

# Minor's Participation in OPSU Activities

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**Approved by:** Larry Peters, VP Academic Affairs and Outreach

**Policy Owner:** VP Academic and Student Affairs

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**Revision Approved by:** Julie Dinger, VP Academic and Student Affairs

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## Purpose

This statement sets forth Oklahoma Panhandle State University's (OPSU) policy regarding children under the age of 18 (Minors) who participate in activities and programs, taking place on university property and in facilities or under the authority and direction of the university at other locations, including branch campuses. The university expects all members of the university community to adhere to and act in accordance with this policy. Failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy may lead to disciplinary action and or revocation of the opportunity to use university property and facilities.

## Applicability

This policy applies to all units of the university. Athletic camps, academic camps, other programs, and similar activities intended for Minors (programs) are within the scope of this policy, whether they are limited to daily activities or involve the housing of Minors in residence halls.

This policy does not apply to enrolled OPSU students who are Minors. This policy also does not apply to general public events where parents or guardians are expected to provide supervision of Minors.

## Program Information

A sponsoring unit offering or approving a program which involves Minors or provides university housing for Minors participating in a program, units responsible for university facilities that are used by programs including Minors, or a non-university group using OPSU facilities or housing shall maintain a current list of those programs. Such list should include each program's dates, times, locations, attendance (age range and number of participants), and a program contact, so that in the event of an emergency, consideration may be given to the possible presence of Minors, and the appropriate course of action to address their health and safety.

Programs that include Minors shall have in place, enforce, and make available policies that address the following areas, if they are applicable to the program:

- A. Transportation--including the transportation of Minors at the beginning and end of the program, to and from the program, and within the program, whether by parents, guardians, staff or others. University programs must also comply with OPSU policies regarding drivers and vehicles.

- B. Appropriate levels of access to and supervision of Minors.
- C. Appropriate forms including permission forms, medical contact information and liability waivers. Forms should be safeguarded and readily available.
- D. First aid and medical treatment as well as dispensing of medication. Program personnel must have appropriate training.
- E. Plans for severe weather.

Programs including overnight stays or use of university residences by Minors shall have the following additional policies in place:

- A. Curfews.
- B. Suitable code of conduct for participants.
- C. Prohibition of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.
- D. Adequate residential supervision by responsible adults.

Contractual agreements concerning personnel or facilities related to programs including Minors must include compliance with this policy as a term of the contract. When appropriate, such contracts shall also include an indemnification provision in which OPSU is held harmless for the acts or omissions of other program participants or third party employees or agents. Academic and administrative supervisors are responsible for ensuring that programs are in compliance with this policy.

## Required Training

In recognition of the absolute necessity of protecting Minors, OPSU requires that all adults working with Minors participate in university-approved training annually regarding policies and issues relating to interactions with Minors including the practices and conduct requirements of this policy, on protecting Minors from abusive emotional and physical treatment, and on required reporting of incidents of improper conduct. The appropriate vice president, dean, or unit head may enhance or modify the required training program to meet specific needs of the particular program involved, in consultation with the human resources officer. Any such enhanced or modified program must include all the elements described in this policy. In addition, the appropriate vice president, dean, or unit head shall arrange for sufficiently frequent training opportunities to permit programs to continue to function on a regularly scheduled basis. Training resources can be obtained from the Director of OPSU Human Resources at 580-349- 1574. Academic and administrative supervisors are responsible for ensuring that programs are in compliance with the training requirements outlined in this policy.

## Appropriate Behavioral Expectations

Adults should be positive role models for Minors, and act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner that is consistent with the mission of OPSU. Adults working in programs covered by this policy must follow these expectations to avoid behaviors that could cause harm or be misinterpreted:

- A. Do not have one-on-one contact with Minors outside the presence of others. It is expected that activities where Minors are present will involve two or more adults. 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.
- B. Do not meet with Minors outside of established times for program activities. Do not invite individual Minors to your home. Any exceptions require written parental authorization and must include more than one adult from the program.

- C. Do not touch Minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. Touching should generally only be in the open and in response to the Minor'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 (i.e., treatment of an injury) purpose. Any resistance from the Minor should be respected.
- D. Do not engage in any abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a Minor, including but not limited to verbal abuse, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining. If restraint is necessary to protect a Minor or other Minors from harm, all incidents must be documented and disclosed to the program director and the Minor's parent/guardian.
- E. Do not shower, bathe, or undress with or in the presence of Minors.
- F. Do not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or when responsible for a Minor's welfare.
- G. When transporting Minors in a program, more than one adult from the program must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple Minors will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation. Avoid using personal vehicles if possible.

## Statutory Reporting Requirements of Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect

Under Oklahoma law, if you believe a child is being abused or neglected, you are required to report it to the proper authorities. Reports can be made at any time to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1- 800-522-3511. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In an emergency, or if you see a crime in progress, always call 911 immediately. It is the policy of the university that no OPSU faculty, staff, or student making a good faith report of suspected abuse or neglect will be retaliated against in the terms and conditions of employment or educational program at OPSU.

## Internal Procedures Following Report of Suspected Abuse

The university will fully cooperate with any external investigation conducted by OKDHS or local law enforcement. Following reporting as provided in Section 6.01, adults shall also report the matter to the Goodwell Police Department (GPD) Chief of Police, or his/her designee, who in consultation with the Office of the Vice President, OPSU Human Resources (if staff or hourly employee), Office of Student Affairs (if student), the Office of Academic Affairs (if faculty), and OSU/A&M Office of Legal Counsel will conduct its own internal evaluation to determine if sanctions are warranted, up to and including termination, dismissal or expulsion. Legal prohibitions regarding physical presence on campus may also be pursued. University administrators shall follow the appropriate procedures in determining and issuing any sanction (OPSU Faculty Handbook, campus-based Academic Handbooks, OPSU employee policies and procedures, and the Student Code of Conduct). If the alleged abuser is one of the university officials identified herein, the Goodwell Chief of Police, or his/her designee, shall report and consult with his/her superior, or in any instance, the Provost, the President, or the Board of Regents, if appropriate.

The Office of the Vice President shall maintain a report of each allegation, together with a summary of the internal evaluation, the findings and sanctions, if any, that are imposed.

If the alleged abuser is not a member of the OPSU community, but is present at OPSU through a third party vendor or other external entity authorized to be on campus, that external entity will also be notified that the alleged abuser will no longer be permitted on campus/facilities owned by OPSU.

## Violations of this Policy

Any employee who becomes aware of a failure to comply with this policy shall, in addition to any other reports that may be required, report such failure immediately to the director of human resources or through EthicsPoint by completing the internet form or by calling the toll-free hotline number.