# Youth Programs: Minimum Operational Requirements – Policy Template

**I.  Background**

The University strives to offer a safe and enjoyable educational environment for all minors attending its programs. In support of that goal, this document sets forth minimum requirements for conducting University youth programs.

**II.  Applicability**

These requirements apply to all University youth programs, except programs sponsored by Extension (including 4H) that are covered by the Extension Volunteer Selection Process and other youth program policies. The criminal background check requirements do not apply to youth programs whose format requires the participating minor to be accompanied at all times by a parent, legal guardian, or other adult relative (e.g., Grandparents University, Take your Child to Work Day). The criminal background check requirements do apply to youth programs sponsored by external organizations and occurring on campus or in University facilities. The criminal background check requirements do apply to on-site vendors contracted for services provided for youth programs.

**III. Consequences**

Programs that fail to comply with University-wide requirements for facilitating youth programs may be subject to suspension or termination of operations. Relevant unit administrators will be notified of policy violations, and individuals who violate the policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Discipline for violations of this policy will be handled in accordance with applicable employee disciplinary policies and procedures.

**IV.  Definitions**

A.  Minor:  A person under the age of eighteen who is not enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the University. Students who are "dually enrolled" in University programs while also enrolled in elementary, middle, or high school are not included in this policy unless such enrollment includes a residential component in University housing.

B.  Youth Athlete:  An individual who participates in an athletic activity and who is under 18 years of age.

C.  Youth Athletic Activity: A program or event, including practices and competition, during which youth athletes participate or practice to participate in an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, entity, or individual.

D.  Youth Program:  Any class, camp, program, or other learning activity that includes participation by minors. The term "youth program" does not include (1) private, personal events (e.g., birthday parties, weddings) that occur at University facilities, or (2) events open to the general public (e.g., intercollegiate athletic events, concerts, Wharton Center events).

E. One-on-one Contact: Unsupervised interaction between a minor and any adult who is not the minor's parent or legal guardian. One-on-one contact limitations do not include situations in which more than one minor or staff/volunteer is present.

**V.  Criminal Background Checks**

*A.  Requirements*

All individuals who have unsupervised access to minors at a youth program must have been subject to a criminal background check (including sex offender registry check) through the Human Resources Department within the last twelve months. At least 30 days prior to the start of their program, an external organization sponsoring a youth program on campus or using facilities for a youth program must certify that all adults working or volunteering at the program have been subject to a criminal background check (including sex offender registry check) yielding satisfactory results within the last twelve months. Faculty, academic staff, and executive management involved with University youth programs must comply with the applicable policies and procedures regarding self-disclosure processes outlined in the Faculty Policies and Procedures regarding Criminal Background Checks for Faculty, Academic Staff and Executive Management.

*B.  Exceptions to Background Check Requirements*

* 1. UNIVERSITY students hosting siblings or other family members during campus events (e.g., sibling weekend) are not required to have a criminal background check.
  2. UNIVERSITY students hosting high school students as part of a pre-enrollment visit for prospective students are not required to have a criminal background check.
  3. UNIVERSITY students who attend a youth program in order to work or volunteer under the direct supervision of a UNIVERSITY employee are not required to have a criminal background check.
  4. Individuals under the age of 18 who volunteer or work under the direct supervision of a UNIVERSITY employee are not required to have a criminal background check.
  5. External organizations using UNIVERSITY facilities open to the general public are not required to provide certification of criminal background checks, even if minors are present.
  6. Youth programs that involve large numbers of one-time volunteers are exempt from the criminal background check requirement for volunteers if the volunteers work only in public spaces and with supervision by a full-time University employee. Such youth programs are required to compile a list of all volunteers prior to the event, check the names of all volunteers against the National sex offender registry database, and require photo identification from volunteers at the start of the program.

*C.  Criminal Background Check and Sex Offender Registry Results*

The following types of convictions will normally render an individual ineligible to work or volunteer at a University youth program:

* 1. Drug distribution activity or felony drug possession
  2. Sexual offenses
  3. Crimes of violence involving physical injury to another person
  4. Child abuse, molestation or other crimes involving child endangerment
  5. Murder
  6. Kidnapping
  7. Any other felony or crime involving moral turpitude

Individuals who have unsupervised access to minors at a youth program may generally not be listed on any sex offender registry. Individuals who do not have satisfactory criminal background check results will be provided with an opportunity to explain the results and give clarifying information to Human Resources before a final decision regarding eligibility is made.

**VI.  Operational Requirements.**

A.  Program Handbook. Units sponsoring a youth program must develop and distribute a program handbook to participants and their parents/legal guardians. The program handbook must include the following information:

1. Procedures for notifying a minor's parent/legal guardian in case of emergency, including medical or behavioral situations.

2. Information for parents/legal guardians on how to contact the participant during the program.

3. Program rules, including conduct expectations, for participants in the program, including the fact that participants must abide by all University regulations and may be removed from the program for violation of such rules. Program rules must include the following:

* Prohibition against the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, fireworks, guns, and other weapons.
* Rules about when participants may leave campus during the program.
* Clear statement that no violence of any kind will be tolerated.
* Clear statement that sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and other sexually inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated.
* Clear statement that harassment in violation of the University Anti-Discrimination Policy will not be tolerated.
* Clear statement that hazing and bullying (physical, verbal, or cyber-bullying) will not be tolerated.
* Clear statement that misuse or damage of University property is prohibited, and participants may be financially responsible for damage or misuse of University property.
* Clear statement that prohibits the inappropriate use of cameras, imaging and other digital recording devices, including camera, imaging, and other digital recording applications on smart phones and mobile devices, in showers, restrooms, locker rooms, and other areas where privacy is expected by participants.
* Rules that identify areas of the program facilities where participants may be restricted from entering (e.g. storage rooms, equipment rooms, athletic training rooms, staff/faculty/administrator offices) and/or equipment that participants may be restricted from using.

4. A description of the process to be followed if a participant, group leader, or other individual associated with a youth program is alleged to have violated University policies or conduct rules of the program, including the process for dismissal and removal from the program.

5. A description of the process to be utilized for the parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult to pick up the participant if he/she is dismissed from the program early.

6. Inclusion of the University's model statements describing how requests from accommodation may be made for participants with disabilities.

7. Inclusion of the University Anti-Discrimination Policy.

8.  Housing specific policies, if applicable, addressing:

1. Curfew time that is age-appropriate for participants;
2. In-room visitation by participants of the opposite gender;
3. Visitation by non-participant guests restricted to public spaces in the building and only during approved hours specified by the program;
4. Requirement that separate accommodations are provided for adults and minors, except when housing minors with their parents or guardians; and
5. Requirement that program participants, staff, and volunteers must comply with all security measures and procedures specified by UNIVERSITY Police and Residence Education and Housing Services.

B.  Program Requirements. Units are expected to adhere to the following program requirements when conducting youth programs:

* 1. Youth program directors/coordinators must register each youth program with the UNIVERSITY Youth Program Office at least 60 days prior to the start of the program.
  2. Authorized personnel/signatories for non-University groups using University facilities must provide to the sponsoring unit satisfactory evidence of compliance with all of the requirements of this Policy at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled use of University facilities, as well as an approved agreement for use of University facilities, if applicable.
  3. Obtain all media, medical, and liability releases as a part of the program registration process. All data gathered shall be confidential, is subject to rectors retention guidelines, and shall not be disclosed, except as provided by law.
  4. Utilize the standard medical treatment authorization form for all participants.
  5. Utilize the standard media release and parent/guardian consent form for all program participants as part of the registration process.
  6. Utilize the standard parent/guardian release of responsibility form ("Pick-up/Drop-off/Commuter Form") for all participants who are authorized to commute independently or be released to a specified adult other than the participant's parent or legal guardian during the duration of the specified program.
  7. Provide adequate supervision for minors during the program. In determining the appropriate level of supervision, the program will consider the number, age, and gender of participants, the activities involved, the age and experience of staff / volunteers, and the supervision standards for residential and non-residential programs provided by the American Camp Association (ACA).
  8. In the event of a medical emergency, contact local emergency medical services.
  9. Follow appropriate safety measured approved by the Office of Environmental Health & Safety for laboratory and research work.
  10. Minors must be assigned housing separately from adults.
      1. Exception: a minor may be housed in the same room as the minor's parent/guardian.
  11. Vendors contracted for services provided for youth programs must meet the vendor requirements outlined in Section 75 of the University's Manual Business Procedures.

C.  Annual Staff Training. Units are expected to provide annual training to program staff and volunteers that addresses the following topics:

* 1. Program responsibilities and expectations
  2. Program policies and procedures
  3. What to do in the event of a crises or emergency
  4. Safety and security precautions
  5. Prohibited harassment and reporting obligations
  6. University reporting protocols for suspected child abuse, sexual assault, or child pornography
  7. University Anti-Discrimination Policy
  8. Prohibition of retaliation against minors, families, parents, guardians, and staff/volunteers who report allegations of inappropriate conduct including but not limited to abuse, neglect, assault, harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, child pornography, furnishing alcohol, drugs, and/or sexual materials to a minor, and violations of the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policy
  9. Conduct rules for staff and volunteers outlined in this policy
  10. Units operating a youth athletic activity must comply with the training requirements of the Michigan sports concussion law

D.  Participant Orientation. Units are expected to provide orientation to participants that addresses the following topics:

* 1. Program safety and security procedures
  2. University rules, program rules, and behavioral expectations
  3. University reporting protocols for suspected child abuse and sexual assault
  4. University Anti-Discrimination Policy

E.  Conduct Rules for Youth Program Staff and Volunteers.  Units are expected to notify program staff and volunteers of applicable program rules, including conduct expectations. Program staff and volunteers must abide by all University regulations and may be removed from the program for violation of such rules. Program rules for program staff and volunteers must include the following:

* 1. The supervision ratio expectations addressing the number of adults who must be present during activities where minors are present.
  2. Youth program directors and coordinators must make reasonable efforts to limit one-on-one contact between adults and minors participating in youth programs.
     1. Reasonable efforts must be made to have two or more adults present during activities where single minors are present.
     2. Reasonable efforts must be made to involve more than one adult in any direct electronic contact with single minors.
     3. Staff/volunteers should make reasonable efforts to have another adult staff/volunteer present when addressing single participants in private areas (e.g.: restrooms, bedrooms, study lounges, and similar areas).
     4. If handling an emergency when only one minor is present, the adult responding should make reasonable efforts to contact another adult to come and assist as immediately as possible.
     5. Staff expected to contact single minors for official academic or programmatic recruitment may do so as directed by their supervisor by E-mail or phone call during standard business hours.
  3. Adults may have no personal, non-programmatic related electronic communications with participants (email, phone, text, Facebook, etc.) during the youth program.
  4. Adults may not take pictures of minors or post information about minors to social media sites without permission from a parent/guardian.
  5. Adults may not meet participants off-site or off-hours.
  6. Adults may not give personal gifts to participants.
  7. Adults may not possess, consume, or be under the influence of alcohol, medical marijuana, or illegal drugs at any time the adult has responsibility for minor participants.
  8. Adults may not possess a firearm or other weapon at any time during the youth program.
  9. Adults may not violate the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policy.
  10. Adults may not engage in abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a minor.
  11. Adults may not strike, hit, administer corporal punishment of any kind to, or touch a minor in an inappropriate or illegal manner.
  12. Adults may not pick up minors from or drop off minors at their homes, other than the driver’s child/children, or except as specifically authorized in writing by the minor’s parent/legal guardian.
  13. Adults may not provide alcohol or illegal drugs to any minor.
  14. Adults may not provide prescription drugs or any medication to any minor except for medical professionals specifically authorized in writing by the parent or legal guardian as being required for the minor’s care or emergency treatment.
  15. Adults may not make sexual materials in any form available to minors or assist them in any way in gaining access to such materials.
  16. Adults may not retaliate against minors, families, parents, guardians, and staff/volunteers who report allegations of inappropriate conduct including but not limited to abuse, neglect, assault, harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, child pornography, furnishing alcohol, drugs, and/or sexual materials to a minor, and violations of the University’s anti-discrimination policy.
  17. If an allegation of inappropriate conduct including but not limited to abuse, neglect, assault, harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, child pornography, furnishing alcohol, drugs, and/or sexual materials to a minor, and violations of the University’s anti-discrimination policy is made against an adult participating in a program, including program staff/volunteers, the accused adult must be removed from any further participation in programs and activities covered by this policy until such allegation has been satisfactorily resolved.

F.  Reporting Protocols. Youth program staff, volunteers, and other individuals associated with a youth program must adhere to University protocols for reporting child abuse, sexual assault, and child pornography.

G.  Transportation of Minors. Units operating a youth program that involves transportation of minors must comply with the following requirements:

* 1. University employees and volunteers that transport minors must have been subject to a Michigan driver records check within the last twelve months.
  2. Although the use of private vehicles for transporting minors should be avoided, when private vehicles must be used, drivers must have automobile liability insurance.
  3. More than one adult must be present in the vehicle except when there are multiple minors for the duration of the transportation.
  4. University youth programs utilizing commercial transportation services must follow the guidelines outlined in the statements regarding “Services Provided & Request Forms” in Section 35 of the University’s Manual Business Procedures.

H.  Concussion Awareness. Units operating a youth athletic activity must comply with the requirements of the Michigan sports concussion law.