

Providence College

Guidelines for Working/Volunteering with Minors

Introduction

The following guidelines are intended to help members of the Providence College (the “College”) Community understand their responsibilities when having contact with minors. All members of the College Community should also familiarize themselves with the College’s Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy. A “minor”, for purposes of these guidelines, is a person under the age of eighteen (18) and not an enrolled PC student.

The College also strongly encourages anyone working with or having direct contact with minors to complete the Boundary Training for Educators and the Protecting Children: Identifying and Reporting Sexual Misconduct courses. These programs are offered by United Educators and can be accessed through the Training Portal on the Office of General Counsel’s intranet site.

Guidelines for Working with Minors

These guidelines establish limits on personal behavior and describe appropriate interactions with minors. All members of the College Community are expected to follow these guidelines when working/interacting with minors on or off College property.

1. Become a positive role model for minors by maintaining an attitude reflecting patience, courtesy, and maturity. You should act in a caring, respectful, honest, and responsible manner that is consistent with the mission of the College.
2. Wear clothing that is appropriate for the activity or program.
3. Treat all minors equally and do not differentiate based on their status or characteristics (e.g., race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance, or socio-economic status).
4. Do not use any form of physical or emotional punishment to discipline a minor.
5. Do not engage in physically rough or sexually provocative games with minors; do not allow minors to sit on your lap.
6. Do not engage in or allow inappropriate touching, including between or among minors.
7. Be aware of the impact of your words and language on minors of all ages. Do not use profanity; do not use or respond to sexual innuendo; never make a sexually suggestive comment, even in an attempt to be humorous.
8. If minors use inappropriate language, including language of a sexual nature, respectfully and calmly correct them.
9. Be aware of situations in which actions can be misconstrued or manipulated by others (for example, being alone with the last minor to leave an instructional setting); conduct all dealings with minors in a public environment to the extent possible so that all behavior can be easily observed.
10. Follow the “rule of three” – no fewer than three persons (preferably 2 staff and one child, or 1 staff and 2 minors, are present) when spending time with minors as part of your official duties. Unless there is an emergency, do not spend time alone with a minor away from others, particularly in a locker room, bathroom, dorm room, storage closet, or athletic training room. If there is an emergency that requires you to be alone with a minor (for example, you must take a sick minor to the bathroom immediately), the timeframe should be limited only to that amount of time necessary under the circumstances. Once the emergency has been addressed, you should inform your supervisor and document the circumstances immediately after the incident. If your

Revised: June 27, 2023

program or activity involves interaction with a minor on a one-on-one basis, then the activity should be observable via open doors and/or doors with windows, and you should be amenable to unannounced interruptions. If possible and as applicable, use separate facilities (bathrooms, locker rooms, showers) from minors; otherwise, schedule separate usage time.

11. Physical touching guidelines between any member of the College Community and minors should be governed by and appropriate for the particular activity, program, or circumstance and for a clear educational or developmental purpose. Further, any necessary touching should be open and not secretive. Out of respect for the minor and in consideration of the fact that many individuals are uncomfortable with touching for a variety of reasons, obtain the minor's permission before touching him/her.
12. Request assistance from proper authorities when minors behave in an out-of-control or unsafe manner, and refrain from physically restraining them.
13. As applicable to the circumstances and setting, minors should use a "buddy system" or otherwise be encouraged to stay together when going to the bathroom or when leaving the instructional setting.
14. Do not invite minors to your home or to ride in your vehicle, and do not meet with minors outside of the approved program or activity.
15. If you need to reach minors during off-hours, you should communicate with them via their parent/guardian. If you must have direct electronic contact with a minor, always include another employee in the email communication.
16. Do not "friend," "follow" or accept any requests from minors on a social networking site or communicate with minors via Internet chat rooms; do not send personal emails or text messages to minors; do not share personal or intimate information with minors.
17. Do not take pictures of minors unless their parent/guardian has signed a waiver allowing use of photography for program-related purposes.
18. Do not appear to favor one minor more than any other; do not give gifts to any one minor in a program; do not accept gifts from any minor in the program. (However, it may be appropriate in certain circumstances to accept non-monetary gifts from a minor, such as a picture drawn by a minor, or a card).
19. Do not encourage minors to keep secrets of any nature from their parent/guardian.
20. Do not use or possess alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products while interacting with minors and do not come onto College property or participate in any College activity or program under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
21. All weapons are prohibited on the College's premises; therefore, you should not have weapons in your possession or in your vehicle while on campus.
22. Release minors only to an authorized parent/guardian, or other adult specifically authorized by the custodial parent and after confirming that person's identity via proper identification.
23. If you are supervising other employees/volunteers, be visible and available, and make periodic unannounced visits to program sites to observe whether behavioral standards are being followed. Correct and provide feedback to others as necessary, and immediately stop any activity with a minor that appears suspicious.
24. If you have probable cause to *suspect* that a minor is a victim of abuse or neglect, you **must** make a **report immediately** to the Chief of Public Safety, or his designee, at 401-865-2222. If in doubt about whether there are grounds for making a report, ask yourself: Would a reasonable person in the particular circumstances suspect that abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred? If you remain in doubt, take the precautionary step of reporting.

For additional, important information about what constitutes child abuse or neglect and how to report suspected abuse and neglect, please see [Providence College's Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy](#). Anyone making a good-faith report of suspected abuse or neglect pursuant to this Reporting Policy should feel safe and empowered to do so and is protected against retaliation.

What if a Minor Tells Me that He/She is a Victim of Abuse or Neglect?

- Stay calm; ensure that the minor is safe and feels as safe as possible.
- Do not probe for more information or details; do not “interview” the minor or otherwise attempt to investigate the matter on your own. Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- Be honest; explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the behavior. Avoid making promises you cannot keep.
- Make a note of what the minor said as soon as possible.
- REPORT! You must immediately report what the minor told you to the Police and to the Chief of Public Safety, or his designee, at 401-865-2222.