

# GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS WITH MINORS

These guidelines apply to employees and volunteers who have interactions with minors

---

## INTRODUCTION

**As someone representing Eastern Washington University, it is your duty to prevent harm towards minors in your care.**

These guidelines describe University expectations and best practices for working with minors. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a safe environment for employees, volunteers, and minors, and to raise awareness of how to manage risk when minors are involved in programs/activities.

These guidelines emphasize the responsibility that staff, parents, and minors each have in ensuring a safe and successful program. Note that "Staff" includes both employees of the university and volunteers.

---

## CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS – UNIVERSITY POLICY

### **Adults working with minors are expected to:**

- Conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner and be a positive role model for minors.
- Respect, adhere to, and enforce the rules, policies, and guidelines of Eastern Washington University.
- Endeavor to provide a safe and healthy experience for all program participants.
- Comply with all applicable civil rights laws and policies, including all nondiscrimination policies.
- Inform program participants about safety and security procedures, University rules, rules established by the program, and behavioral expectations.
- Be able to respond to emergencies.
- Follow established procedures for releasing children from the program.

### **Adults working with minors must not:**

- Have intentional, private unsupervised interaction with a minor without at least one other person present.
  - Have any direct electronic contact (e.g. social media, email, texts, telephone) with minors under the age of 13 without the minor's parent/guardian being included in the communication.
  - Have any direct electronic contact (e.g. social media, emails, texts, telephone) with minors ages 13-17 for a non-university related purpose and must use a university issued social media account, email address, or phone for all such communications unless an exception is approved by the Risk Manager.
  - In the case of adults supervising minors overnight, adults shall not enter a minor's bedroom, bathroom facility, or similar area without another person present.
  - Share a bedroom with a minor, unless the minor is the adult's child or close family member.
  - Engage in abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a minor.
  - Strike, hit, administer corporal punishment to, or touch in an inappropriate or illegal manner any minor.
  - Physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally abuse any minor.
  - Make comments of a sexual nature in the presence of a minor.
  - Make sexual materials in any form available to minors or assist them in any way in gaining access to such materials.
  - Fail to provide the necessities of care to a minor.
  - Pick up minors from or drop off minors at their homes, other than the driver's child(ren), except as specifically authorized in writing by the minor's parent or legal guardian.
  - Provide alcohol or illegal drugs to any minor.
  - Provide prescription drugs or any medication to any minor unless specifically authorized in writing by the parent or legal guardian as being required for the minor's care or the minor's emergency treatment.
- 

## CONSEQUENCES OF BEHAVIORS THAT HARM MINORS

Eastern Washington University takes these matters seriously. In the case of suspected abuse or neglect of a minor, the University will adhere to existing policies and procedures for corrective action. Actions taken will first and foremost consider the need to ensure the safety of minors participating in EWU programs or activities.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS

### Care & Custody

- Do not leave minors in the custody of any person, other than the child's parent, unless that person has had a background check and is a designated program staff member or university official.
- Do not transport minors in a private or EWU operated vehicle without explicit program permission and following proper university transportation policies and procedures.

### Communication & Interaction

- Establish clear boundaries with minors, e.g. stating what are or are not appropriate conversation topics.
- Do not have contact with minors outside of authorized program environment or activities.
- Treat all minors fairly and consistently. Avoid showing favoritism.
- Understand and respect the boundaries set by minors regarding physical touch or sharing personal information.
- Do not discuss your personal life with minors.
- Do not discuss your own or minor's sex life or activities.
- Do not swear or tell off-color jokes.

### Conduct and Appearance

- Do not smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of minors.
- Follow appropriate professional attire guidelines and avoid provocative or revealing attire.

### Assistance

- Report all situations that may be questionable or a possible breach of these guidelines.
- In sensitive situations and in case of injury, involve another staff member, adult, or parent.
- Seek support from lead staff for high risk situations, such as discussions of very personal stories.
- When in doubt, seek assistance from a program lead.

---

## MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

**All Eastern Washington University employees and volunteers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities.**

Abuse can occur anywhere – at home, school, or during an EWU program. If you have reasonable cause to believe a minor has been abused, or if a minor has disclosed abuse to you, you have a duty to report that abuse to the proper authorities. Failure to do so is a violation of Eastern Washington University policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Even if you're not sure whether something constitutes abuse, it's better to have others help you decide, rather than keep information to yourself.

**At the first reasonable cause to believe that *abuse or neglect* occurred (off-site or on-site), or if you witness abusive behaviors, you must:**

- **If the safety of a minor is of immediate concern, call 9-1-1**
- **For all other cases, call either Child Protective Services (CPS) at 1-866-END-HARM or local law enforcement (EWU PD 509-359-6498) within 48 hours**

If you are unsure about whether a report is justified, you may use Child Protective Services (CPS) as a sounding board to help determine whether a report should be made and to whom.

For cases involving abuse occurring in an EWU program or on EWU property, contact your program lead immediately after making your report to CPS or law enforcement, and report the incident to the Director of Risk Management. Describe what occurred and who was involved, and any details regarding your conversation with CPS or law enforcement.

---

**Confidentiality of information related to abuse is crucial and should be limited to the immediate supervisor, any authorities called, and designated EWU internal reporting recipient(s).**