

## UNH Procedures for the Protection of Minors

The University of New Hampshire is committed to providing a safe environment for all persons, including but not limited to children, and to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and crimes against children. These procedures accompany the UNH Policy for the Protection of Minors to provide more detail for UNH Youth Program Managers and Staff. Any department or program that provides programming or services designed specifically for youth are required to comply with these procedures.

UNH Youth Program Managers (as defined in the UNH Protection of Minors Policy) or their designees are required, at minimum, to adhere to these procedures and to develop additional procedures specific to the population and program area.

These procedures, in order to comply with Federal & State Laws and UNH Policy, are divided into six major categories: A. **Hiring** practices, B. Manager and staff **Training**, C. Staff **Supervision**, D. **Reporting** suspicions of child abuse and neglect, E. General **Management** of youth programs, and F. **Resources**

### A. Hiring Practices

#### A. 1 Candidate Recruitment

A.1.1 Job Posting: Employment or volunteer position postings for staff working with minors in a UNH Youth Program shall include the following language:

“The University of New Hampshire is committed to providing a safe environment for all persons, including but not limited to children, and to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect and crimes against children. All UNH youth program staff shall be subject to a criminal background check as required by NH State Law. Staff and volunteers will also be required to complete periodic child safety training.”

A.1.2 Job Application: Any candidate for a position with a UNH Youth Program must complete a written or online application. The application will include the requirement that any applicant must consent to a criminal background check if offered a position.

#### A.2 Candidate Screening

A.2.1 Interview: Candidates for UNH Youth Program staff positions should attend at least one in-person interview with the hiring manager, if possible. Candidates should be asked about their ability to work safely around minors, to follow rules, establish safe boundaries, and properly supervise minors. They should also be informed of UNH’s process for background checks, reference checks, and training requirements.

A.2.2 Reference Checks: UNH Youth Program Managers shall check at least two references for each finalist for UNH Youth Program positions.

- References should include questions regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children, including examples of disciplining minors (other than the candidate's own children).
- Conduct verbal references when possible to elicit more information and allow for immediate follow up to a response if needed.
- Require a mix of personal and professional references.
- If a former employer will only verify dates and title(s) of the candidate, ask why (it may be company policy). Request to speak with anyone who can provide more information about the candidate.

A.2.3 Final Assessment of Candidates: All concerns about an interviewed candidate's suitability to work safely with minors shall be discussed between the UNH Youth Program hiring manager and the hiring manager's supervisor. UNH HR will provide support in this area.

### A. 3 Background Checks

A.3.1 UNH shall perform criminal record background checks on any faculty, staff or volunteer for a UNH Youth Program prior to the staff member beginning to work with minors.

A.3.2 A UNH program that meets the State of New Hampshire's definition of a Youth Skill Camp will perform more frequent and more extensive background checks. The State defines a Youth Skill Camp as a program that runs for three or more consecutive days for the purpose of teaching skills to minors (under age 18). The background check requirements for a Youth Skill Camp are:

- Annual checks must be repeated at least once per calendar year
- Initial checks must be submitted and the results received before the start date of employment or volunteer appointment with the youth program
- A background check from every state of residence since age 18 for the initial background check *and*
- A search of the National Sex Offender Registry for both initial and annual background checks

A.3.3 UNH Youth Programs that **do not meet** the State of New Hampshire's definition of a Youth Skill Camp will perform background checks on staff and volunteers, as follows:

- a check prior to hire or volunteer appointment, repeated every three (3) years, provided there is no break in service
- a check on every state of residence from the previous seven (7) years
- a search of the National Sex Offender Registry

A.3.4 The Youth Program Manager is responsible for maintaining records of background checks for their staff and volunteers and for ensuring repeated checks are completed within the required timeframe.

A.3.5 Results with any convictions involving (1) causing or threatening direct physical injury to any individual; or (2) causing or threatening harm of any nature to any child or children; or (3) any sex offense, shall be grounds for not hiring a candidate.

These convictions shall also be grounds for a current staff member or volunteer to be dismissed from a UNH Youth Program position. Managers shall consult with their supervisors and UNH HR about these or any other convictions.

A.3.6 UNH's current policy on background checks and the rights of the employee can be found here: <https://www.unh.edu/hr/background-check>

A.3.7 Additional screening requirements regarding transportation of Youth Program participants:

- Program staff or volunteers who transport minors are required to complete a motor vehicle records check every three years
- If utilizing UNH vehicles or rental vehicles staff or volunteers must complete the online UNH Defensive Driving course every three years. Individual programs may require additional training
- Driving a vehicle with more than 8 passengers may require more frequent motor vehicle checks and meeting a higher level of driver qualification standards as required by UNH and/or the NH Department of Transportation

## A.4 Position Hiring

A.4.1 Hire Letters or Volunteer Appointment Letters for any UNH Youth Program position shall include:

“The University of New Hampshire is committed to providing a safe environment for all persons, including but not limited to children, and to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect and crimes against children. UNH youth program staff are subject to periodic criminal background checks and shall complete periodic child safety training. This offer of employment/volunteer service is contingent upon a satisfactory background check.”

A.4.2 Hire Letters or Volunteer Appointment Letters shall include links to the UNH Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors.

## **B. Manager and Staff/Volunteer Training**

B.1 UNH Departments running a UNH Youth Program will ensure that Youth Program Managers are trained on the UNH Policy for the Protection of Minors and these Procedures.

B. 2 Youth Program managers and staff/volunteers will receive a basic Protection of Minors training that includes:

- Responding to incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect
- NH State Laws & Definitions relating to child protection
- Supervision of participants and activities
- Communication with parents and minors
- Prohibited actions and behaviors of staff/volunteers working with minors
- Emergency preparedness
- Managers: Staff/Volunteer hiring practices, including Background check policies

B.2. UNH Youth Program Staff or Volunteers will also receive training specific to the population, program, and activities they supervise.

## **C. Supervision of UNH Youth Program Staff, Volunteers, and Participants**

C.1 UNH Youth Program Managers shall provide regular supervision of Youth Program staff and volunteers, following best practices for the program type, including:

- Promptly responding to any suspicious or improper activity by staff, volunteers and/or participants and reporting any illegal activity to authorities
- Observing and monitoring staff performance

C.2 An Authorized Adult is responsible for supervising minors attending a UNH Youth Program. An authorized adult, as defined by the UNH Policy for the Protection of Minors, is a University employee, student, or volunteer (paid or unpaid) who has successfully completed a criminal background check and completed a University protection of minors training within the timelines outlined in these Procedures.

C.3 Staff-to-Minor Participant Ratios:

Youth Program Managers will ensure adequate overall staff-to-minor children ratios for the ages and populations served and in consideration of the program setting:

Overnight Camps and Programs for Minors, at least:

- one staff member for every five children ages 4 and 5
- one staff member for every six children ages 6 to 8
- one staff member for every eight children ages 9 to 14
- one staff member for every 10 children ages 15 to 17

Day Camps and Programs for Minors, at least:

- one staff member for every six children ages 4 and 5
- one staff member for every eight children ages 6 to 8
- one staff member for every 10 children ages 9 to 14
- one staff member for every 12 children ages 15 to 17

Some activities may require different staff-to-minor ratios and additional adult personnel may be needed for programs serving minors with special needs.

## **D. Reporting and Responding to Incidents of Child Abuse or Neglect**

D.1 Reporting Obligation: NH Law requires that **any person** who has any reason to suspect that a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected must report that suspicion immediately to the NH Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Definitions of abuse or neglect are found in the UNH Policy for the Protection of Minors. Program Managers shall also notify UNH Police that a report has been filed with DCYF.

D. 2 Procedures for reporting suspicion of abuse or neglect and contact information is outlined in the UNH Policy for the Protection of Minors. Additional information is provided here:

D.2.1 UNH staff or volunteers shall report any suspected abuse or neglect - immediately or as soon as it is safe - to the appropriate UNH Youth Program Manager or designee. The information should include: observations of abuse, disclosures about abuse (note the child's own words whenever possible), and behaviors the child has exhibited.

D.2.2 Proof of abuse and neglect is not required to make a report. Staff/Volunteers do not need to determine cause or whether abuse or neglect has actually occurred – that is the responsibility of DCYF or law enforcement.

D.2.3 After a report is made, the UNH Youth Program Manager will document and follow all instructions given by the DCYF or law enforcement authorities. Notes shall be kept confidential to the extent possible.

D.2.4 Contact with the parent or guardian of the child involved shall be established by the UNH Youth Program Manager, as soon as possible and/or appropriate based on the specific case and following the direction of DCYF staff or law enforcement.

#### D. 3 Responding to abuse that occurs during a UNH Youth Program:

D.3.1 If suspected abuse or neglect occurs during the UNH Youth Program and a child is in present danger, the UNH staff or volunteer responsible for the child shall immediately act to protect and separate the child from the person alleged to have caused the abuse, and notify other staff to assist as needed. The incident should be kept as confidential as possible. Reporting procedures as outlined above should be followed.

D.3.2 The Youth Program Manager and staff will ensure the immediate safety of all participants following program emergency policies and procedures. UNH staff shall work toward achieving the continued emotional and physical safety of all children in their care.

D. 3.3 If a UNH staff member or volunteer is suspected of having committed abuse or neglect, then he or she shall be immediately removed from working with children by the Youth Program Manager or his/her designee. The employee or volunteer will remain removed until an investigation is completed and a final determination of continued employment is made in consultation with UNH HR.

### **E. Management of UNH Youth Programs**

E. 1 Youth Program Managers will establish and implement best practice procedures and train staff in areas such as:

- UNH Protection of Minors Policy & Procedures as outlined above in B.2
- Topics specific to that program, population, or environment
- Additional procedures relating to child safety and/or youth program management as outlined by UNH and/or the sponsoring department or unit

E.2 While some of the following behaviors may or may not always meet the definitions of Abuse or Neglect, they are not permitted in a UNH youth program:

- Use of profanity or telling explicit jokes/stories
- Use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Engaging in any type of sexual activity
- Bullying, hazing, fighting, or threatening harm to self or others

E.2.1 If incidents such as those outlined above occur, it shall be noted in writing by the UNH staff or volunteer witnessing the behavior and discussed with the UNH Youth Program Manager and with UNH Human Resources if a staff member is involved.

E.2.2 Any potential disciplinary action for UNH employees will be implemented according to USNH's Personnel Policies.

E.2.3 A minor participant may be dismissed from a UNH Youth Program for violations of these procedures, the UNH Youth Program and/or specific program codes of conduct, and/or additional UNH policies, at the discretion of the UNH Youth Program manager and/or University Administrators.

## **F. Resources**

F.1. Emergency Response Procedures for Reporting Abuse of a Minor:

- NH Division of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) Central Intake Office:  
1-800-894-5533 (in-state) or (603) 271-6562 (out of state)
- UNH Police Department: 911 or (603) 862-1427
- Durham, NH Police Department: 911 or (603) 868-2324
- Manchester, NH Police Department: 911 or (603) 668-8711
- NH Statewide Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-277-5070
- NH Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-886-644-3574

F.2 Additional Resources:

- UNH Human Resources: (603) 862-0500
- UNH Counseling Center: (603) 862-2090
- UNH Health Services: (603) 862-1530
- UNH SHARPP 24/7 Helpline: (603) 862-SAFE (7233) or (888) 271-7233  
Office: (603) 862-3494
- UNH Affirmative Action and Equity Office: (603) 862-2930

State of NH Department of Health & Human Services Youth Camp Program:

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/cclu/ycp/index.htm>

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