

## **Guidelines for Working with Minors: Information for Those Participating in University Programs Involving Minors**

The University of Denver (DU”) 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 DU students, faculty or staff are involved with in the community.

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) Resources on the signs of child abuse and neglect; 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.

## **I. Guidelines for Working With Minors:**

- A.** 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 email, text, or engage with minors through social networking media unless there is an important educational or programmatic reason to do so and you are communicating consistently to all minors in the program.
- Don't provide alcohol or drugs to minors or use them in the presence of minors.

## **B. Guidance for Interacting with Non-DU Students Who Are Minors (Under the Age of 18) in Virtual Learning Environments**

### **DO:**

- Limit communication with minor participants/students to DU platforms and follow all University guidance for protecting against disruptive activities such as Zoombombing.
- Follow University program protocols for engagement with minors in virtual learning environments, including those related to recording class sessions and/or other activities.
- Keep online conversations and interactions focused on class or program material and objectives.
- Ensure that all participants are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. Do not allow harassment or cyberbullying.
- Dress appropriately and have an appropriate background when on video.
- Report inappropriate online behavior that rises to the level of abuse or harassment to the Program director and the DU Compliance and Ethics Hotline at 303-871-7439 (anonymous reports are accepted)..

### **DON'T:**

- Do not share personal information (such as phone number and personal email addresses) or personal social media accounts with minor participants.
- Do not "friend," "like" or "follow" minor participants in a class or program

on social media or accept invitations to connect on sites such as LinkedIn.

## II. MANDATORY REPORTERS

### A. Reporting Child abuse and Neglect

Are you a mandatory reporter? All University personnel are mandatory reporters, including faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate student employees, graduate students with teaching responsibilities, postdoctoral fellows, researchers, volunteers, independent contractors, and third-party operators participating in a covered program.

Reporting and Emergency Procedures?

Emergencies: Call Campus Safety or the Denver Police Department at 911.

All Other Reports of Known or Suspected Child Abuse:

Any mandatory reporter 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 report such concerns to one or more of the following, available 24 hours a day year- round:

- Division of Campus Safety at 303-871-3000
- DU Anonymous Hotline at 303-871-7439

(The University contracts with a confidential third-party provider, Lighthouse Services, for the intake of hotline reports.)

- Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 844-CO-4-Kids (844-264-5437)
- In addition, individuals should promptly notify their supervisor, director, dean, associate vice chancellor or vice chancellor.

Applicable University Policy: RISK 2.50.060 - [Protection of Minors on University Premises and in University Programs](#).

### B. Reporting Obligations FAQs:

When might I need to make a report under the Policy?

If you are participating in a program or activity involving minors and you know, suspect, or receive information indicating that a minor has been abused or

neglected or is otherwise unsafe, you must make a report. Find out information on signs of abuse and neglect.

What if I'm not sure whether a minor I'm working with has been abused or neglected?

If you encounter a situation in which you are uncertain or feel uncomfortable, contact Campus Safety, which can assist you and your supervisor or program director in determining what to do. If you have any suspicion that a child has been abused or neglected, report it—even when you have doubts, it is better to report your suspicions than to ignore them.

What training am I required to have in order to participate in a program involving minors?

The following members of the University Community must successfully complete required Training before interacting with Minors in University Programs:

- individuals who regularly spend time with Minors as part of their responsibilities;
- individuals who directly supervise those who regularly spend time with Minors; and
- individuals who supervise overnight stays by Minors as part of their responsibilities.

For University Programs that are not licensed childcare providers, the University has selected a series of web-based training courses developed by United Educators on the Protection of Children on Campuses ("Training"). See the [Procedures for Protection of Minors on Campus](#) for instructions on how to access Training.

### III. SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

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).

**A.** Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth & Families [Child Abuse & Neglect Website](#)

**B.** [CO4Kids.org](#) (for information regarding [signs of Child Abuse and Neglect](#))

**C.** Other Prevention Resources:

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Factsheet: What is Child Abuse and Neglect? Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Factsheet: Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

#### IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the foregoing *Guidelines for Working with Minors: Information for Those Participating in University 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 of known or suspected mental or physical abuse or neglect of a child known to me. If I am a mandated reporter, I will complete required training and comply with all reporting and other obligations for mandated reporters under Colorado law.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

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Net ID

Program/Activity in which you are participating: