

**What is this policy?**

Whether you are a faculty member, staff member, student, or volunteer working with minors entrusted to the university’s care, each of us have an important role. Together, we share the responsibility of providing enriching experiences for the nearly half a million minors who participate in more than 600 programs sponsored by the university each year.

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and welfare of minors who participate in these activities and programs. To support the protection of minors, this policy outlines what is required of personnel and volunteers who work in activities and programs with minors and informs individuals of their reporting obligations in instances of known or suspected abuse or neglect of minors.

*Policy Requirements:*

- Activities and programs must be registered;
- Individuals working in these activities and programs must receive training, know reporting obligations, and sign standards of behavior, all of which are included here; and
- Those with care, custody, or control of minors must successfully complete a background check.

The policy includes an important focus on reporting obligations in instances of known or suspected abuse or neglect of minors.

**Ask your supervisor if you have questions regarding your responsibilities within the policy or view it at <http://hr.osu.edu/policy/policy150.pdf>.**

**What is child abuse?**

When a child has suffered or faces a substantial threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability or condition that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect.

**What are some signs of child abuse?**

You might notice some of these common signs of abuse when working with minors. It is important to remember, however, that not all children will exhibit all of these symptoms. They may exhibit alternative symptoms.

<p><b>Physical Abuse:</b> any physical injury inflicted other than by accidental means.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Unexplained bruises or burns</li> <li>– Fear of going home</li> <li>– Fear of going with a particular staff member or person</li> <li>– Physical force used to correct behavior</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional Abuse:</b> a pattern of harmful interactions between an adult and child such as criticizing, belittling, and rejecting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Not eating or overeating at meals</li> <li>– Extreme nervous habit behaviors</li> <li>– Parent/child interactions using inappropriate language or name calling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse:</b> when a person uses power and directly involves the child in any sexual act, involves the child in pornography, or forces the child to witness sexual acts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Unusual sexual knowledge or behavior</li> <li>– Child-to-Child sexual contact</li> <li>– Bruises on inner thighs or other “no touch” areas</li> <li>– Fear of being alone with a particular person</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neglect:</b> the failure of an adult to provide for a child’s basic, educational, or medical needs (i.e., food, shelter, supervision, and clothing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Stealing food</li> <li>– Poor shower habits/poor hygiene</li> <li>– Dirty clothes or clothes with numerous stains and/or tears</li> <li>– Low body weight</li> </ul>

**How can I help prevent child abuse?**

- Recognize and understand signs of child abuse. Be alert and act on your suspicions.
- Know the procedure for reporting child abuse.
- Always use proper touches when working with children. Some examples include: hand to shoulder contact, side by side hugs, pats on the

head, high fives, handshakes, eye contact, and smiles.

- Only use physical restraint in situations when a child puts herself/himself or others in danger.
- Minimize high-risk opportunities for child abuse.
- Avoid one adult/one child interactions. Unless pre-approved, don’t be alone in private spaces with a child.
- These tips not only help to protect children, but also yourself from potential false allegations.

**REPORTING**

**YOU MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY**

**If you witness or believe that there is a substantial threat of child abuse**

Under this policy, you are required to *immediately report* all incidents whether you observed them directly, someone reported them to you, or you believe that there is a substantial threat of child abuse.

You may also be a mandated reporter under Ohio law. A complete list of mandated reporters can be found at <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/2151.421>.

**2 CALLS: You must report in any of the above circumstances in the following order:**

1. Imminent danger or life-threatening: 911 **or** Non-life threatening: Children Services Agency - 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline at 855-OH-CHILD
2. University Police at 614-292-2121

**1 REPORT:** Complete the **Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse, or Neglect Incident Report** form which can be found online at [hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/150abuse.pdf](http://hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/150abuse.pdf).

OSU policy and state statutes may provide protection for those making reports in good faith.

