

## Protection of Minors

Vanderbilt University complies with all State of Tennessee and Federal laws regarding safeguards against child abuse and maltreatment. By execution of the contract, the contracting agency agrees to comply with these laws as well as the following items:

- **Prior to interacting with minors (children under 18 years of age) in Vanderbilt programs, contracted personnel are required to have a cleared criminal background check (Attachment #2) and complete training which includes prevention and identification of child abuse, including Tennessee law on mandatory child abuse reporting.**
- **Minors are required to be supervised at all times while in Vanderbilt programs.**
- **Contractors interacting with minors are required to abide by the Vanderbilt Protection of Minors policy's *Code of Conduct for Interacting with Minors* (provided below).**

### Vanderbilt Minimum Allowable Ratios for Programs with Minor Participants:

Age	Day Event/Camp Ratio	Overnight Ratio
5 years and younger	1 Adult : 6 Minors	1:5
6-8 years	1:8	1:6
9-14 years	1:10	1:8
15-18 years	1:12	1:10

### **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse:**

Tennessee Law on mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect (TCA 37-1-403) states, “**Any person** who has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition shall report such harm immediately if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect or that, on the basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect.”

### ***Selection from VANDERBILT PROTECTION OF MINORS POLICY (Section IV)***

**Every** member of the University community (not limited to individuals who interact with minors) is required by law to report known or suspected instances of the abuse of, neglect of or inappropriate interactions with minors. Members making a report in good faith will be protected from criminal and civil liability for making the report. It is important to understand that every member is required to report any type of suspected abuse, neglect or inadequate care rather than just child sexual abuse.

Two reports, one external and one internal, must be made:

**External Report:** Tennessee law requires every person to make a report when they suspect sexual or physical abuse or neglect of a minor. Failure to report is a Class A misdemeanor. The required report may be made to the State of Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004, online at <https://reportabuse.state.tn.us/> or to a Tennessee sheriff's office or police department, including VUPD at 615-322-2745. If the situation is a life threatening emergency, contact 911.

**Internal Report:** Every member of the University community has a further obligation to report known or suspected abuse or neglect of a Minor on campus or in a Vanderbilt program immediately to Vanderbilt University. The preferred method is to immediately contact the Office of Risk Management and Insurance at 615-322-5155. Alternatively, known or suspected abuse or neglect of a Minor on campus or in a Vanderbilt program may be reported online at <https://www.tnwgrc.com/Vanderbilt>.

**Policy Excerpt - VU Code of Conduct for Interacting with Minors**

You are required by Tennessee law and Vanderbilt University policy to report actual or suspected abuse or other improper conduct involving a Minor. You also are also required to comply with the following code of conduct when interacting with Minors.

- Do not spend time alone, either on or off campus, with a Minor away from others. If one-on-one interaction is required, meet in open, well-lit rooms or spaces with windows observable by other adults from the Program.
- Do not engage in any sexual actions, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or share or view sexually explicit material with or within the vicinity of Minors.
- Do not touch Minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate.
- Do not shower, bathe, or undress with or in the presence of a Minor.
- 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, hitting, punching, poking, or restraining, except as required to protect a Minor or others from harm. All incidents involving such conduct, whether or not required to protect a Minor or others from harm, must be documented and disclosed promptly to the Program Director and the Minor's parent/guardian.
- Be aware of the impact of your words and language on Minors.
- 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.
- Do not meet with Minors outside of established times for Program activities. Any exceptions require parental authorization and must include more than one adult from the Program.
- Do not engage or converse with Minors through email, text messages, social networking websites, or other forms of social media at any time except and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communications is consistent with the mission of the Program and the university.
- 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.
- Do not tell children "this is just between the two of us" or use similar language that encourages Minors to keep secrets from their parent/guardians.

**"Take-aways" to remember when working with minors – Protect, Observe, Manage, Report:**

- ☉ Two adults should be present or within eyesight when interacting with minors.
- ☉ If you see something, say something – Risk Management 615-322-5155 or VU Hotline 1-866-783-2287
- ☉ TN is a mandatory child abuse reporting state: 877-237-0004
- ☉ Know and understand how to keep healthy boundaries, minimize opportunity for abuse
- ☉ Group communication always – no one-to-one

*Provided by the Office of Risk and Insurance Management, Protection of Minors:  
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