

## Student Activities Policy for Registered Student Organization Activities: PROTECTION OF MINORS

The University of Connecticut believes that all members of our community are responsible for safeguarding the welfare of minors who use our facilities or are involved with University programs and activities. This policy serves as a guide for our students and volunteers coming into contact with minors through their off-campus activities.

### Definitions

**Definitions** (Obtained from the Connecticut Department of Children and Families: <http://www.ct.gov/dcf/site/default.asp> Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes and the University of Connecticut's [Protection of Minors and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy, 2018](#))

- **Child abuse** is a non-accidental physical injury to a minor, or an injury that is inconsistent with the history given of it, or a condition resulting in maltreatment.
- **Child neglect** is the abandonment or denial of proper care and attention (physically, emotionally, or morally) of a minor, or the permitting of a minor to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to the minor's well-being.

*Source: University Policy for the Protection of Minors, 2018*

**Authorized Student Organization Leader** is a student organization leader who:

1. is supervising an activity involving minors that the student organization is attending, sponsoring or operating, and *during which the student organization leaders/members are responsible for supervising, chaperoning, or otherwise overseeing minors.*
2. has completed the University's minor protection training within the last calendar year
  - a. Questions about the Minor Protection Training can be directed to the University's Minor Protection Coordinator ([minorprotection@uconn.edu](mailto:minorprotection@uconn.edu)) or visit their [website](#). (<https://hr.uconn.edu/minor-protection/>)
3. has assured that student organization members who will be participating in an activity involving minors:
  - a. are educated on each activity's minor protection protocols
  - b. have signed, thereby agreeing to obey/supporting each activity's minor protection protocols

**Student Organization Sponsored Activity Involving Minors** is a program or activity open to the participation of minors that is sponsored, operated, or supported by the student organization and where minors, who are not enrolled or accepted for enrollment in credit-granting courses at the University are under the supervision of the student organization and its Authorized Student Organization Leader.

**Minor:** Any individual under the age of 18, who has not been legally emancipated.

### Protection of Minors: Protocols

All University students should report suspected child abuse or neglect to the DCF hotline listed below. Pursuant to Connecticut law, no individual will be held liable for making a report later found to be unsubstantiated as long as the report was made in good faith. The Department of Children and Families 24 hour Careline for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is 1-800-842-2288. For further guidance see <https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/1-DCF/Reporting-Child-Abuse-and-Neglect>.

**Activities where minors will be under the supervision of Student Organizations:** UConn student organizations are required to develop a Minor Protection Protocol for the activity regarding working with minors, and to name an Authorized Student Organization Leader. The protocol must be communicated to members prior to the activity. Student organization members must agree to abide by this protocol in writing prior to the activity. A copy of the protocol and the signature documents must be provided to Student Activities at least 2 weeks prior to the activity. The protocol and signature documents submitted are shared with the University's Minor Protection Coordinator.

**Activities where minors will be under the sole supervision of individuals not affiliated with the Student Organization (including the minor's parents or guardians):** UConn student organizations are required to develop a Minor Protection Protocol for the activity regarding working with minors. The protocol must be communicated to members prior to the activity. Student organization members must agree to abide by this protocol in writing prior to the activity. A copy of the protocol and the signature documents must be provided to Student Activities at least 2 weeks prior to the activity. The protocol and signature documents submitted are shared with the University's Minor Protection Coordinator.

Below are examples of items that could be included in a student organization's Minors Protocol:

- **Connecticut State Law:** All University students should report suspected child abuse or neglect to the DCF hotline listed below. Pursuant to Connecticut law, no individual will be held liable for making a report later found to be unsubstantiated as long as the report was made in good faith. The Department of Children and Families 24-hour Careline for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is 1-800-842-2288.
- **Time Alone with Minors:** Care should be taken to avoid or minimize situations in which individual minors are alone with a single adult. At least two unrelated authorized adults should be with minors at any given time. This applies to: transportation to/from activities, accompanying a child to the bathroom, etc. If this is not possible, then assure that at least two children go with an authorized adult.
- **One-to-One Meetings:** One-to-one meetings with minors are best held in public areas. If that is not appropriate or possible, then the door to the room should be left open, and a student organization leader as well as an advisor of the organization should be notified about the meeting in advance.
- **Advance Consents:** Collect written parental consents before permitting minors to engage in program activities, including overnight activities.
- **Check-in/Check-out Protocols:** Have protocols for accounting for the whereabouts of minors at all times and ensuring that participants are properly checked-in and only released to authorized parents, guardians, or other adults as requested in writing by the parent or guardian.
- **Communication:** Limit contact with minors to topics related to sanctioned activities. Online engagements with minors, including via social media, email, or text messages must be justified by the particular program or activity, and include a second adult or at minimum, take place in a public forum.
- **Access Control:** Control access to, and protect the confidentiality, security, and integrity of program records, including individual participant records, and program personnel records.

- **Driving Minors:** Student organization members should not be driving program participants who are minors. Any exceptions need to be discussed with Student Activities in advance so that a plan can be developed and approved. Additionally, Transportation in University vehicles during a University-sponsored activity involving minors is permitted only if at least two adults, one of whom must be an Authorized Adult, are present in the vehicle at all times, except when multiple minors will be in the vehicle at all times.
- **Alcohol and drugs:** All programs involving minors will be alcohol and drug free.
- Programs including **overnight stays or use of university residences** by children shall have the following additional policies in place:
  - Curfews.
  - Procedures to regularly account for overnight participants.
  - Code of conduct for program staff/volunteers and participants.
  - Substance-free housing and facilities.
  - Substance-free commitment for program staff and volunteers.
  - Separate restroom facilities for males and females, or if not available, programs must schedule separate times for males and females, as well as minors and adults.
  - Procedures to ensure that no Authorized Adult enters an area where minors are or are likely to be showering, bathing, sleeping, dressing, and other areas where privacy is expected.
  - Measures to control access to program participants.
  - Adequate levels of residential supervision by trained staff. Programs with male and female participants must have Authorized Adults of each gender in attendance.

### **Steps for Student Organizations Planning Activities with Minors**

The **Authorized Student Organization Leader or Activity Planner** is responsible for working with student organization to ensure (see attached template for guidance):

1. The development of activity specific minor protection protocols
2. The education of student organization members about the minor protection protocols for the specific activity
3. The securing the signatures of student organization members, and thereby their affirmations, that they will obey and support the activity-specific student organization minor protection protocols
4. The activity-specific protocols and student organization member signatures are sent to Student Activities, *at least two weeks prior to the activity.*
5. Additionally, for activities where minors will be under the supervision of the members of the student organizations:
  - a. The Authorized Student Organization Leader must complete the University's Minor Protection Training.
  - b. The Authorized Student Organization Leader must arrange for the student organization members to complete the University's Minor Protection Training.

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*This policy supplements and does not supersede any other legal requirements, for example, those related to childcare or teacher licensure.*

**Protection of Minors at RSO Off Campus Activities**

Official Name of Student Organization:

Activity:

Activity date / time / place (address):

Name of Activity Planner or Authorized Student Organization Leader:

Contact information:

Minor Protection Protocol for this activity (create your own based on the information above, or include the policies of the sponsoring organization, if there is another sponsoring organization):

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Signature of Activity Planner / Authorized Student Organization Leader:

Date:

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been educated about the Minor Protection Protocols for this activity, and I agree to abide by and support these protocols.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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