

System-wide Policy: SA0575 - Programs for Minors	
Version: 2	Effective Date: 12/05/2019

SA0575 – Programs for Minors

Objective:

Minors visit campuses and institutes of The University of Tennessee System for a variety of reasons and are involved in a variety of programs and activities sponsored by the University or by third parties using University facilities or resources. The objective of this policy is to promote a safe environment for minors by fostering a University culture that is committed to preventing, recognizing, reporting, and addressing child abuse and child sexual abuse.

Policy:

Section 1. Definitions

Covered Adult: The term “Covered Adult” means a person:

1. Who is eighteen (18) years of age or older; and
2. Who is a University employee (whether regular, temporary, or student, and whether full-time or part-time) or a person in a contractual or volunteer position with the University; and
3. Whom the Program Director reasonably anticipates will have direct contact with a minor in a Covered Program, by reason of the person’s employment, contractual, or volunteer status with the University. The term “Covered Adult” does not include a University employee, contractor, or volunteer who participates in a Covered Program in his/her personal capacity in a Covered Program that is not sponsored by a University unit.

Covered Program: The term “Covered Program” means:

1. A program or activity in which minors participate that is sponsored by a University Unit; or
2. A program or activity in which minors participate that is sponsored by an entity other than a University Unit and involves use of University owned or

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controlled real property.

Examples of Covered Programs include, but are not limited to, athletic camps, academic camps, day care or early learning programs/centers, recreational camps, individual lessons, workshops, competitions, clinics, conferences, pre-enrollment visits, University outreach programs and activities, 4-H programs, and University Units that employ minors under University [HR0110 - Employment of Minors](#)

For purposes of this policy, an athletic camp owned or operated by an employee of the University's athletics department (including but not limited to an athletic camp operated by a limited liability company owned by a University coach), either on or off campus, and in which prospective student-athletes participate, shall be considered a Covered Program that is sponsored by a University Unit.

The term "Covered Program" does not include:

1. A program or activity that requires each minor to be accompanied by his/her parent or legal guardian.
2. A program or activity designed primarily for regularly enrolled University students, including credit courses and community service projects organized by the University;
3. A program or activity open to the general public that is not targeted toward minors (e.g., athletic events, plays, concerts, lectures, and UTIA Field Days and Special Events);
4. Practicum activities, student teaching activities, or college-approved academic curriculum activities that include University student interaction with minors;
5. Orientation programs for freshman or transfer students;
6. Campus tours and visitation programs for prospective students that do not involve an overnight stay;
7. Field trips supervised by a minor participant's school or organization and not sponsored by the University; or
8. Patient-care related activities relating to minors. (This exception does not exclude day care programs from the definition of "Covered

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Program.”)

If there is any doubt whether a particular program or activity is subject to this policy, the Program Director shall consult with the Designated Official, who shall consult with the Office of the General Counsel as needed.

This policy does not prohibit the employment of minors in compliance with University [HR0110 - Employment of Minors](#).

Minors brought onto University property or to a University-sponsored event by an employee, contractor, volunteer, or student, and who are not participating in a Covered Program, are the sole responsibility of the employee, contractor, volunteer, or student.

Designated Official: The term “Designated Official” means the official designated by the Chancellor/Vice President to have responsibility for implementation of this policy at the campus/institute level, for centralizing the review, approval, and monitoring of Covered Programs, and for monitoring the compliance of Covered Programs with the campus/institute procedure required by Section 6 of this policy. The Chancellor/Vice President shall notify the General Counsel and the campus/institute Human Resources Officer of the name of the Designated Official.

Direct Contact: The term “direct contact” means instruction, care, supervision, guidance, or control of a minor, and/or routine interaction with a minor.

Minor/Child: The term “minor” or “child” means a person who is under eighteen (18) years of age or who is reasonably presumed to be under eighteen (18) years of age.

Program Director: With respect to a Covered Program sponsored by a University Unit, the term “Program Director” means the person primarily responsible for the management and oversight of a Covered Program, including identifying all Covered Adults and ensuring the Covered Program’s compliance with this policy.

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With respect to a Covered Program not sponsored by a University Unit, the Program Director is the University employee who serves as the primary University contact with the third party who is sponsoring the Covered Program.

University Unit: The term “University Unit” means a department, division, school, college, administrative unit, or other official organization of a campus or institute of The University of Tennessee. University extension offices and research centers are considered University Units for purposes of this policy. Student organizations are not University Units for purposes of this policy.

Section 2. Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse

A. External Reporting

Tennessee law mandates reporting by any person who has knowledge of physical or mental harm to a child if: (1) the nature of the harm reasonably indicates it was caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect; or (2) on the basis of available information, the harm reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect. Tennessee law also mandates reporting by any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused, regardless of whether the child has sustained any apparent injury as a result of the abuse. **The Tennessee mandatory reporting laws apply to all University employees, contractors, and volunteers, even if they are not Covered Adults subject to the other sections of this policy, and even if the child abuse or child sexual abuse does not occur in connection with a Covered Program. For purposes of the Tennessee mandatory reporting law, University students who are under the age of eighteen (18) are not excluded from the definition of a child.**

In the event of a life threatening emergency, a report of child abuse or child sexual abuse should be made by calling 911. In other cases, a report of child abuse or child sexual abuse must be made immediately to one of the following authorities outside the University:

1. The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (call the Central Intake

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Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004).

2. The sheriff of the county where the child resides.
3. The chief law enforcement official of the city where the child resides.
4. A judge having juvenile jurisdiction over the child.

Tennessee law provides immunity from civil and criminal liability for any person who makes a good faith report of suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse. In addition, no person making a good faith report of suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse, or participating in an investigation thereof, shall be subject to retaliation by the University.

B. Additional Internal Reporting for University Employees

Reporting to University police, a supervisor, or any other University official or employee does **not** satisfy an individual’s statutory duty to report child abuse or child sexual abuse to one of the external authorities listed above. However, after reporting child abuse or child sexual abuse to one of the external authorities listed above, a University employee shall also provide notice of the report to his/her supervisor, University police, or the Office of the General Counsel. The identity of a University employee who reports an incident of child abuse or child sexual abuse shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed except as authorized by law.

Upon receiving such a report, the employee’s supervisor, University police, or the Office of the General Counsel shall ensure that the Tennessee mandatory reporting statute has been followed and coordinate an appropriate University response with state officials and local law enforcement, which may necessitate notifying other University employees with a need to know about the report.

Persons who have been identified by the University as “campus security authorities” for purposes of compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (“Clery Act”) shall evaluate whether there is also a legal duty to report the incident to the University Unit responsible for compiling and reporting crime statistics.

Section 3. Criminal Background Check Requirements for Covered

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Programs Sponsored by a University Unit

The following provisions concerning criminal background checks shall apply to all Covered Programs sponsored by a University Unit.

- A. Except as otherwise provided in this Section 3 or Section 5, a criminal background check shall be conducted on all persons in the following categories:
1. Covered Adults;
 2. Employees, full-time or part-time, whose duties involve work in a University residential facility (including employees whose primary duties involve work in these facilities and employees who may need access to such facilities only periodically, such as maintenance or safety and health staff); and
 3. Employees, full-time or part-time, who have access to a locker room or shower room in a University athletic or recreational facility (including employees who are assigned to work in these facilities and employees who may need access to such facilities periodically, such as maintenance or safety and health staff).

Criminal background checks on the persons described above shall be repeated no less frequently than every four (4) years. Employees who are subject to five-year recurring background checks under a separate state law are exempted from the University's four-year recurring background check requirement.

- B. Each campus/institute will determine who shall bear the cost of criminal background checks.
- C. The Chief Human Resources Officer, in consultation with Designated Officials and the Office of the General Counsel, shall determine the type of criminal background checks and the vendor who will perform the criminal background checks, which shall include but not be limited to a search of the National Sex Offender Public Website and the Tennessee Felony Offender Database.

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- D. Criminal background checks shall be conducted under the direction of the campus/institute Office of Human Resources. The campus/institute Office of Human Resources shall develop a process for documenting whether a criminal background check has been conducted on a person, and, if so, the date on which the criminal background check expires pursuant to this policy.
- E. The Program Director shall ensure that the campus/institute Office of Human Resources has had a criminal background check conducted on a Covered Adult within the last four (4) years before allowing the Covered Adult to participate in a Covered Program.
- F. The campus/institute Office of Human Resources shall ensure that a criminal background check is conducted on employees whose primary duties involve work in a University residential facility or a University athletic or recreational facility with a locker or shower room. The campus/institute Designated Official is responsible for notifying management of areas that employ staff who need periodic access to such facilities of their responsibility to provide the campus/institute Office of Human Resources with the names of these employees to ensure all necessary background checks have been done.
- G. If, after proper verification, a person's criminal background check is determined to indicate a conviction of one or more of the following offenses, Human Resources or the Program Director shall promptly notify the Designated Official:
1. Any [sexual offense](#);
 2. Any offense against children, including but not limited to child abuse, child sexual abuse, or other crime involving the endangerment of a minor;
 3. Battery or assault, including but not limited to domestic violence related offenses;
 4. Any drug distribution offense or felony drug possession;
 5. Any violent offense (e.g., murder, kidnapping, rape, assault)
 6. Any other felony or crime involving moral turpitude.

Absent an exception granted by the Designated Official, following

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consultation with the campus/institute Human Resources Officer and the Office of the General Counsel, the Program Director shall not allow any person to participate in a Covered Program if his or her criminal background check, after proper verification, is determined to indicate conviction of one or more of the offenses listed above.

- H. If the criminal background check reveals any of the criminal offenses identified above or other criminal offenses, the continued employment or assignment of a Covered Adult, an employee whose duties involve work in a University residential facility, or an employee who has access to a locker room or shower room in a University athletic or recreational facility, shall be approved or disapproved as follows: (1) in the case of staff, student employees, contractors, and volunteers, by the campus/institute Office of Human Resources, in consultation with appropriate campus/institute administrators and the Office of the General Counsel; and (2) in the case of faculty, by the campus/institute Chief Academic Officer (following notification from the campus/institute Office of Human Resources) in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel. In addition, if the criminal background check of a Covered Adult or employee who is also a student indicates a conviction of any of the criminal offenses identified above or other criminal offenses, the campus/institute Office of Human Resources shall communicate the results of the background check to the Chief Student Affairs Officer for the campus/institute, who shall evaluate whether any additional action needs to be taken in consultation with appropriate campus/institute administrators and the Office of the General Counsel.
- I. All Covered Adults, including but not limited to current employees, contractors, and volunteers who qualify as Covered Adults and who have not had a criminal background check performed within the last four (4) years, shall execute a criminal background check consent form approved by the Office of the General Counsel. All employees who have not had a criminal background check performed within the last four (4) years and whose primary duties involve work in a University residential facility or a University facility with a locker or shower room shall execute a criminal background check consent form approved by the Office of the General

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Counsel. The University reserves the right to take appropriate action with respect to persons who falsified or failed to disclose information on employment or admissions applications discovered as a result of the criminal background check.

Section 4. Training Requirements Relating to Covered Programs Sponsored by a University Unit

The system Office of Human Resources shall develop a training program that campuses and institutes shall use to train Program Directors and Covered Adults on how to prevent, recognize, report, and address child abuse. The training program should address at least the following topics:

1. Definition of child abuse, and the signs, symptoms, and effects of child abuse;
2. Responding to suspected child abuse, including but not limited to reporting of suspected child abuse under Tennessee law and this policy; and
3. Child abuse prevention strategies, including campus/institute policies for Covered Programs.

The Designated Official shall ensure that every Program Director is trained at least once every two (2) years. The Program Director shall ensure a Covered Adult has been trained within the last two (2) years before allowing the Covered Adult to participate in a Covered Program. Electronic documentation that a Program Director or Covered Adult has been trained shall be maintained by the system Office of Human Resources for at least two (2) years.

Section 5. Exceptions to Requirements for Criminal Background Checks and Training

The provisions of Section 3 and Section 4 of this policy relating to criminal background checks and training shall not apply in the following circumstances:

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1. In circumstances when it is not feasible to conduct full criminal background checks, due to volume, timing, or for other reasons, Covered Programs may elect to adopt preventive measures in lieu of criminal background checks and training of University volunteers, but only with the prior written approval of the campus/institute Designated Official. A Program Director applying this exception shall:
 - a. Ensure that a registry check is performed on all volunteers by using the National Sex Offender Public Website, the Tennessee Felony Offender database and the Tennessee Department of Health’s online abuse registry, prior to participation in the Covered Program;
 - b. Ensure that all volunteers work in a public place during the Covered Program, are supervised by a Covered Adult who has undergone a criminal background check, and present photo identification prior to participation in the Covered Program;
 - c. Ensure that all volunteers sign a statement verifying their understanding of, and agreement to comply with, Tennessee’s law on the mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse; and
 - d. Register the name of the volunteers as University volunteers in IRIS.
 - e. Communicates to the campus/institute Designated Official in writing the fact that the Program Director has granted an exception to the criminal background check requirement for the Covered Adult.

Section 6. Campus/Institute Policies Relating to Covered Programs Sponsored by a University Unit

Each campus and institute shall establish a policy relating to Covered Programs sponsored by a University Unit. The policy shall address the following subjects

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with respect to Covered Programs sponsored by a University Unit, as appropriate based on the nature and duration of the Covered Programs:

1. Transportation of minors;
2. Emergency procedures, including but not limited to plans for notifying a minor's parent/legal guardian in case of an emergency and plans for weather emergencies if the Covered Program will be using University property for which no such plans are in place;
3. Restrictions on access to and supervision of minors, including prohibition of one-on-one unsupervised contact with minors unless approved in advance by the Designated Official. The Designated Official shall approve if the contact is essential to the program and confirms that the person interacting with the minor is a Covered Adult who has undergone a background check and completed the training described in Section 4.
4. Restrictions on physical contact and communication by Covered Adults with minors based on the age of the minors and the nature of the Covered Program's activities;
5. Appropriate forms, including permission forms, medical contact information, and liability waivers, approved by the Office of the General Counsel;
6. First aid, medical treatment, and medication dispensation; and
7. For Covered Programs with overnight stays:
 - a. Identification to be worn by Covered Adults and Covered Program participants;
 - b. Curfews;
 - c. Code of conduct for participants; and
 - d. Residential supervision and visitation.
8. If applicable, Covered Programs shall comply with University of Tennessee [System Policy SA 550](#) regarding minors in laboratories and shops.

The Designated Official is responsible for monitoring the compliance of Covered Programs with the campus/institute policy.

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The campus and institute policies described in this Section 6 shall be submitted to the Office of the General Counsel for review and approval prior to implementation.

Section 7. Requirements Relating to Covered Programs Not Sponsored by a University Unit

If the sponsor of a Covered Program is not a University Unit, the Program Director shall require the sponsor of the Covered Program to sign an agreement to indemnify and hold harmless The University of Tennessee for the acts or omissions of program participants or the sponsor’s employees or agents. A copy of the completed agreement shall be forwarded to the campus/institute Chief Business Officer and the Designated Official. This requirement does not apply to a governmental entity prohibited by law from entering into an indemnification agreement.

For Covered Programs not sponsored by a University Unit, the sponsoring entity is responsible for deciding whether to conduct criminal background checks on persons who are not University employees, contractors, or volunteers. However, the sponsoring entity may be required to provide documentation for any background checks conducted to the Designated Official.

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Section 8. Approval and Monitoring of Covered Programs

Campuses and institutes shall centralize the review, approval, and monitoring of all Covered Programs under the Designated Official.

Periodically, the Office of Audit and Compliance shall assess the adequacy and effectiveness of this policy and the policies of campuses and institutes referenced in Section 6; assess compliance with this policy and with campus and institute policies; and make recommendations to management for the improvement of policies and procedures.

Campus and institute Designated Officials are responsible for determining how to monitor and assess their programs (e.g., by conducting peer reviews within or external to the University or by engaging external consultants). To ensure program effectiveness, the Designated Officials should meet at least biennially to discuss the effectiveness of University and campus/institute policies and procedures and share best practices.

Section 9. Sanctions for Failing to Comply with this Policy

Employees should report violations of this policy (other than violations involving child abuse or child sexual abuse, the reporting of which shall be in compliance with Section 2 of this policy), or a campus/institute procedure that implements this policy, to their supervisor, the Designated Official, the Office of the General Counsel (865-974-3245), Office of Audit and Compliance (865-974-6611), or the State of Tennessee audit hotline (1-800-232-5454).

A Covered Program in violation of this policy may be denied permission by the campus Designated Official in consultation with General Counsel and Human Resources, to continue operation in connection with The University of Tennessee. Any violations of this policy by an individual will be handled in accordance with other applicable University policies and procedures, which for University employees may include disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. In addition, a person who fails to comply with Tennessee laws on mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse can face criminal prosecution.

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Section 10. Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the campus/institute Designated Official, following consultation with the campus/institute Human Resources Officer and the Office of the General Counsel.

Section 11. Communication

Designated Officials shall distribute this policy to all Program Directors, deans, directors, and department heads at least once a year. Designated Officials also shall distribute a notice about the mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse, as described in Section 2, to all employees and students twice per year in the spring and fall. The notice will include an automated acknowledgement of the policy which will be added to the individuals' human resources file.

CAMPUS PROCEDURES:

- [UT Chattanooga](#)
- [UT Institute of Agriculture](#)
- [UT Knoxville](#)
- [UT Martin](#)
- [UT Health Science Center](#)
- [UT Space Institute](#)