

Children on Campus In WVU Programs

Policy Training Workbook



Introduction

The purpose of West Virginia University Board of Governors Policy 49 is to protect children (any person under the age of 18) on West Virginia University's premises or those involved in University sponsored programs at all geographic locations by providing guidance on reporting requirements for child abuse or neglect; providing guidelines for appropriate supervision of children; and ensuring that West Virginia University and its divisional campuses comply with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding the employment of children.

Who Must Comply With The Policy?

The Policy for children on campus at West Virginia University affects all units of the university, such as athletic camps, academic camps, and other programs, and similar activities intended for minors. Specifically the policy applies to all adults who:

- Interact with children or work in programs that take place on university land or facilities
- Work under the authority and direction of West Virginia University and its divisional campuses
- Work as West Virginia University employees and who interact with or employ children.

For the purposes of the training and this document, the adults (either internal or external to West Virginia University) who will interact with children as part of an activity or program as defined by the policy will be referred to as "program staff member." A program staff member can be WVU faculty, WVU employees, employees of the program that sponsor the activity at WVU, or a volunteer.

Who is Exempt from the Policy?

The policy provides that there must be guidelines and procedures for the adequate supervision for visiting children. Visiting children are individuals under the age of 18, but does not include:

- Enrolled WVU students who are minors.
- Children at general public events where parents or guardians are invited and expected to provide supervision of children.

What Do I Have To Do?

To meet the requirements of the policy, the program staff member (you) must complete this workbook as your training and pass an annual assessment with at least seventy percent accuracy before working with children. In addition, program staff members must pass a background check as explained in the following section.

Screening Program Staff Members

All adults who have direct contact, i.e., those responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or control of a child, with visiting children be subject to an adequate and timely background check. This check must initially be conducted on all program staff members. The screening will then be conducted every three years for employees, faculty, staff, and annually for all other applicants seeking to become members of the program staff, i.e., volunteers that are not employees of WVU.

The program director works with WVU Human Resources to request the criminal background check. If the check reveals a criminal record, the WVU Human Resources Department will determine the suitability for service on a case by case basis.

Training Objectives

After completing this training, you will be able to:

- Protect children who participate in activities and programs
- Act as a positive role model and avoid putting yourself in a risky situation
- Successfully pass the policy assessment

The Facts about Sexual Abuse

Most people consider child sexual abuse to be unacceptable behavior. At the same time, one in four girls and one in six boys experience sexual abuse before their eighteenth birthday. Therefore, we have to assume that child sexual abuse is happening to both boys and girls in our community today.

Sexual abuse thrives in an environment where adults are inattentive, in denial, or afraid to take action. We must actively work to prevent it. We must take steps to create a safe environment for children. The earlier that abuse is caught, the better the chance of recovery for the child.

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse is any sexual act between an adult and a child or between two children when one exerts power over the other.

There can be no case of a consensual act between an adult and a child due to the inherent power dynamic. Forcing, coercing, or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual contact is sexual abuse. However, sexual abuse doesn't always involve bodily contact. If an adult engages in any sexual behavior with a child to meet the adult's sexual interest or needs, it is sexual abuse. Exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism, sexting, and other communication in a sexual manner over the phone or internet is sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse can occur between members of the opposite sex or members of the same sex.

Sexual abuse is a crime. Aiding and abetting a sexual offender is also a crime.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical sexual conduct which because of its severity and/or persistence interferes significantly with an individual's work or education, or adversely affects an individual's living conditions. Harassment also occurs when a person uses a position of authority to engage in unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Warning Signs

A warning sign is an opportunity for prevention and a chance for you to recognize a risk to a child. Sexually abused children may display a wide range of physical or emotional symptoms. While these symptoms do not necessarily indicate that child sexual abuse has happened, they combine to raise your level of concern about the situation.

Sometimes there are no warning signs.

Warning signs differ by the age of the child. You should be aware of the following possible warning signs.

Emotional or Behavioral Signs

- Sexual behavior that is not appropriate for the child's age
- Sexual language that is not appropriate for the child's age
- Overly compliant behavior
- Too perfect behavior
- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Unexplained anger
- Rebellion
- Refusal to be left alone
- Finding reasons not to go home
- Finding reasons to avoid being with a specific person that the child used to spend time with
- Problems sleeping such as nightmares or sleepwalking
- Bed-wetting or bowel-movement accidents in children who have previously outgrown it
- Fire-setting
- Self-destructive behavior
- Suicidal gestures
- Self-mutilation
- Running away
- Making degrading comments about themselves and considering themselves as "damaged goods"
- Falling grades or a change in school behavior
- Using alcohol or drugs

Portrait of an Abuser

A myth of sexual abuse is that the abusers are usually strangers. On the contrary, most child sexual abusers are known to the victim. The abuser could be a family member, friend of the family, teacher, older youth, or coach. In addition, one third of all child sexual abuse is committed by another child under the age of eighteen.

Some abusers are careful and calculated about the process they take to earn the victim's trust. This process of slowly introducing a child to sexual activity is called grooming.

These abusers set up the situation so that they can take advantage of the child. They become friends with potential victims and their families. They earn trust and seek time alone with the children. Sometimes they spend time doing what the child wants. Sometimes, they give gifts. Their goal is to spend time with the child in one adult and one child situations. Then, they may threaten or force the child to participate in sexual contact and maintain secrecy.

Another kind of abuser is a situational offender. They take advantage of the situation and opportunity to find and abuse a victim. These abusers are impulsive and abuse minors to meet their own sexual or control needs.

The Effects of Abuse

The most damaging effects of child abuse are the emotional effects. Abused children can blame themselves, lack trust, and have difficulties forming relationships into adulthood. Often, these children feel that they are worthless or damaged at their core.

As an adult, this may cause the victim to fall short of reaching his or her potential. Also, abused children have trouble regulating their emotions. As they grow into adults, they can struggle with emotions and turn to drugs or alcohol. While not every abused child repeats the cycle as an adult, these children are more at risk for abusing their own children as an adult. The effects of child sexual abuse affect not only the individual, but the community, and the future community.

Adequate Supervision of Children

All programs and units must provide for the appropriate supervision of visiting children at WVU. To do so, below are some general standards that should be considered. Importantly, some programs may be exempted from these standards as they may have certain legitimate programmatic needs or have already established procedures designed to meet the goals and expectations set forth below.

Specifically, adults engaged in patient-care related activities pertaining to children at the University where other policies apply must follow those policies. Similarly, adults who work in laboratories under the control of a Dean or Director that have specific policies that apply to visiting children who serve as interns or volunteers in laboratories must follow those policies.

In all other cases, the following information is applicable.

WVU Behavior Expectations

As the program staff member, you should avoid behaviors that could cause harm or be misinterpreted.

Do Not

- Do not engage in any sexual activity with children.
- Do not make sexual comments to children.
- Do not tell sexual jokes to children.
- Do not share sexually explicit material with children (or assist in any way to provide access to such material).

Your Home

Do Not

- Do not invite individual children to your home.

Any exceptions require authorization by the program director and written authorization by a parent or guardian.

Meetings

Most sexual abuse incidents happen in one adult and one child situations. If you eliminate one adult and one child situations, you reduce the risk of abuse.

Do Not

- Do not be alone with a single child.
- Do not meet with children outside of established times for Program activities.

If one-on-one interaction is required, meet in open, well illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other adults from the program, unless the one-on-one interaction is expressly authorized by the program director, dean, department chairperson or is being undertaken by a health care provider.

To meet with a child outside of established times for program activities, get written parental authorization. This meeting must include more than one adult from the program.

Watch For

Watch for older children or adults who take younger children to secret places or hideaways. Watch for older children or adults who have younger favorites with whom they want to spend time exclusively.

Program directors should consider ensuring that adults supervise older children serving younger children. Program directors, other trusted adults, or parents should be able to observe a program activity at any time.

Communications

Do Not

- Do not engage or allow minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations or related matters, unless required in the role of resident advisors, counselors, or health care providers.
- Do not engage or communicate with minors through email, text messages, social networking websites, internet chat rooms, or other forms of social media at any time except and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the program and the university.

Touching

Touching should generally only be in the open and in response to the child's needs, for a purpose that is consistent with the Program's mission and culture, and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health related purpose, such as the treatment of an injury.

Many children are taught that it is not okay to touch any part that covers where the child wears a bathing suit. These are the private areas. If you must touch a child, ask if it is okay to touch first. Children have the permission and power to say "No" to any unwanted or uncomfortable touch. Any resistance from the minor should be respected.

If restraint is necessary to protect a child or other children from harm, all incidents must be documented and disclosed to the program director and the minor's parent or guardian.

Do Not

- Do not touch children in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate.
- Do not engage in any abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a child including but not limited to verbal abuse, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining.

Watch For

- Watch for other adults who make children uncomfortable by ignoring their personal space limits. Beware of adults who want to touch, tickle or wrestle with a child when the child does not want physical contact or attention.

Alcohol and Drugs

Do Not

- Do not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or when responsible for a child's welfare.

Transportation

When transporting children in a program, more than one adult from the program must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple children will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation. Avoid using personal vehicles, if possible.

Weapons

Do Not

- Possess of or use of any type of weapon or explosive device.

Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with the WVU policy may lead to disciplinary action and/or revocation of the opportunity to use university facilities and land. Therefore, the entire program or activity may be restricted based on the actions of a single program staff member.

In addition, if you are accused of sexual abuse of a child, you will be subject to the appropriate investigations and actions by the criminal justice and social services systems. These actions are separate and apart from the university policy and process.

Reporting Potential Abuse

Remember that child sexual abuse thrives in an environment where adults are inattentive, in denial, or afraid to take action. We must actively work to prevent it. We must actively work to create a safe environment for children. The earlier that abuse is caught, the better the chance of recovery for the child.

Child Self-Reporting

Fewer than one in ten children will report the abuse. Yet, most of these children carry the emotional scars and guilt of the abuse for the rest of their lives.

A child may tell a trusted adult about sexual abuse. If you are the trusted adult, your reaction may be key in beginning the healing process for the child.

1. Believe the child. Preteen children rarely make false accusations about sexual abuse.
2. Remain calm. Don't panic. Listen. If you respond in a judgmental way, the child may refuse to tell more.
3. Ask open-ended questions, such as "What happened next?" Don't ask leading questions and don't press for details.
4. Thank the child for having the courage to tell you about the situation.
5. Tell the child that it is not the child's fault. Remember that the adult is always responsible for his or her behavior.

Think about situations in which a child may tell you about abuse, and have a response plan in case it happens. That way you can control your emotional response better and be ready to help the child.

Your Responsibility

If you suspect abuse or you suspect someone is grooming a child for abuse, you must trust your gut feeling and report it. If you are correct, you have made a difference in a child's life.

“If you see something, say something.”

You may be concerned that you are making a mistake. However, you are protected for reporting a suspicion. Program staff members making a report in good faith will be protected from criminal and civil liability for making the report. Further, it is the policy of the university that no program staff member making a good faith report of suspected abuse or neglect will be retaliated against in the terms and conditions of employment or educational program.

Every member of the university community (including a program staff member) has an obligation to report instances or suspected instances of the abuse of any inappropriate interactions with minors to WVU Police, the program director, and the Title IX Coordinator immediately. This includes information about suspected abuse, neglect, or inadequate care provided by a parent, guardian, or custodian/caretaker.

Every member has a further obligation under state law to contact Child Protective Services at the local county office in the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources or at the Child abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-352-6513), seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.

Reports should first be made to the program director. The program director must then contact the Title IX Coordinator immediately. The Title IX Coordinator will work with you and the program director to make sure all appropriate officials are contacted, including WVU Police and Child Protective services.

You do not have to witness the abuse to report it. It is not your responsibility to verify whether a report or suspicion is truly abuse. You are simply responsible for reporting the situation.

Notice that the Policy for children on campus in West Virginia University Programs indicates that you are obligated to report any type of suspected abuse, neglect or inadequate care rather than just child sexual abuse. You are obligated to report potential abuse or neglect, even if the parent or guardian is the suspected abuser.

Remember . . . You must report any suspected abuse to program director immediately. Then ensure that the Program director contacts the Title IX Coordinator, who can assist with contacting University Police and Child Protective Services.

Removing Access

Upon notification, the program director must remove the accused person's access to potential victims.

Failure to Report

Failure to comply with the policy may lead to disciplinary action and/or revocation of the opportunity to use university facilities and land.

Check Your Understanding

To meet the requirements of the policy, you must complete the assessment and pass with at least a 70%. The quiz is open book. Please go to the following link to complete the quiz:

<http://www.classmarker.com/online-test/start/?quiz=jtf5399be221ab6d>

Once you complete the quiz, you must forward the certificate you receive to your program director or supervisor. Your score will also be sent to Training and Development for tracking.