures used to monitor transition time and free times, as listed above.
  + Ensure that staff are assigned to supervise specific areas during both night games and the transition times after dinner and before the game begins.
  + For example, while youth participants are waiting in a large group before the night games, staff should be spread out in a “zone monitoring” formation – i.e., one employee in each corner of the area, one or more employees posted near the exits, etc. This “zone monitoring” ensures that all accessible areas and youth participants are monitored.
  + Conduct head counts at random intervals throughout the activity. At some point during night games, each employee should formally ascertain that all of his or her youth participants are present. During some activities, consider stopping the game to make sure that all youth participants are present. Create roll sheets that counselors must turn in at the end of the night.
  + Require the presence of the program director, the assistant director, or the program director during night games.

1. **Transporting Youth participants**

Transporting youth participants may increase the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse because staff and volunteers may be alone with a youth participant or may make unauthorized stops with youth participants. In addition, transportation activities may provide a time for unsupervised youth participants to engage in youth-to-youth sexual activity. When it is necessary to transport youth participants, staff and volunteers must adhere to the steps described below.

When transporting youth participants by bus or van:

* Youth Activities Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
* Youth participants must never be transported without written permission from a parent. Staff and volunteers must take these permission forms and medical releases with them on the trip.
* Determine the number of staff and volunteers necessary to adequately supervise the youth participants. The driver should not be assigned as a supervisor for the youth participants.
* Staff and volunteers should be seated throughout the bus for easier supervision of youth participants, with at least one employee or volunteer in the middle of the bus and one in the far rear (youth participants should not be seated behind staff). Staff and volunteers should sit in an outside seat so they can supervise youth participants on the bus.
* Youth participants should be seated by grade, gender, and behaviors. If possible, high-risk youth participants should be seated by themselves or next to an employee.
* Take a head count or roll call before loading and after unloading vehicles.
* When driving a van, it is ideal to have at least one other staff member, in addition to the driver, to act as co-pilot and supervise the participants.

When public transportation is used:

* In addition to the transportation procedures listed above, youth participants should remain in one area of the bus, if possible.
* Staff and volunteers that are assigned to a group should remain with that group on the bus.
* Take a head count or call roll immediately after entering and leaving the bus.
* Youth participants must never be transported without written permission from a parent or guardian.

In emergency situations where staff and volunteers must transport youth participants in non-program vehicles:

* Youth Activities Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
* Use the “rule of three” when transporting youth participants: At least two adults must transport a single youth participant, or at least two youth participants must be present if transported by a single adult.