

Programs Serving Non-Student Minors Policy (“Minors on Campus Policy”)
Georgia State University Sponsored Programs
Frequently Asked Questions

Policy Applicability

Q: Does the Minors on Campus Policy apply if the GSU Sponsored Program only operates at off-campus locations (e.g., operates an after-school program at an elementary school)?

A: No. If your program only conducts its activities involving minors at an off-campus location, the Minors on Campus Policy does not apply. However, the program staff/volunteers are still mandatory reporters of suspected child maltreatment under State law and staff/volunteers should report (see below) suspected child maltreatment. Additionally, while a program may operate at an off-campus location, the program must still determine what rules, policies, and procedures may be in place at the host location similar to the Minors on Campus Policy.

If a program has any activities with minors on a University campus, and doesn't meet an exemption as described below, then yes, the Minors on Campus applies.

Q: Does the Minors on Campus Policy apply to every child who comes on to GSU's campus?

A: No. The Policy includes several exemptions for programs. These exemptions can be found in Section V of the Policy (available at: <http://safety.gsu.edu/risk-management/minors-on-campus/>). If you have any questions regarding whether your program satisfies an exemption category, please contact Madison Burnett in the Office of Legal Affairs or Elizabeth Barrett in Safety & Risk Management.

Q: An outside organization wants to rent GSU space to run a camp. Do they have to comply with the Minors on Campus Policy?

A: Yes, though the requirements are different for these programs (called “Hosted Programs” in the Minors on Campus Policy) than those for GSU Sponsored Programs. The outside organization will need to complete a Facilities Use Agreement, to be approved by the Office of Legal Affairs. The Facilities Use Agreement will require the organization to screen and train program personnel and register with Safety & Risk Management.

Q: A student organization wants to run a program for minors. Do they have to comply with the Minors on Campus Policy?

A: Generally, if minors are not supervised by a parent, guardian, or the minors' teacher, the program falls under the Minors on Campus Policy. Exceptions under the Policy will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approved by Safety & Risk Management.

Q: Is a minor someone under 18 or someone under 21?

A: For the purposes of this policy, a minor is a person under the age of 18.

Background Checks

Q: Who needs background checks?

A: Program Directors (“PDs”) should submit the names of University faculty and staff involved with a program, and any other requested information, to their Department's HRAC Officer or Steven Hill in the Talent Management Office, which will confirm they have been previously screened subject to the policy. Non-GSU staff (including volunteers or contract employees from other governmental agencies) will need a new background check unless they can show that they have had a background check consisting of similar screenings in the last year.

Q: I have GSU students volunteering for my program. Do they need background checks?

A: Yes, all volunteers, including GSU students, must complete the volunteer form (see below) and undergo a background check. Some students have already had background checks if they have been previously employed by the University, which can be confirmed by the Talent Management Office.

Q: How much does a background check cost?

A: The average cost of a background check is \$16.50; however, actual costs may differ based on the provider used, the precise background check ordered, and other variables.

Q: Who pays for the background check?

A: The Program is responsible for all background check costs.

Q: How long does a background check take?

A: Once all required documentation is provided, a background check takes on average approximately 24 to 72 hours to complete; however, actual timing may differ based on the many factors. Program staff/volunteers may not begin work with the program until their background checks are approved, so programs should plan accordingly when ordering them.

Q: How do I request a background check?

A: PDs should speak with their Department's HRAC Officer regarding background checks and/or should contact Steven Hill in the Talent Management Office.

Q: Who do I tell once all program staff/volunteers have passed the background check, and who do I tell if there's a result (e.g., criminal conviction) in the background check on a staff/volunteer?

A: If all screening is successful, the PD should certify to the Office of Safety & Risk Management via the Checklist that all staff and volunteers have been properly screened. If a background check returns with a negative factor, PDs should contact the Office of Safety & Risk Management for additional counsel and next steps.

Q: How do Hosted Programs (run by outside organizations) conduct background checks?

A: As directed in the Facilities Use Agreement.

Staff/Volunteer Code of Conduct and Volunteer Forms

Q: Do Staff/Volunteers sign the Code of Conduct annually?

A: No. Staff/Volunteers should sign the Code of Conduct at the commencement of their relationship with the program and it is valid for the duration of their time with the program. PDs should retain copies of these signed Code of Conduct forms for 3 years after the staff/volunteer leaves the program.

Q: The Code of Conduct prohibits "private communications with minors," such as text messaging, but as part of our program minors email/text staff/volunteers for support with school work, mentoring, etc. How do we address this?

A: Program Staff/Volunteers should copy the PD or their program supervisor on any and all electronic communications with a minor, so that the communications are not private and the PD/supervisor is aware of the communications.

Q: What should I do with the volunteer forms once they are signed?

A: Volunteer background checks and forms should be retained by the program in a confidential file for 3 years after the Volunteer leaves the program, and a copy of such documents should be sent to the Office of Safety & Risk Management.

Participant Forms

Q: How long do GSU Sponsored Programs need to keep the forms that the minor's parent or guardian filled out and signed?

A: Per the Board of Regents document retention policy, until the minor turns 21. Documents may be kept electronically or in hard copy.

Mandatory Reporting

Q: Are University staff/volunteers still mandatory reporters of suspected child maltreatment, even if the University sponsored program operates at an off-campus location (e.g., operating after-school program at an elementary school)?

A: Yes. Staff/volunteers should report any suspected child maltreatment to their PD.

Q: Where should PDs report cases of suspected child maltreatment?

A: PDs should call 1-855-GA-CHILD (1-855-422-4453) immediately to make a report of suspected child maltreatment. (The law requires a report within 24 hours.) PDs should also inform the Office of Safety and Risk Management.

Q: How do I confirm that program staff/ volunteers have completed the online mandatory reporter training on the Office of the Child Advocate website?

A: All program staff and volunteers can send a copy of their completion certificate to the PD, or his/her designee, and such party should retain copies for 3 years after the staff/volunteer leaves the program. PDs should certify to the Office of Safety and Risk Management via the Checklist each year that all staff and volunteers have completed the training.

Research Labs

Q: My program will have minors in labs. Do both the Minors in Labs and Minors on Campus policies apply?

A: Yes. Your program will need to comply with the requirements set forth in both policies. The Minors in Labs Policy can be found at: <http://ursa.research.gsu.edu/files/2013/11/Individuals-Under-18-Years-Policy.pdf>.

Miscellaneous

Q: My program already has forms similar to those provided with the Minors on Campus Policy. Do we need to switch to the new forms?

A: Starting January 1, 2018, all programs should utilize the new forms (unless otherwise officially exempted).

Q: The safety training recommended that programs know the locations of atrial defibrillators ("AEDs") on campus. How do we find that information?

A: See attached; list will also be available at the Safety & Risk Management webpage.