

Guidelines for Working with Youth



Office of Risk Management
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Guidelines for Programs Involving Youth

The University promotes and engages in many programs, events and activities that involve youth. Whenever possible, the responsibility for supervising youth should be placed with the parents, school districts or other organizations associated with bringing the youth to campus. For instances when the University assumes the responsibility for supervising youth, the following guidelines are offered to assist departments with practices to aid in minimizing risks to youth.

Registration

All campus programs involving youth must register with the Office of Risk Management by completing the Youth Program Registration form.

Background Checks

Background checks are required for all employees and volunteers who perform work involving regular or direct contact with youth. Regular volunteer means a volunteer with the youth service organization who is 18 years of age or older and who has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year. For more information, visit the Human resources website at <https://www.csuchico.edu/hr/employment/background-check-process.shtml>.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Interactions Between Adults and Youth

The following physical contact guidelines promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth and adults.

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 youth in escorting situations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-frontal hugs• Kisses• Showing affection in isolated area• Lap sitting• Wrestling• Piggyback rides• Tickling• Allowing a youth to cling to an adult’s leg• Any type of massage given by or to a youth• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the adults• Compliments relating to physique or body development• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas



Appropriate and Inappropriate Verbal Interactions Between Adults and Youth

Employees and volunteers should not speak to youth in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Employees and volunteers may not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth. The University's guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth • Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family

Managing the Risk When One Youth is Alone with One Adult

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are necessary, employees and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse.

<i>Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When meeting one-on-one with a youth, 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 adults that you are alone with a youth 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.



Electronic Communication and Social Networking Policy

Electronic communication between employees or volunteers and youth should be avoided whenever possible. If electronic communication is necessary, the following guidelines should be followed:

<i>Appropriate Electronic Communication</i>	<i>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sending and replying to text messages from youth ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth's parent• Communicating through "group pages" on Facebook or other designated public forums• "Private" profiles for employees and volunteers which youth cannot access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments• Sexually oriented conversations• Private messages between employees or volunteers and youth• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures

Non-Program Contact with Youth

Many cases of abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities. Contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put program employees, volunteers, and our University at increased risk and should be avoided. If outside contact is necessary, the youth's parent should be present at all times.

Guidelines for Checking Youth in and out of Program Facilities

For programs where the University assumes the responsibility for supervising youth, the following guidelines are offered to assist with checking youth into and out of Program Facilities:

- When anyone (youth participants, guests, residents, other, etc.) enters the facility during operational hours, they must check in with a pre-established program check in area or individual.
- When possible, create a single point of entry and exit in the facility.
- If there is more than one entrance or exit, ensure these other points of access are consistently monitored.
- Establish a protocol for documenting how youth arrive (i.e. with parent, other, on their own) and who is authorized to pick the youth up.

Procedures for Transportation Using Personal Vehicle or Rental Car

Transporting youth in a personal vehicle or rental car may increase the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse because employees or volunteers may be alone with a youth.



When it is necessary to transport youth on field trips and extracurricular activities, employees and volunteers must adhere to the following:

- Ensure the appropriate Program Director or equivalent is notified.
- Contact the Office of Risk Management to determine if a Waiver of Liability form is required.
- When possible, the “rule of three” should be used when transporting youth in vehicles. At least two adults are required to transport a single youth. At least two youth must be present if transported by a single adult.
- Youth are not to be transported without written permission from a parent.
- Youth are only to be transported directly to their destination (i.e. No unauthorized stops made).
- Document beginning and ending time and mileage, the names of youth and employees or volunteers who are involved in transportation, purpose of the transportation, and destination.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with youth while in vehicles.
- Avoid engaging in sensitive conversations with youth.

Procedures for Supervising Bathrooms and Locker Room Activities

When supervising restroom use, employees and volunteers should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youth to enter.

For Group Bathroom Breaks:

- Require employees and volunteers to take groups of two or more youth to the bathroom – following the “rule of three” or more.
- If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the employees or volunteers.
- If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youths as there are stalls.
- Minimize youth of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
- Require employees and volunteers to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.

For single use restrooms:

- Require youth to ask permission to use the bathroom.
- Require all employees and volunteers to frequently check bathrooms.
- Prohibit employees and volunteers from using the bathroom at the same time as youth.
- When necessary to assist young youth in the stalls, employees and volunteers should keep the door to the stall open.

Locker room procedures:

- Require employees and volunteers to stand within earshot of locker room when in use by youth.
- Require employees and volunteers to intermittently and briefly check inside the locker room so users know the locker room is monitored.
- Discourage the use of locker rooms by youth of different ages at the same time.
- Prohibit the use of locker room horseplay such as towel snapping.
- When possible, arrange lockers to minimize unnecessary privacy.



- Require all employees and volunteers to also watch for suspicious or inappropriate locker room conduct.

Guidelines for Program Supervision Ratios

Age of Youth	Adult to Youth Minimum Ratios	
	Overnight Program	Day Program
4-5	1:5	1:6
6-8	1:6	1:8
9-14	1:8	1:10
15-17	1:10	1:12

Per the American Camp Association

Guidelines for Supervising Overnight Activities

Overnight stays present unique risks to youth and employees and volunteers. They often involve changing clothes, groups of both genders and different ages in a more intimate atmosphere than usual, more unstructured activities, and increased supervision demands for employees and volunteers.

- *Supervision Guidelines*
 - Determine the appropriate supervision ratio and schedule employees and volunteers accordingly.
 - Appoint a “lead” employee or volunteer to supervise the overnight stay and to observe overnight activities.
 - Overnight stays on campus:
 - Physical boundaries within the housing facility and program must be clearly defined and explained to the youth;
 - Assign each employee or volunteer to a specific group of youth to supervise. Each employee or volunteer should then maintain a roll sheet that lists all of the youth in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the evening.
 - Assign employees and volunteers to high risk areas in the facility, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, elevators, etc. If it is not possible to assign specific employees and volunteers to these areas, assign specific employees and volunteers to conduct periodic facility “walk-throughs.”
 - Separate the male and female youth into separate rooms and post employees or volunteers at the entrances and exits to these rooms. If this is not feasible, separate males and females by as much space as possible.
 - When performing overnight checks, employees and volunteers should always go in pairs.
 - Overnight stays off campus
 - Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited.



- Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the youth;
- Assign each employee or volunteer to a specific group of youth to supervise. Each employee or volunteer should then maintain a roll sheet that lists all of the youth in his or her group. Head counts and role checks should be conducted routinely throughout the event.
- When applicable, employees and volunteers should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of youth sneaking out (such as by the door).
- In hotel rooms, assign youth to rooms based on sex and age. Employees and volunteers should have their own rooms. If employees and volunteers must share rooms with minors, employees and volunteers must have their own beds and never change or shower in front of minors.
- Employees and volunteers should be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

Guidelines for Supervising Transition and “Free” Times

Transition time and “free” time guidelines:

- Require youth to remain in line of sight of volunteers at all times.
- Specify the volunteer-to-youth ratio.
- Specify narrow authorized areas in the program areas.
- Ensure that all volunteers are assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
- Specific bathroom procedures.
- Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
- Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

Guidelines for Missing Youth

If a youth has been separated from the group, immediately activate procedures for finding a missing youth. The following is suggested:

- Assemble all youth in a secure place under supervision.
- Notify supervisor.
- Institute a systematic search, beginning with high-risk areas (streets, locker rooms, bathrooms etc.)
- If the youth has not been located within 10 minutes, contact law enforcement.
- Maintain communication with supervisor and other employees.
- Notify parents.



How to Report Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors with Youth

Because our University is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that every employee and volunteer participate actively in the protection of youth. All Management Personnel Plan (MPP) employees and all volunteers are considered Mandated (**Limited**) Reporters, unless they are in positions that require the **General** Reporter designation (e.g. employees whose duties involve regular contact with children or who supervise such employees). All Limited and General Reporters are Mandated Reporters which requires them to report observed, or reasonably suspected, child abuse and/or neglect.

General Reporters are legally required to report child abuse or neglect *no matter where it occurs.* **Limited** Reporters are legally required to report child abuse or neglect only if it occurs on CSU premises or at an official activity of, or program conducted by, the CSU.

Reporting is required to specified authorities immediately, or as soon as practically possible to: The University Police Department (530) 898-5555, Chico Police Department (530) 897-4900 or other law enforcement agency. Mandated Reporters can also contact Butte County Children Services Division at (800) 400-0902. Within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident, follow the additional steps listed on the Human Resources website at <https://www.csuchico.edu/hr/eodr/mandatory-reporting.shtml>.

Mandated Reporters must also report any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors on the part of other employees, volunteers or other youth, immediately, or as soon as practically possible by contacting the University Police Department (530) 898-5555, Chico Police Department (530) 897-4900 or other law enforcement agency or the Butte County Children Services Division at (800) 400-0902. Within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident, follow the additional steps listed on the Human Resources website at <https://www.csuchico.edu/hr/eodr/mandatory-reporting.shtml>.