

Youth Protection Policy

Responsible Office: Risk Management & Safety

I. POLICY STATEMENT

As a land grant institution with a tradition of service and access, activities and programs involving minors are integral to our mission of creating and disseminating knowledge for the betterment of society. This policy establishes requirements for those in the University community who work with any activities or programs for or that include minors (“Youth Programs”). In addition to the requirements of this policy, all University employees (including faculty, staff, student employees, graduate assistants, and other full-time, part-time, or temporary employees), students, contractors, and/or volunteers must adhere to applicable law and other applicable University policies.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

Auburn University hosts a wide variety of University-sponsored or sanctioned Youth Programs both on campus and off campus under University supervision. It is imperative that minors in these programs be overseen in a fashion that is appropriate and intended to keep them healthy and safe. The purpose of this policy is to describe requirements placed on those working with minors to ensure the minors’ protection, to fulfill our obligations as mandated by law, and to provide the best possible experience for any minor visiting our campuses or participating in University-related programs.

University leadership supports this policy with departmental leadership responsible for ensuring their Youth Programs are compliant with this policy. Any questions regarding clarification of this policy should be directed to Risk Management & Safety.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

March 1, 2021

IV. APPLICABILITY

- A. This policy applies to University employees (including faculty, staff, student employees, graduate assistants, and other full-time, part-time, or temporary employees), students, contractors, and/or volunteers working in or with Youth Programs. Any behavior or contact between Youth Program Personnel and Program Participants that violates approved program activities, established law, the University’s [Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy](#), or other relevant University policies is prohibited.
- B. This policy and the more detailed instructions outlined in the [Guide for Youth Programs](#) and [Guide for Third-Party Youth Programs](#) apply to all Youth Programs¹ that involve minors in their activities, whether they are limited to daily activities or involve the housing of minors in University Housing, including:
 - 1. Youth Programs operated or sponsored by a University unit that take place on campus or in University facilities.
 - 2. Youth Programs that are under the direction and authority of the University at locations off campus or online (see the [Guidelines for Virtual Youth Programming](#)).

¹ See Section IX for exceptions.

3. Youth Programs that are operated, conducted, or organized by External Entities on University property, including, but not limited to, facility rentals to External Entities.
4. Minors who come to campus as interns or volunteers for faculty or staff outside of a structured activity or program for or that include minors (e.g., to volunteer or intern in a laboratory). This could also include auditions, lessons, tutoring, or tours where the parent or guardian is not present.
5. Student organizations or any other University-affiliated organization operating, facilitating, or sponsoring Youth Programs.

V. POLICY MANAGEMENT

Responsible Office: Risk Management & Safety

Responsible Executive: Executive Director, Risk Management & Safety

Responsible Officer: Youth Protection Program Manager

VI. DEFINITIONS

Authorized Program Staff

An individual age 19 or older, paid or unpaid, who has Direct Contact with minors participating in Youth Programs. This includes but is not limited to faculty, staff, volunteers, graduate and undergraduate students, interns, employees of temporary employment agencies, and independent contractors/consultants. Roles may include positions as counselors, coaches, instructors, etc. Authorized Program Staff are responsible for planning, teaching, coordinating, and carrying out activities and for the supervision of Program Participants in Youth Programs. These individuals must meet policy requirements for background checks and training.

Direct Contact

Providing care, supervision, instruction, guidance, oversight, or control of minors and/or having routine interaction with minors in a program covered by this policy.

External Entity

A third-party individual, contractor, consultant, vendor, student-run organization, or other non-University entity or individual.

Minor

Any person under 19 years of age (Code of Ala. §26-1-1). Minors enrolled or accepted for enrollment at Auburn University as full-time or part-time students are excluded from this definition. Minors who are “dually enrolled” in University academic courses while also enrolled in high school are excluded from this definition when they are participating in University academic courses, but they are not excluded when they are participating in other Youth Programs. Minors employed by Auburn University are excluded from this definition. However, mandatory reporting requirements do apply regarding all individuals under 19.

One-On-One Contact

Personal, unsupervised interaction between any Authorized Program Staff and an individual Program Participant without at least one other Youth Program Personnel or the Program Participant’s parent or guardian being present.

Program Contact

Represents the department, college, or student organization responsible for the direction or operation of Youth Programs. In the case of Third-Party Youth Programs, this person serves as the liaison between the University and the External Entity. The Program Contact must be a full-time Auburn University employee and is responsible for registering the External Entity and the Youth Program.

Program Director

The individual on-site who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Youth Program and who oversees Youth Program Personnel. The Program Director is considered Authorized Program Staff.

Program Participant

A minor attending a Youth Program.

Sponsoring Unit

The academic or administrative unit of the University which offers a Youth Program or gives approval for housing or use of facilities.

Supervised Program Staff

An individual age 19 or older, paid or unpaid, who is under the direct supervision of Authorized Program Staff. Youth Programs who wish to include individuals under the age of 19 as Supervised Program Staff must request an exception in advance. Supervised Program Staff do not have unsupervised contact with Program Participants, meaning an Authorized Program Staff is physically present at all times. These individuals must meet policy requirements for training and may, based on the nature of the program, be required to have a current background check.

Third-Party Youth Programs

Youth Programs that are offered by a student-run organization or an External Entity and that have a participant group made up, in whole or in part, of minors. These programs complete all or part of their educational and/or business purpose on Auburn University property, and the third-party individual or entity assumes full or primary responsibility for the supervision of the minors. These programs may or may not collect fees from participants.

Volunteer

Any individual working in an unpaid capacity in a Youth Program. All volunteers must meet the requirements of Authorized Program Staff or Supervised Program Staff.

Youth Program

Any (1) program, event, activity, or endeavor offered by various academic or administrative units of the University; or by student organizations or other University-affiliated organizations; or by External Entities using University facilities; (2) that is designed to serve minors; and (3) during which parents or guardians are not expected to be responsible for care, custody, and control of the minors. Youth Programs include, but are not limited to, workshops, sport camps, academic camps, conferences, pre-enrollment visits, 4-H or Cooperative Extension programs, and similar activities.

Youth Program Personnel

The Program Director, Authorized Program Staff, and Supervised Program Staff. This definition does not include support personnel who do not directly interact with Program Participants.

University Housing

Facilities owned by, or under the control of, the University that are intended for use as housing.

VII. POLICY PROCEDURES**A. Program Registration**

All Youth Programs must submit a registration and all requested documentation to Risk Management & Safety pursuant to the detailed process outlined in the [Guide for Youth Programs \(Guide\)](#) and the [Guide for Third-Party Youth Programs](#). Program registration should be submitted and approved before beginning to advertise or accept registrations, but no less than 90 days in advance of the program start date.

Detailed information on required documentation is available in the Guide and on the [Youth Protection webpage](#). Failure to comply with this policy or the requirements of the Guide may result in the Youth Program being denied approval.

Sponsoring Units of Youth Programs should maintain an up-to-date listing of those programs being offered through their area. Such lists should include each program's dates, times, locations, attendance (including age range and number of participants), contact information for the University Program Contact, and contact information for the Program Director.

B. Background Checks and Training

- All Youth Program Personnel must successfully complete training on protecting Program Participants from abusive emotional and physical treatment and on reporting child abuse or neglect before working in or with Youth Programs.
- Authorized Program Staff working in or with Youth Programs must successfully complete required background checks before working in such activities or programs. Detailed information on required background checks and training is available in the Guide.
- Supervised Program Staff must successfully complete training before working in or with Youth Programs and may, depending on the nature of the program, be required to have a current background check.

Programs that are discrete, occasional events for which a large number of volunteers are essential (for example, Science Olympiads, BEST Robotics Tournament, etc.), may elect or adopt measures and safeguards instead of background checks for one-time volunteers. The measures adopted must include requirements that the volunteers complete training on protecting Program Participants from abusive emotional and physical treatment and on reporting child abuse or neglect; work in public places; never work alone with children; and be supervised by a person who has completed a background check and undergone training. Programs must compile the names and addresses of the volunteers prior to the event. The Program Director shall have a means to check volunteers in for the event. Programs adopting this method must have the approval of the Vice President or Dean and are subject to audit by Risk Management & Safety.

C. Compliance and Review

Compliance with this policy and the Guide is required as a condition of operating Youth Programs at Auburn University. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy or the requirements further outlined in the Guide can result in the loss of program privileges and other sanctions at Auburn University.

Youth Programs may be subject to site visits coordinated by Risk Management & Safety. Any suspected violation of approved program guidelines or University policy will be subject to investigation by the appropriate University officials. Colleges, units, and individuals must cooperate with investigations when they occur.

D. Interaction with Minors

One-On-One Contact between Youth Program Personnel and Program Participants should be avoided. If an activity requires any type of one-to-one interaction (tutoring, private lessons, interviews, etc.) these interactions must take place in a location that is open, observable, and interruptible.

Parents or guardians should not leave minors unsupervised on University property.

E. Third-Party Youth Programs or Activities

Third-party Youth Programs must:

- Establish a contractual relationship with the University for the use of facilities and/or resources;
- Provide evidence of insurance coverage in accordance with the requirements outlined by Risk Management & Safety;
- Be sponsored by or affiliated with a University department, college, or recognized student organization (Sponsoring Unit) and have a designated Program Contact;
- Designate an on-site Program Director, if not the Auburn University Program Contact;
- Operate under the administrative purview of a University department;
- Meet the contractual requirements for background screenings and training as outlined in the Permissive Use Agreement, the Guide, the Guide for Third-Party Youth Programs, and this policy; and
- Complete the same review and approval process as a University-operated Youth Program.

VIII. SANCTIONS

The University may ban any Youth Program, Program Director, Youth Program Personnel, group, or sponsor from holding or participating in future programs for violations of University policy, inappropriate conduct, or other good cause. This decision will be made at the University's sole discretion and is not subject to appeal.

Individual sanctions for violations of this policy will depend on the circumstances and the nature of the violation but may include the full range of available University sanctions applicable to the individual, pursuant to the Auburn University Human Resources manual, the Faculty Handbook, and/or the Code of Student Conduct, up to and including dismissal/termination.

Notwithstanding any contractual provision to the contrary, the University may terminate its relationship with any third-party contractors or volunteers who fail to comply with this policy.

IX. EXCLUSIONS

A. This policy applies to all University Youth Programs with the exception of the following:

1. Undergraduate and graduate academic programs in which minors are enrolled for academic credit;
2. Events on campus which are open to the general public (athletic events, plays, concerts, etc.) that are not targeted toward minors;
3. Minor visitors, individually or in groups, for single-day activities during which the minors will be supervised by their parents, guardians, or non-Auburn University chaperone at all times, e.g. field trips supervised by a minor participant's school or organization. Contractually arranged Third-Party Youth Programs are not intended to be exempted by this scenario;
4. Admissions, pre-enrollment, or advising activities that are unplanned or informal;
5. Single incidental visits by minors interacting with University faculty or staff, but not as part of a Youth Program (e.g., tours of facilities, visiting a family member at work, or discussing academic, intellectual or career interests). This exclusion does not pertain to scheduled or ongoing visits, such as individual lessons (music) or tutoring/mentoring, volunteering with or job shadowing a University employee, or individualized experiential learning/enrichment.
6. Private, invitation-only, personal events (e.g., birthday parties, weddings) that occur on campus;
7. Other programs as may be designated from time to time by Risk Management & Safety in advance and in writing as exempted from this policy.

Mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect apply to all programs and events involving minors, regardless of whether they are an exception to the Youth Protection Policy.

X. INTERPRETATION

Questions related to the daily operational interpretation and application of this policy should be directed to:

Risk Management & Safety
334-844-2626
youthprotection@auburn.edu