



The following documents are intended for MGA Minors Program/Activity Administrators and staff to serve as best practices on key areas of creating and managing safe and effective programs.

Program/Activity Administrators must recognize that all Programs/Activities are unique, and these best practices may or may not apply equally to each Program/Activity.

If there are any questions on these best practices or additional guidance is requested, contact Michelle Lewis at 478 471-0223 or michelle.lewis@mga.edu

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Accountability and Supervision

Ensuring the safety of minors and always providing effective supervision should be the primary



Communication

Effective communication within programs is critical to safely run operations. Communication needs to occur up, across, down, and out to external organizations and individuals. A culture of continuous communication is key to well-run minor's programs.

- Program leaders should develop an effective communication procedure for program supervisors, staff, and volunteers to ensure all required information is relayed to staff in a timely manner. Through written and oral means information about program procedures as well as about minor participants should be thoroughly communicated to all staff. Program leaders should continually evaluate information and who needs to know it for successful program operations. Regular staff meetings and debriefs should be incorporated into all programs.
- Staff should be trained and encouraged to promptly communicate to program leaders with any significant program information such as incidents involving minors, medical situations, and other program incidents. Strong, continuous communication should be the standard of minor's program staff.
- Communication across program staff is also a critical component of effective programs. A culture of information sharing should exist in all minors' programs, with staff members ensuring that all important information is shared between program areas and work shifts.
- Communicating with external stakeholders is also necessary.



Discipline

All programs should be prepared to handle situations where minors violate the Participant Code of Conduct. Minors, for various reasons, may act inappropriately, including disrespectful actions and words towards fellow program participants and/ or staff or bullying behavior. Programs should have procedures in place to handle discipline correctly.

- In addition to a Staff Code of Conduct, all programs should also use a Participant Code of Conduct that outlines behavior expectations and consequences for failing to follow program rules. This document should be signed by both minor participants and parents/guardians. This document forms the core of how disciplinary issues will be handled by program staff.
- Minors should be reminded of the Code of Conduct behavioral expectations of the program upon arrival. This can be accomplished by a mass meeting/orientation or in smaller groups. Ensuring all minor participants understand expectations is critical to a successful program.
- Staff should be properly trained on appropriate disciplinary actions that follow the Participant Code of Conduct. As noted in the Staff Code of Conduct, any discipline used should be constructive, not humiliating or isolating. Physical punishment is not an appropriate form of discipline and IS NOT allowed. Typical forms of corrective discipline include: verbal reminder of the Code of Conduct/program expectations for behavior, removing the minor from an activity temporarily, removal from future program activities.
- Minors must still be supervised during periods of removal from activities. Minors should not be sent to a dorm room or any other area away from staff supervision. Having a disciplined minor sit to the side of the activity is an acceptable program procedure. Staff should continue to engage with the minor and return them to program activities as soon as possible, reminding them that proper behavior is expected.
- Program leaders should be prepared for how severe disciplinary issues will be handled, including considerations for removal of a minor from a program and communications with parents/guardians. Review and decision procedures should be standard and fair across the program. Expectations and consequences should be included in the Participant Code of Conduct signed by minors and parents/guardians.
- Programs should use appropriate corrective measures to help minors understand expected behavior.



Medical and First Aid

All minor's programs should have some degree of medical preparation and training as part of their program planning. At a minimum staff should understand basic first aid responses and have access to a first aid kit. More extensive training and plans should be implemented for residential or extended day programs.

- Programs should ensure their staff have at a minimum basic first aid training (how to deal with cuts, scrapes, mild burns). Residential or week-long day programs should consider more extensive training, as well as programs that have higher risk of injury (athletics camps, outdoor activities).
- CPR/AED training is recommended for all or some staff for extended/residential programs. Volunteers and other non-staff personnel should check with their local Red Cross or hospital. Programs should ensure staff awareness of AED locations in facilities.
- Programs should either purchase/create their own first aid kits or have access to facility first aid kits.
- Annual reviews of the contents of first aid kits will ensure that items are replaced as needed.
- Plans should be developed for how medical issues beyond basic first aid will be handled. For nonemergency medical situations day programs should normally call parents/guardians to pick up minors who need medical care; residential programs will need to contact 911 if it's an emergency.
- A best practice is to have a signed medical authorization form from the parent/ guardian along with a copy of the family insurance card; this will ease the process of obtaining medical care for the minor. Programs should also have notification plans for parents/guardians in the event of a medical situation.
- Programs should develop plans for how serious medical emergencies will be handled including: who will provide care for the minor; who will notify medical authorities, program leadership, and parents/guardians; and who will transport. There should also be plans for moving other minors away from injury scenes and ensuring appropriate supervision levels are maintained as the medical emergency is handled.



Medication

Medication management should be considered for all minor's programs, especially overnight programs where participants share rooms. This ensures the overall safety of minor participants by limiting the sharing or taking of someone else's medication. There are several measures programs can implement to ensure all medication is taken appropriately and that medication usage is recorded.

- Program administrators should develop a comprehensive plan for medication management for the program; if assistance is needed, contact the Compliance Coordinator at protectingminors@mga.edu
- Residential programs should develop plans to collect and hold all medications (except emergency medications like epi-pens and inhalers, these should be kept by minors). Ensure all staff know where emergency medh



Misconduct Reporting

Misconduct Reporting is critical to safe programming. It is essential that all program staff, participants, and parents/guardians understand misconduct reporting and the process to make a report. Staff especially should be observant for any potential misconduct within the program and vigilant in reporting.

- Misconduct Reporting can be as significant as reports of abuse to reports of inappropriate language used during programs. Everyone who is part of your program should understand that any misconduct witnessed or reported should be made known to program leadership.
- All program participants and parents/guardians should be made aware of who to report misconduct to (this can be worded in program communications as “concerns about the program”). Provide a primary and secondary person to report to (in case the primary person is part of the alleged misconduct) including methods of contact like phone number and e-mail.
- All program staff should also know who to report misconduct to, including a primary and secondary program leader or other University official. Additionally, if misconduct is committed by minor program participants, staff should enforce the participant code of conduct via appropriate disciplinary methods.





Residential Housing

Many programs involve minors staying overnight at



Transportation

Programs that provide transportation to minors should ensure they are following all MGA motor vehicle use requirements. Additionally, all program staff who drive or ride in vehicles with minors should perform their duties in a safe manner at all times.

- All program staff who drive vehicles on University business must follow the MGA Motor Vehicle Use Policy.
- Minor transportation should preferably be done in MGA vehicles; while personal vehicles can be used if needed for infrequent trips, personal vehicle use for minors should be minimized.
- Programs should plan to have two staff members in each vehicle to follow the two adult guidelines while in the vehicle as well as having the ability to offload and park the vehicle away from the offload location. Developing plans for movement and loading/unloading will ensure continuous supervision of the minors.
- Staff should operate all vehicles safely and follow all motor vehicle rules to ensure the safety of the minors they are transporting.

