

# Valdosta State University Youth Programs Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct

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Valdosta State University is committed to the safety and well-being of minors. Authorized staff and volunteers should be positive role models and treat others with respect, courtesy, and dignity. Authorized staff and volunteers must abide by Valdosta State University policies and state and federal law.

**As an authorized staff or volunteer working in programs for minors, I hereby agree as follows:**

1. I will maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times.
2. I will immediately report any reasonable suspicion or knowledge of abuse of a minor to the Valdosta State University Police Department and the appropriate supervisor or program director who can take immediate action.
3. I will not touch or speak to a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
4. If one-on-one interaction is required, it will take place in open, well illuminated spaces or rooms with windows, authorized recording or two-way mirror observable by other authorized adults or program staff.
5. I will not meet with minors outside of established program locations or outside of established times. Any exceptions require written parental authorization and must include more than one authorized adult or program staff.
6. I will not invite minors to my home or other private location or accept their invitations for the same. Any exceptions require authorization by the program administrator and written authorization by a parent/guardian.
7. I will not make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or allow minors to access sexually explicit materials.
8. I will not engage in private communications with minors to include communications via text messaging, e-mail, phone, internet chat, on-line games, or other forms of social media unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the program. Should communication be necessary, I will include a third person.
9. I will not engage or allow minors to engage me in romantic or sexual conversations.
10. I will not accept or give gifts to minors without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
11. I will not inflict any physical or emotional abuse of minors to include, but not limited to, striking, humiliating, ridiculing, or degrading minors.
12. I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with minors.
13. I will not provide or knowingly allow minors to possess or consume alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
14. I will not use profanity, vulgarity, or harassing language in the presence of minors at any time.
15. I will not provide transportation to minors unless doing so is an acknowledged component of the program. When transporting minors, more than one volunteer or program staff must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple children/teens will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation.

## **Expectations of Behavior & Consequences of Misconduct for Staff and Participants:**

Program participants and staff must abide by all University regulations and may be removed from the program for non-compliance with the following expectations. It is the responsibility of the Program Administrator to communicate these expectations to their staff and volunteers. If an allegation of inappropriate conduct has been made against an Authorized Adult participating in a program, they shall discontinue any further participation in program/activities covered by this Policy until such allegation has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Minor Coordinator.

1. It is the responsibility of all Authorized Adults to inform program participants of safety and security procedures, University rules, program specific rules, and expectations of behavior.

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2. Participants are expected to be respectful of others. No violence, including sexual abuse or harassment, will be tolerated. Hazing of any kind is prohibited. Bullying including verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited.
3. The inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices is prohibited, including use of such devices in showers, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.
4. The possession or use of alcohol and other drugs, fireworks, guns and other weapons is prohibited.
5. Use of tobacco products is prohibited on all University property.
6. Misuse or damage of University property is prohibited. Charges will be assessed against those participants who are responsible for damage or misuse of University property.
7. No theft of property, regardless of owner, will be tolerated.
8. The operation of a University motor vehicle by minors is prohibited while attending the program.
9. The parking of staff and participant vehicles must be in accordance with University parking regulations.
10. Rules and procedures governing when and under what circumstances participants may leave University property during the program must be made explicit by the Program Administrator and communicated in writing to program participants, staff and to the Minor Coordinator.
11. Authorized Adults are expected to report immediately misconduct or violations of expected behavior to the Program Coordinator, who will then report such incidents to the Minor Coordinator.
12. Any Authorized Adult or Program Staff or other Mandatory Reporter under Georgia law who has reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, shall immediately report the suspected abuse to the institution police department, the appropriate supervisor or Program Administrator and the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services is notified of the suspected abuse immediately and in no case later than 24 hours after the Authorized Adult or Program Staff (or other reporter) first had reasonable cause to suspect the abuse.
13. Authorized Adults participating in Minors on Campus programs are required to notify their Program Administrator, Human Resources and University Police of any arrest (charged with a misdemeanor or felony) or conviction within 72 hours of knowledge of the arrest or conviction. This includes any arrests or convictions that occur either between the date of a University run background check and the beginning of the event/program. Human Resources will notify the Program Administrator and Minor Coordinator, who will then determine, in conjunction with University Police, if it is appropriate for the Authorized Adult to continue with the program.
14. If the Authorized Adult believes that the Program Administrator and/or the Minor Coordinator may be involved in the allegations of assault or abuse, they shall inform University Police directly.

By signing below, I have read, understand and agree to abide by the directions provided in this document. Furthermore, I understand that I must complete training and also pass a background check, and hereby provide the following information in order that the University may do so.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date