

West Virginia University

YOUTH PROGRAMMING POLICY HANDBOOK

For the Morgantown Campus, Health Sciences – Eastern Division, Health Sciences
Charleston Division, and School of Nursing – Bridgeport Campus – All Members of
the University Community

Last Updated January 2026

A printed copy of this document is available upon request.

CONTENTS

I. From the President	1
II. From the Youth Protection Specialist	2
III. About the University and Its Role in Protecting Youth	3
IV. Program Registration and Compliance	4
A. Arrival and Departure Procedures	4
B. Transportation of Youth	5
C. ADA Accommodations and Program Access	6
D. Codes of Conduct	5
E. Emergency Preparedness	7
F. Document Retention	8
G. Program/Site Review	8
IV. Medical Requirements	8
A. Medical Information and Treatment Authorization	8
B. Storing and Dispensing Medicine	8
C. First Aid and EMS	9
D. Immunization Requirements	9
V. Adult Authorization	9
A. Required Training	10
B. Background and MVR Checks	10
C. Supervision Ratio and One-on-One Interactions	11
VI. Reporting Requirements	12
A. Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect	12
B. Reporting a Violation of Standards for Interacting with Youth	13
C. Reporting a Title IX Violation	13
D. Medical or Behavioral Incidents	13
VII. University Standards for Interacting with Youth	13
A. General Contact	13
B. Equitable Treatment	14
C. Sexual Misconduct	14
D. Safety	14
E. Educating Youth	15
F. Consequences for Violating University Standards	15
VIII. During the Program	15
A. Identification of Program Staff and Participants	15
B. Harassment and Discrimination	15
C. Bullying and Violence	15
D. Alcohol, Substance Abuse, Vaping, and Tobacco Policy	16

IX. Unique Programs and Activities	16
A. Virtual Programming	16
B. Residential Programs / Overnight Housing	17
C. Aquatic Activities	17
D. Research Labs	18

I. FROM THE PRESIDENT



To our University community,

For so many people, West Virginia University is a place of learning, exploration, and discovery.

Whether through academic camps, athletic clinics, or community programs, we are especially proud to welcome thousands of youth participants to our programs each year. With that privilege comes a deep responsibility that we embrace wholeheartedly.

Our Youth Protection Program, guided by the Board of Governors Rule 1.7: Rule on Child Protection, ensures we meet this responsibility with care, consistency, and integrity.

This rule sets clear expectations for how we protect and support every youth who participates in a University-sponsored program.

It also ensures every adult who works with young people, whether a faculty or staff member, student, coach, or volunteer is fully trained, vetted through background checks, and committed to maintaining the highest standards of safety and conduct.

In practice, this commitment means:

- Ensuring children are always properly supervised and supported.*
- Providing specialized training to every adult who works directly with youth on how to recognize and report concerns.*
- Establishing clear guidelines for how programs are structured, both in person and online so every child's experience is safe, meaningful, and enriching.*
- Empowering our authorized adults to act immediately and appropriately if they ever suspect abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior.*

To each of you who share this mission, I extend my sincere gratitude. Your dedication, vigilance, and compassion make it possible for WVU to continue offering high-quality, safe, and inspiring programs for young people across West Virginia and beyond.

Let's Go!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael T. Benson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Michael T. Benson
President and Professor of History

II. FROM THE YOUTH PROTECTION SPECIALIST



To our University community,

It's an honor to serve as the Youth Protection Specialist and to support the work our University community does to provide programming and activities for youth across our state.

West Virginia University's commitment to youth engagement and protection are more than words ... it's woven into our land-grant mission of service, education, and community engagement across the state. Every day, members of the University community give their ... your ... time, creativity, and compassion to youth through camps, clinics, mentoring programs, trainings and workshops, and so much more.

This commitment comes with the highest level of responsibility and standard of care. My role, and the Office of Compliance and Prevention Education, is to help provide guidance, training, and support needed to meet that standard. You know your program and how it works best ... we aren't here to tell you how to run it, rather to help with the details you shouldn't have to worry about, so you can focus on the details you should.

Our University community's dedication is what makes the work of all of this possible. "It takes a village," as the saying goes, and our village is strong. Together, we'll continue to ensure that every youth program provides not only an education and enrichment environment, but a safe one, too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Arbogast'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mason Arbogast
Youth Protection Specialist
West Virginia University



III. ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS ROLE IN PROTECTING YOUTH

Adopted in early 2018 by the West Virginia University Board of Governors (BOG), *BOG Governance Rule 1.7 – Rule on Child Protection* establishes the minimum standards that our University follows when interacting with Visiting Children on WVU campuses and sponsored programs. This rule designates the Title IX Coordinator and/or their designee to implement additional guidelines, training and protocols to ensure the appropriate supervision of Visiting Children.

This document is a supplement to BOG Rule 1.7 Section 3.2.1 and does not replace or supersede any institutional, state, or federal policies or laws. The guidelines and requirements outlined throughout this document serve as a minimum standard for WVU Youth Programming, and as such individual youth programs may have additional materials required for their specific programs.

West Virginia University is committed to the protection of youth participating in programs and activities on campus, as well as in WVU-sponsored off-campus events. In furtherance of this commitment and consistent with Board of Governors Rule 1.7, the Office of Compliance and Prevention Education will:

- /// *Stay informed on developments impacting youth protection in West Virginia and nationally.*
- /// *Be an active resource for WVU units planning to host programs involving Visiting Children (“Host Units”), to create a positive and safe experiential learning environment for program participants.*
- /// *Partner with Host Units to ensure they develop, implement and regularly review guidelines for the supervision and safety of Visiting Children.*
- /// *Facilitate an Adult Authorization program to ensure that adults who have Direct Contact with Visiting Children have undergone required background checks and training.*



IV. PROGRAM REGISTRATION AND COMPLIANCE

University Units are required to register their youth programs and activities annually with the Office of Compliance and Prevention Education and it's recommended to register at least 60 days, but no later than 30 days, prior to the start of scheduled activities. Basic logistical information about the program is required upon registration including:

- /// Program Title
- /// Description of Activities
- /// WVU Host Unit
- /// Duration/Occurrences
- /// Location
- /// Expected number and age range of youth participants



The Program Registration Form can be found on compliance.wvu.edu/compliance/youth-protection

Documents that collect and communicate logistical, operational, and personnel information are required to be completed prior to the start of and during a youth program. These documents must be stored by the program director/unit and ready to present to the Youth Protection Specialist upon request. The following forms and documents are required for all WVU Youth Programs:

- /// Emergency Preparedness Plan
- /// Participant Attendance Sheet
- /// Program Staff Attendance Sheet
- /// Visitor Sign-In/-Out Log
- /// Program Staff Codes of Conduct
- /// Participant Codes of Conduct
- /// Medical Treatment Authorization Forms
- /// Transportation Forms
- /// Media Release Forms*

*Media release forms are required if the program intends to take any pictures, videos, or audio of youth participants or program staff.

Programs that do not meet this requirement are subject to disciplinary action that may include the suspension of youth programs within that unit/department for a specified period or until requirements are met.

A. Arrival and Departure Procedures

Youth Programs must—

- /// Have procedures for the orderly arrival and departure of youth participants including the process for the unloading and loading of vehicles, and guidelines for supervision of the area during this time.
- /// Have procedures for signing in and signing out youth participants
- /// Provide written information regarding transportation to parents/legal guardians which include:
 - /// Pick-up and drop-off times and safety procedures related to pick-up and drop-off
 - /// A system to communicate changes or emergencies that would affect a youth participant's pick-up or drop-off time or location and
 - /// Safety rules for van or bus travel if provided by the program
- /// Have forms on-site that record attendance of youth participants, program staff, and visitors, which include:
 - /// Youth Participant Attendance Sheet which includes the first and last name of the youth participant, arrival date and time, departure/pick-up date and time, designated individual dropping them off and designated individual picking them up.

- /// *Program Staff Attendance Sheet which includes the first and last name of the staff, arrival date and time, final departure date and time, signatures of the staff member and whether they are an authorized adult.*
- /// *Visitor Sign-In/Out Sheet which documents any time visitors are present at the program and any time a participant or staff temporarily leave and return to the program.*

The parent/legal guardian who registers the child for the program will be considered the primary point of contact and will be whom the program will communicate with concerning the child and authorizations unless otherwise noted.

B. Transportation of Youth

If a youth program requires the transportation of youth participants during the program, any authorized adult who will be responsible for driving a vehicle with youth participants inside must complete an annual Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check. Adults must never be alone in a vehicle with youth participants. Even with multiple youth, at least two (2) authorized adults must be present per vehicle.



Individuals cannot volunteer or be hired into a driving position if they have had:

- /// *one (1) DUI within the last five (5) years, or*
- /// *two (2) DUIs within the past seven (7) years (until the most recent DUI is older than five (5) years old).*

If an individual has been convicted or pled no contest to three (3) DUIs, they are permanently barred from driving on behalf of the University. In addition to this, if during the past seven years the applicant has:

- /// *three (3) or more speeding, reckless driving, or similar convictions and/or*
- /// *three (3) or more at-fault accidents, or*
- /// *any combination of the above totaling three (3) incidents,*

they cannot drive on behalf of the University. Speeding violations under 10 mph over the limit may be excluded at the discretion of the Committee.

C. ADA Accommodations and Program Access

West Virginia University hosts a wide array of services, programs and activities which are open and available to the public and encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in these programs. Program coordinators should be prepared to both proactively address general accessibility issues as they plan events and participate in the interactive process of accommodation for individuals with disabilities who want to participate.

The ADA Coordinator (ada@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-4750) is available for consultation, advice, referral, training and technical assistance related to program accessibility. Requests for assistance should be made as far in advance as is feasible, but at least three weeks in advance of the event. Common accessibility issues include, but are not limited to:

- /// Ensuring digital content, such as forms, websites, and social media, comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and are able to interact with assistive technology;
- /// Providing alternative formats such as audio recordings, Braille or large print;
- /// Providing ASL interpretation or live captioning services for events;
- /// Choosing accessible event locations;
- /// Identifying and removing physical barriers to access;
- /// Communicating with children who use adaptive communication devices and methods;
- /// Etiquette and guidance on working with individuals in an inclusive, supportive way.

Program participants and/or their parents may also contact program coordinators to seek accessibility information or request accommodations for themselves or their children. In order to ensure a consistent accommodation process, these

individuals should always be referred to the ADA Coordinator at the University using this form: wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eDwlWFclFRP1tMa

Program Director's Role in The Interactive Process of Accommodations

A program director's role in the interactive process is to help identify and implement options for accommodating individuals with disabilities. A program director's knowledge of the program's purpose, planned activities and the accessibility features of the location is essential to planning accommodations. After receiving the relevant information from the program participant to verify their disability and access needs, the ADA Coordinator will reach out to the program director to discuss options and plan implementation.

To prepare for this conversation, the program director should review and be ready to discuss:

- /// The activities planned for the event and required materials;*
- /// The location of the event, known access issues, and accessibility features of the facility; and*
- /// Steps already taken to create an accessible event for everyone.*

After confirming the planned accommodation, the program director will receive a document outlining the accommodation, and the ADA Coordinator will make any referrals or share any resources needed to implement the necessary modifications and services.

D. Codes of Conduct

Codes of Conduct are required from all individuals involved in a youth program, including both youth participants and youth program staff. These forms provide an opportunity to review expectations for behavior during the program. Codes of Conduct establish rules, guidelines and standards to follow while involved in the program and communicates consequences for undesirable behavior.

Units are responsible for providing and maintaining a Code of Conduct for each youth participant and program staff per youth program. Units are encouraged to customize their Codes of Conduct and add items as necessary, but each Code of Conduct must at a minimum include the following:

For Youth Participant Codes of Conduct—

- /// possession or use of alcohol and other drugs, fireworks, guns, and other weapons is prohibited*
- /// parking of participant vehicles must be in accordance with University parking regulations rules and procedures governing when and under what circumstances participants may leave University property during the program.*
- /// no violence, including sexual abuse or harassment, will be tolerated*
- /// hazing of any kind is prohibited. Bullying including verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited*
- /// no theft of property regardless of owner will be tolerated*
- /// no use of tobacco products (smoking is prohibited in all University buildings) will be tolerated*
- /// misuse or damage of University property is prohibited, charges will be assessed against those participants who are responsible for damage or misuse of University property.*
- /// inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices is prohibited including use of such devices in showers, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants*
- /// expectations for parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are to be made clear prior to the start of the program*
- /// complete and return any required paperwork before the program begins*
- /// notify program staff of any accommodation requests before the program begins*
- /// ensure the participant attends every day of the program, be able to sign-in/out on time, and ensure the child is prepared with the necessary gear*

- /// *communicate with staff prior to the program start time if a participant must be absent, arrive late, or leave early*
- /// *work together with program staff to resolve issues that arise with your child*
- /// *Title IX prohibits sex discrimination (including sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse) against youth participants in any of the University's education programs or activities, including recreational and/or athletic programs or services operated by the University.*
- /// *operation of a motor vehicle must be approved by both the program director and participant's parent/legal guardian prior to the event; any unauthorized use is prohibited*
- /// *visual and/or audio recording in "high risk" areas is prohibited. These areas include bathrooms, shower houses, overnight residential housing, and other locations where a participant has an expectation to privacy.*

For Program Staff/Volunteer Code of Conducts—

- /// *University Standards for Interacting with Youth (see Section VIII);*
- /// *Reporting Requirements (see Section VI).*

E. Emergency Preparedness

All programs must have plans ready to keep Youth Participants safe in the event of an emergency. The Emergency Preparedness Plan addresses various circumstances that the Program Director and their staff should be ready for and is intended as a template to guide emergency planning and response by youth programs at West Virginia University. The following should be addressed prior to the start of the program:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| /// <i>Communication Plan</i> | /// <i>Bomb Threats</i> |
| /// <i>Reunification Plan</i> | /// <i>Suspicious Package</i> |
| /// <i>Medical Emergency</i> | /// <i>Threatening Communications</i> |
| /// <i>Severe Weather</i> | /// <i>Utility Failure</i> |
| /// <i>Extreme Heat</i> | /// <i>Hazardous Materials Spill</i> |
| /// <i>Earthquake</i> | /// <i>Lost or Missing Youth</i> |
| /// <i>Fire</i> | /// <i>Field Trips or Travel</i> |
| /// <i>Evacuation and Sheltering</i> | /// <i>Active Attacker – Run, Hide, Fight</i> |

Your response plans should answer these questions:

- /// *How will you signal an emergency -- and the type of emergency -- to those in your program or facility?*
- /// *Who can direct your response (e.g., an evacuation)?*
- /// *When and how will parents/legal guardians be notified of the emergency?*
- /// *Who will decide what to tell your youth participants and when?*
- /// *How will everyone in the facility be accounted for after an evacuation?*
- /// *What will be taken during evacuation?*
- /// *To where will participants, staff, and others be evacuated?*



- // How will participants and staff be transported?
- // Who is responsible for each action documented in your plan?
- // What coordinating actions with the University or community public safety and/or emergency management officials are necessary?

Communication and Reunification Plans

The ability to communicate with and reunify youth participants with their parents/legal guardians following an emergency incident was identified as a priority with WVU Youth Programs and Campus Emergency Preparedness departments.

Reunification is a process that protects both the safety of the youth participant and provides for an accountable change of custody from the University to a recognized parent/legal guardian. In the event of reunification, parent/legal guardians will be notified where the reunification center will be located. Please wait for an official communication from the program director before going to the reunification center.

If a parent/legal guardian is notified that reunification is needed, there are some expectations that parents/legal guardians should be aware of:

- // Be patient and do not pick up your child without checking in.
- // Please remember to bring your photo identification to the check-in center to have your child released to you.
- // Your child will only be released to a parent/legal guardian or designated individual.
- // The designated individual must be a minimum of 18 years old.

For more information regarding communication/reunification and emergency planning, please refer to the WVU Youth Program Emergency Preparedness Plan at compliance.wvu.edu/youth-protection/resources

F. Document Retention

All youth programs are required to follow the timeframes in the University Standards for Records Retention and Disposal: registrar.wvu.edu/files/d/e8fac016-277f-4bd8-9598-82f2724f76f3/standards-for-records-retention-and-disposal.pdf

G. Program/Site Review

Youth programs are subject to a program/site review at least once every three years. This process includes a full review of all documents and records, program staff authorization statuses, a brief interview with the program director (or designee), and a physical site visit by the Youth Protection Specialist. Programs who fail to meet the guidelines and standards outlined in this document and WVU BOGG Rule 1.7 may be subject to disciplinary action, such as a restriction from hosting future youth programs. **Youth programs that pose a significant risk to youth participants risk being shut down.**

IV. MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Medical Information and Treatment Authorization

Programs must collect a Medical Information and Treatment Authorization Form from each youth participant detailing the medication name(s), time(s) to be dispensed, dosage(s), and authorization for the program staff to dispense any medications.



B. Storing and Dispensing Medicine

- // Prescription medications must be in the original containers labeled with the youth participant's name, date, directions, and the physician's name.
- // Non-prescription medications are labeled with the youth participant's name and the date the medication was brought to the program. Non-prescription medication must be in the original container.

- /// The program staff will dispense medications, prescriptions or non-prescription, in accordance with the label directions.
- /// It is the parent's responsibility to pick up all medication at the end of the program. Any medication left after the last day of the program will be discarded. Medication that has expired will be sent home and parents will be notified to provide a replacement.
- /// Program staff are expected to keep a record of all medication dispensed during the program.

C. First Aid and EMS

All youth programs must have a first aid kit on site for the purpose of providing first aid to participants or program staff in incidents of accident or illness. First aid kits should be easily accessible to all program staff and be clearly marked in the case of needing to find and use one. Appropriate supplies and equipment that are in the first aid kit may include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| /// Adhesive Bandages (Band-Aids) | /// Roller Gauze (recommended 1"-3") |
| /// Liquid bandage (individual use packets) | /// Triangular Bandages |
| /// Bandage scissors | /// Elastic Bandages (Ace wrap) |
| /// Blanket | /// Gauze Bandages (self-adhering) |
| /// Cotton | /// Antibiotic ointment (individual use packets) |
| /// Gauze Pads (such as 4" x 4" or 3" x 3") | /// Burn treatment (individual use packets) |
| /// Ice Packs (chemical) (or Ziploc bags if ice is available) | /// First Aid Cream (individual use packets) |
| /// Medical Gloves (Nitrile preferred) | /// Cleansing Towelettes (individual use packets) |
| | /// Medical Tape |

D. Immunization Requirements¹

West Virginia requires all youth participants in programs to have a current immunization record showing the participant has been immunized in accordance with the West Virginia Department of Human Services Minimum State Vaccine Requirements. The immunizations are listed below:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| /// Chickenpox | /// Meningitis |
| /// Hepatitis B | /// Polio (IPV) |
| /// Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) | /// Tetanus |
| /// Whooping Cough | |

V. ADULT AUTHORIZATION

Any adult who has Direct Contact with children at a WVU youth program must complete an authorization process prior to the start of the program. Adult authorization consists of completing the WVU Youth Protection training² and clearing a criminal background check. This applies to all faculty, staff, students and youth program staff who may supervise, lead, guide or take care or control of a youth participant. Adults who have completed these requirements are considered Authorized Adults for the purposes of WVU youth programs.

Youth program staff must complete the training and clear a background check prior to the start of the program and again every 3 years. In the second and third year (non-background check years), the program staff must clear any checks to the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW).

Individuals that are not up to date on their authorization requirements are prohibited from overseeing youth participants at any WVU youth program. Program directors are responsible for ensuring that only authorized program staff oversee youth participants.

¹ For more information on West Virginia immunization requirements, visit <https://wvde.us/student-support-wellness/mental-behavioral-physical-health/nurses/immunizations>

² Prior to May 1, 2026 two separate trainings were required: *Title IX* and *Child Abuse Prevention*. These have been combined into the *WVU Youth Protection* training. Individuals who completed both of these previous trainings within the past three years meet the requirement for authorization.

A. Required Training

WVU Youth Protection training is required for any employee, student, parent/legal guardian, independent contractor, or volunteer who will serve as program staff/an authorized adult and are valid for three years. Training can be completed either in-person or online and takes approximately 45 minutes. Groups can request in-person trainings and should prepare one hour for instruction and answering questions.

Questions regarding the WVU Child Abuse Prevention training, scheduling online or in-person training should contact our Youth Protection Program Specialist at youthprotection@mail.wvu.edu or by phone at 304-293-5600.

B. Background and MVR Checks

Background clearance is required for any employee, student, parent/legal guardian, independent contractor, or volunteer who will serve as an authorized adult and is valid for three years. This process can take anywhere from 12 hours to weeks, so program directors should submit program staff needing checked at least 30 days prior to the start of the event.

While background clearance is valid for three years, a sex offender registry check must be cleared yearly. This is submitted at the same time as the background check ("year one"), but in years two and three a sex offender check must be cleared via NSOPW: nsopw.gov/search-public-sex-offender-registries

Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) clearance is required for adults responsible for transporting youth participants during the program and are valid for one year. MVR checks are usually much quicker but should be submitted at least 15 days prior to the event.

Program directors can use the Youth Protection Compliance Portal at compliance.wvu.edu/youth-protection to request checks for their youth program staff. Program directors are expected to maintain records for their youth program staff and to complete necessary checks prior to the start of programming.

The following outlines the process for conducting background checks on individuals falling under BOG Rule 1.7:

- /// *Program Director requests Background Check and/or MVR check through the "Youth Program Background/MVR Check Request Form". This request is saved for the user to easily check later.*
- /// *Background checks will be initiated by the WVU Office of Compliance and Prevention Education through the University's third-party vendor. Once initiated, the candidate will receive an email from the third-party vendor with instructions. The candidate follows the instructions contained in the email and logs into a secure website where they will enter all necessary information.*
- /// *The third-party vendor will send out an email to the Youth Protection Program Specialist once the background check is complete. If the results are clear, the clearance date will be updated in the program director's request and the WVU Adult Authorization Database.*
- /// *At no time is the Program Director given a copy of the background check or told what the check may contain.*
- /// *If there is an alert on the background check, the candidate will receive an email and from that point forward will no longer have access to the background check. The candidate is entered into the youth protection database, which will flag an alert if the individual tries to work or volunteer for any department or program through the University in the future.*

If these requirements have not been met, the adult cannot work for or participate in the program.

Ongoing Self-Disclosure Requirement

All individuals who are authorized must notify the Youth Protection Specialist of any arrest or conviction of a serious misdemeanor or felony, and/or any arrest or conviction within 72 hours of knowledge of such arrest or conviction if arrested/convicted after a cleared background check.



C. Supervision Ratio and One-on-One Interactions

When parents/legal guardians are not expected to stay and supervise their child at an event, standards must be in place to always ensure proper supervision of youth participants. These standards must take into consideration the number and age of youth participants, whether the event involves overnight stay or is day-only and the activities involved during the program.

The table³ below outlines the maximum adult-to-youth ratio* for youth programming:

PARTICIPANT AGE	NUMBER OF ADULTS	OVERNIGHT PARTICIPANTS	DAY-ONLY PARTICIPANTS
5 years or younger	1	5	6
6 - 8 years	1	6	8
9 - 14 years	1	8	10
15 - 18 years	1	10	12

**Only those considered authorized adults may count toward this ratio, and adults must be at least two (2) years older than the youth with whom they are working with.*

Example: If there are between 11-20 youth participants in a group— aged ten to twelve years old— two adult staff are required to be present (per the previous table's ratios). Three adults would be required if the group had between 21-30 youth participants.

When the program serves youth with physical, medical, cognitive, or behavioral needs who require additional staff support to participate in the activity (e.g., participants with physical, mental, cognitive or psychiatric disabilities), the following ratios³ of staff or personal attendants to youth are suggested:

YOUTH PARTICIPANT NEEDS	NUMBER OF ADULTS	NUMBER OF YOUTH
Needing constant individual assistance or support	1	1
Needing close but not constant assistance or supervision	1	2
Needing occasional assistance	1	4
Needing minimal assistance	1	5

³ The ratios provided in the tables on this page follow guidance by the American Camp Association. More information can be found at <https://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/overview/standards-glance>

"Rule of Three"

Appropriate supervision and interaction between participants and staff are key to safety. In addition to the above ratios, program staff are required to follow the minimum standard of **"Rule of Three"**, which is 'two (2) authorized adults to every one (1) youth participant' or 'two (2) youth participants to every one (1) authorized adult'.

At no time should program staff be alone with a youth participant outside the presence of others. If a one-on-one interaction is unavoidable or for programmatic purposes, use the following precautions:

- Meet in open, well illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other program staff;
- Meet in a location with visual and audio recording on and accessible;
- See if a second authorized adult is nearby to sit-in or stay near.

In "high risk" areas or situations, two authorized adults must always be present regardless the number of youth participants. Examples of these include but are not limited to:

- Restroom and shower areas,
- Transportation of youth participants during the program,
- Residential housing for an overnight program

VI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A. Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect

West Virginia Code § 49-2-803 requires certain individuals with knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect to report it immediately to the appropriate authorities. This mandatory reporting requirement applies to all adults involved in WVU youth programs. Under West Virginia law a mandated reporter who knowingly fails to report any known or suspected child abuse or neglect can be found guilty of a misdemeanor, face time in jail and fines. West Virginia Code § 49-2-810 prohibits retaliation against good faith reporting of suspected abuse or neglect.

Entities you are required to report to are included on the next page.

If an individual suspects a child is being abused or neglected, they are required to report it to all of the following entities:

- West Virginia Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services
 - 1-800-352-6513
- West Virginia University Office of Compliance and Prevention Education
 - compliance.wvu.edu/report
- If sexual abuse or severe physical abuse is involved, West Virginia State Police
 - 304-293-6400 (Crimes Against Children Unit)
- If the situation presents an immediate danger, call 911

Information to provide when you call:

- Information about the youth, e.g., name, age, contact information and name of parent/legal guardian(s).
- Information about the person suspected of committing the abuse or neglect.
- The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect, including location and description of the incident.
- Any knowledge of previous incidences.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit compliance.wvu.edu/resources

B. Reporting a Violation of Standards for Interacting with Youth

If you believe a program staff member has violated the Standards for Interacting with Youth you must notify the Office of Compliance and Prevention Education at 304-293-5600 or youthprotection@mail.wvu.edu. If you believe the program staff has violated the Standards in a way that raises concerns for abuse or neglect, you must first follow the steps for reporting child abuse and neglect (see Section VI-A).

If you are unsure about whether someone's behavior is a violation of the standards, you can consult with your supervisor or WVU's Youth Protection Prevention Specialist with your concerns and they can provide guidance.

C. Reporting a Title IX Violation

WVU youth programs must abide by federal Title IX requirements, prohibiting sexual assault, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, stalking, fondling, or dating violence. Employees and program staff are required to report to the Title IX Coordinator if they believe a Title IX violation has occurred at a WVU youth program:

/// *James Goins Jr., Director of Compliance, Title IX Coordinator*

/// 304-293-8363

/// james.goins@mail.wvu.edu

/// compliance.wvu.edu/report

D. Medical or Behavioral Incidents

Youth program directors are required to report significant medical or behavioral incidents. A "significant incident" is any event involving:

- /// *Illness or injury requiring medical intervention, such as calling EMS or a trip to the emergency room.*
- /// *An individual (staff or participant) being sent home due to behavior or violation of the code of conduct.*
- /// *Any incident that results in a suspension/expulsion of a program staff or youth participant during or after the program.*

VII. UNIVERSITY STANDARDS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH

West Virginia University has a responsibility to safeguard the youth in our care. As such the University Standards for Interacting with Youth describes the minimum expectations that we hold for youth program staff and other personnel who interact with youth in a University program. This Standard (section VII.A-F) must be included in all youth program staff Codes of Conduct.

A. General Contact

Expectations—

- /// *At a minimum, observe the "Rule of Three," as defined in Section V-C of the West Virginia University Youth Programming Policy Handbook.*
 - /// *Limit physical contact to purposes that are consistent with the program's mission and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health related purpose, in the presence of another staff member, and with the consent of the youth.*
 - /// *Use program-sponsored e-mail, phone and social media accounts for communication when there is an essential educational or programmatic reason to do so.*
 - /// *Disclose any pre-existing relationships with youth in the youth program immediately to the program lead. Abide by these standards while affiliated with the youth program, despite any pre-existing personal relationships.*
 - /// *If direct communication with youth is necessary, always include at least the child's parent/legal guardian or another WVU authorized adult.*
-

Prohibited—

- /// *Never be alone with a single youth where you cannot be observed by program staff or other adults.*
- /// *Do not act in a manner that can be perceived as physical or verbal abuse.*
- /// *Do not discipline youth by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.*
- /// *Avoid engaging in purposeful communication or contact including in-person meetings, phone or other electronic communication including social networking, with youth outside of sponsored program activities.*
- /// *Never engage in texting or other forms of electronic one-on-one communication between a single adult staff and youth participant.*

B. Equitable Treatment

Expectations—

- /// *Treat all youth equitably, i.e. fairly and consistently, regardless of their actions or behavior, sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, culture, place of birth, age, class, ability, health, citizenship, language, or other identities.*

Prohibited—

- /// *Do not discriminate against a youth based on their sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, culture, place of birth, age, class, ability, health, citizenship, language, or other identities.*
- /// *Do not give personal gifts to youth or their parents, e.g., any item intended to give a youth and/or parent special attention that is not given to others.*

C. Sexual Misconduct

Expectations—

- /// *Understand and respect the physical and personal boundaries set by youth.*

Prohibited—

- /// *Do not engage in sexual contact of any kind (including any verbal or physical contact that can be perceived as sexual in nature.)*
- /// *Do not date or become romantically involved with youth.*
- /// *Do not discuss your own or a youth's sex life or sexual activities.*
- /// *Do not share sexually explicit material with youth.*

D. Safety

Expectations—

- /// *The safety of youth must be your primary concern above all others.*
- /// *Report any concerns for suspected abuse or neglect of a youth to authorities per University policy requirements.*
- /// *Notify University representatives per policy requirements of any violations of these standards for interacting with youth.*
- /// *Follow all University transportation procedures for transporting youth.*

Prohibited—

- /// *Do not possess, sell, use, or be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco or illegal drugs while engaged in program activities or on site.*
- /// *Do not bring or carry a weapon into the program.*
- /// *Do not transport youth in a personal vehicle.*

E. Educating Youth

Youth should be informed in an age-appropriate manner of their right to set their own physical limits for personal safety. They should be encouraged to tell an adult if someone is abusing them, or if they are in a situation or observe something that makes them uncomfortable.

F. Consequences for Violating University Standards

West Virginia University takes these matters seriously. In the case of suspected abuse or neglect of a youth or violations of the Standards for Interacting with Youth, 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 youth participating in the program. See BOG Rule 1.7 Section 5 for more information.

VIII. DURING THE PROGRAM

In addition to preparation and staffing compliance, there are requirements, expectations and guidelines for when youth participants are present and your program is happening.

A. Identification of Program Staff and Participants

Youth program staff and participants must be easily identifiable and distinguish themselves from non-staff/participants at all times. Examples of this can include wearing shirts, lanyards, badges, names tags, etc. Whichever display option is chosen, it must be clearly displayed during the entirety of the program unless programmatic activity wouldn't allow it (i.e. swimming, rock climbing, etc.)

B. Harassment and Discrimination

WVU has zero-tolerance for harassment and discrimination. Any form of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited at WVU youth programs and may result in dismissal from the program. This includes, but is not limited to, harassment or discrimination of a sexual, religious, racial or ethnic nature, or retaliation against someone who has made a complaint of harassment and/or discrimination. All program staff and participants are expected to maintain a fair and welcoming environment free from harassment and discrimination.

For more information on Title IX, including resources and reporting options, visit compliance.wvu.edu/title-ix

If harassment and/or discrimination of any kind is witnessed or suspected, program staff/directors are required to report it to the Title IX coordinator, James Goins Jr. at:

- /// 304-293-8363
- /// james.goins@mail.wvu.edu

C. Bullying and Violence

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Youth attending programs are susceptible to potential bullying situations. To prevent and target bullying tactics, program staff must create a positive and caring environment.

If a behavior does arise that causes a disturbance, it is remedied immediately. West Virginia University has zero-tolerance for bullying. Please reiterate the following to youth participants prior to and during the program:

- /// *If a bully bothers you, ask the program staff or director for help.*
- /// *Report bullying when you see and hear about it. Telling is not tattling.*

Any form of physical, sexual or verbal violence is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

D. Alcohol, Substance Abuse, Vaping, and Tobacco Policy

The Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco (including e-cigs/vaping) and illegal substances is strictly prohibited while participating in or in the presence of a WVU Youth Program. The University is committed to being a drug-free campus. Youth participants and program staff suspected of possessing, selling, or distributing drugs will be reported to the West Virginia University Police Department (WVUPD) and dismissed from the program. The university prohibits the use of all forms of tobacco products, including e-cigs and other vaping devices, on the university campus. Youth participants and program staff must refrain from using tobacco during the program session.

- /// *Participants/Staff may not possess or use alcohol, tobacco (including ecigs/vaping) or illegal substances on or around the university owned/leased property.*
- /// *Participants/Staff may not return to the university campus intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.*

WVU youth programming has zero-tolerance for drugs and alcohol.

IX. UNIQUE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

A. Virtual Programming

The following describes the minimum expectations WVU holds for program staff who have virtual interactions with youth in a University youth program. Virtual interactions may include the use of technology, but are not limited to, email, smart phones, text messaging, learning management systems, online communications platforms, and social media to carry out program activities.

The following standards apply to any interaction between youth program staff and participants, whether held in-person, online, or via other technologies. Specifically, in virtual settings, program staff are expected to:

- /// *Limit virtual contact to purposes consistent with the program's mission and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health-related purpose, in the presence of another staff member and/or participant's parent/legal guardian and with the consent of the participant and participant's parent/legal guardian.*
 - /// *Conduct all virtual interactions in a manner that promotes safety and complies with the general contact guidance outlined in the Standards for Interacting with Youth, including:*
 - /// *Observing the "Rule of Three" in online meetings and all other virtual communications.*
 - /// *Virtual interactions are considered "high risk" areas and require at least two authorized adults present.*
 - /// *Using only program-sponsored e-mail, phone, video conferencing, or social media platforms.*
 - /// *Avoiding text and electronic one-on-one communication between a single program staff and participant. Instead, use technologies and platforms which are accessible by multiple program staff (e.g., a shared email inbox or a group chat functionality) and/or the participant's parent.*
 - /// *Not engaging in purposeful communications or contact, including phone or electronic communication or social networking, with youth participants outside of sanctioned program activities.*
 - /// *Treat all participants equitably, including ensuring equitable access to and support for any technology needed to fully participate in program activities.*
-

- /// Proactively address harassment, bullying, or other inappropriate conduct of youth participants.
- /// Never share sexually implicit or explicit content online with participants.
- /// Be mindful of your online presence and the content shared publicly via your social media or other platforms.
- /// Ensure online and virtual interactions are conducted via safe, known platforms that limit risks to youth participants.

B. Residential Programs / Overnight Housing

Youth Programs that include residential/overnight housing must have:

- /// Written permission signed by the parent/legal guardian allowing the youth participant to stay overnight.
- /// Age-appropriate curfew for participants, no later than midnight.
- /// Youth programs must provide overnight supervision for their participants with sufficient authorized adults to maintain appropriate ratios. If private residence, program staff must not enter participant rooms alone. If it is necessary to enter a room to check on a participant, two authorized adults must be present, and the door must remain open.
- /// When possible, youth participants of different sex should be separated by some barrier other than a wall (i.e. floors or separate buildings), and must be supervised by program staff of the same sex.
- /// If staying at a University-owned building or residence, youth participants and program staff are required to follow the facility's policies. University Housing staff are responsible solely for building operations, including operation of the front desk, and are not intended to serve as supervision for participants.
- /// Youth participants are not permitted to share a bed unless related and directly allowed by the participants' parent/legal guardian. Related participants cannot be required to share a bed for the sake of saving cost/space.

C. Aquatic Activities

Programs that include aquatic activities such as swimming or use of watercraft must coordinate with the facility to review the regulations of the aquatic areas, as well as supervision protocols for participants while at the pool. These regulations may vary depending on location. The camp must have an appropriately certified lifeguard (including first aid and CPR/AED) to guard each aquatic activity. Program directors are responsible for verifying these qualifications prior to the start of the program.

Aquatic areas are considered high risk for the purpose of "Rule of Three," meaning at least two authorized adults must always be present in addition to the supervision ratios found in Section V-C.

Natural Bodies of Water Used for Aquatic Activities

Natural bodies of water, as defined by the American Camp Association, include lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, and the ocean. Physical control of these areas is often not possible, so understanding the hazards that could be present is paramount. Areas of steep drop off, ledges, undercurrents, and submerged hazards should be eliminated as much as possible. Controlling the boundaries of the swimming area to eliminate hazards is extremely important.

Guidelines for activities within designated depths of the water should be clearly stated, as well as ensuring participants understand boundaries and hazards (e.g., submerged rock or undercurrents) if the program is utilizing open water as a swimming area. While specific rules for swimming activities may vary by program/location, emergency procedures should be included in the program's Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Program Staff Swimming

Rules regarding staff swimming with participants may be implemented as necessary. Factors to consider should include the ages of the participants, size of group, time of day, and type of activity/facility. If staff swimming with program participants is permitted, it is important that the rules and expectations for staff highlighted in the Standards for Interacting with Youth are addressed during staff orientation.

Watercraft Use

Programs with activities that include the use of a watercraft (kayak, canoe, paddleboard, etc.) must be led or supervised by a certified instructor in that area. Additionally, if the program takes place in a river, then program staff would also need to be certified in "swift water rescue." Program staff interested in receiving watercraft certification are encouraged to connect with the American Canoe Association, which certifies individuals as canoe instructors, kayak instructors, and stand-up paddle board instructors. Alternatively, a company that specializes in rentals or lessons of the watercraft can be hired to conduct this program topic.

D. Research Labs

Policies and guidelines related to youth in research labs can be found in *Appendix 1: Youth in Research Labs Policy*