

SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

Interim Policy on Safety and Well-Being of Minors on Campus

I. Purpose:

Springfield College is committed to safeguarding all minors involved in our programs and on our campus. The following policy provides direction to employees, students and volunteers about expected codes of behavior and is intended to ensure that child protection concerns are appropriately addressed. This Policy establishes:

- Minimum standards of conduct for interacting with minors;
- Procedures for reporting, and responding to, suspicions of abuse or neglect of minors;
- Guidelines for the operation of programs that involve minors;
- Background screening requirements for Springfield College community members who interact with minors in programs with particular characteristics; and
- Minimum training requirements for Springfield College community members who oversee programs that involve minors.

II. Scope:

This policy applies to: (1) any program, activity, or service involving minors that occurs on any College property and (2) any College-sponsored program, activity, or service involving minors, wherever it occurs.

This policy applies to all members of the Springfield College community, including without limitation: (1) faculty, staff and students; (2) Volunteers, contractors and vendors working on campus or working for the College off-campus or online; and (3) Third-party sponsors who run events or programs on campus, off-campus, or online through the College or on the College's behalf.

Exclusions

The requirements set forth in this policy do not apply to:

- Events, services, or activities open to the general public where parent/guardians are expected to attend and appropriately supervise the minor or minors in their care;
- Courses in which minors are enrolled as they are required to comply with the College's Sexual and Gender-based Misconduct Policy;
- Events for which a third-party has entered into a facilities agreement with Springfield College unrelated to a College Sponsored Program; or
- Springfield College Child Development Center as they are required to comply with state laws and regulations.

III. Defined Terms:

A. Authorized Adult: Person 18 years of age or older who supervises, teaches, counsels, volunteers or otherwise works with minors participating in a program. The term Authorized

Adult does not include a person whose only role is to make a presentation to a group of minors who are under the supervision of another adult at the time of the presentation.

B. Child Abuse: The endangerment of a minor's physical or mental health due to injury by act or omission, including acts of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and economic exploitation. For more detailed information regarding the definitions of "abuse," "neglect," "exploitation," "abandonment," and related terms under Massachusetts law, please refer to the [definitions of abuse and neglect, utilized by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families](#), and associated state-mandated reporting requirements.

C. College Sponsored Program ("Program"): Any activity, event, recital, lesson, class, camp, or other interaction intended for minors, including, but not limited to programs paid for, organized by, or operated in whole or in part by the College, on or off campus. A College Sponsored Program is not one for which Springfield College has entered into a facilities agreement alone.

D. Mandated Reporter: Massachusetts law requires Mandated Reporters to immediately make an oral report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering from abuse and/or neglect. All members of the Springfield College community and contractors/consultants, who, while representing or serving Springfield College or otherwise participating in a Springfield College program, interact with minors are expected to seek further guidance upon any reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from abuse and/or neglect.

E. Minor: A person under the age of 18 who is not enrolled as a student at Springfield College. Minor does not include individuals who accept admission to Springfield College and submit a tuition deposit. In the event of a conflict with this definition and any other definition of minor in other Springfield College policies this definition supersedes any other definition.

F. Program Manager: A College employee who has been identified as a primary leader within a College-sponsored program. Each program is required to identify a program manager.

IV. General Policy Statement:

Adults should be positive role models for Minors, and act in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner that is consistent with the mission and guiding principles of the university.

a. Guidelines for Interacting with Minors

Adults working in Programs covered by this policy must follow these expectations to avoid behaviors that could cause harm or be misinterpreted:

- Do not engage in any sexual activity, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or share sexually explicit material (or assist in any way to provide access to such material) with Minors in-person or online.
- Generally, do not be alone with a single Minor in-person or online.
 - If one-on-one interaction is required in-person, meet in open, well illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other adults from the Program, unless the one-on-one interaction is expressly authorized by the Program Director, dean, department chairperson or is being undertaken by a healthcare provider.
 - If one-on-one interaction is required online, obtain written authorization from the parent/guardian unless the one-on-one interaction is expressly authorized by the

Program Director, dean, department chairperson or is being undertaken by a healthcare provider.

- Do not meet with Minors outside of established times for Program activities. Any exceptions require written parental authorization and must include more than one adult from the Program.
- Do not invite Minors to your home.
- Do not engage or allow Minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations, or related matters. Notwithstanding, within your position at Springfield College you may have Minors report any alleged improper incident(s) of romantic or sexual conversations for further support/review/investigation.
- Do not engage or communicate with Minors through any non-Springfield College email, text messages, social networking websites, internet chat rooms, or other forms of social media at any time except and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the Program and the College. Group messages and posts are acceptable and must be viewable by all participants and the Program Director.
- Do not touch Minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. Touching should generally only be in the open and in response to the Minor's needs, for a purpose that is consistent with the Program's mission and culture, and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health related (i.e., treatment of an injury) purpose. Any resistance from the Minor should be respected.
- 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, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining. If immediate restraint is necessary to protect a Minor or other Minors from harm, all incidents must be immediately documented and disclosed to the Program Director and the Minor's parent/guardian.
- Do not use, possess or be under the influence of, or display any alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs while on duty, when responsible for a Minor's welfare, or when interacting with Minors online.
- 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. Personal vehicles should not be used.
- Possession, use or display of any type of weapon or explosive device is prohibited.
- Do not engage Minors in activities (in-person and online) involving hazardous materials (chemical, biological, radiation) or mechanical tools during a Program.
- Photographing, videotaping and/or audiotaping minors during a Program is prohibited unless permitted by the Program with consent from the parent/guardian; [REDACTED]
- Do not permit hazing, harassment, or any type of bullying behavior, including cyberbullying, during the Program.
- Speak professionally.

b. Program Registration

Program Managers should register their College sponsored program with the Office of General Counsel at least 30 days prior to the start of the program to allow adequate time for background checks and training of authorized adults.

c. Background Screening

All Employees who have contact with Minors during the course of the Program must have a background check in accordance with the College's background check policy:

[https://pridenet.springfield.edu/ICS/icsfs/Background_Check_Policy_\(03_18_2019\)\(FINAL\)\(with_E.pdf?target=d743016a-c8a7-4beb-87b7-5e65b29f5e68](https://pridenet.springfield.edu/ICS/icsfs/Background_Check_Policy_(03_18_2019)(FINAL)(with_E.pdf?target=d743016a-c8a7-4beb-87b7-5e65b29f5e68)

d. Required Training

In recognition of the imperative of protecting Minors, the College requires that all adults working with Minors receive training on policies and issues relating to interactions with Minors.

This training should include:

- Springfield College policies regarding interactions with minors;
- Setting up an online program for minors, including the appropriate use of Zoom, Brightspace, and similar educational programs with minors (where applicable);
- Use of background checks to screen adults working with Minors;
- Responsibility for modeling respectful behaviors;
- Consequences of conduct violations involving Minors;
- Warning signs of abuse or neglect that Minor victims may exhibit;
- Sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
- Laboratory safety for Minors (where applicable);
- Inappropriate behavior with Minors;
- Other appropriate topics; and
- Reporting requirements and procedures for reporting incidents of suspected abuse, neglect, or improper conduct

Springfield College Human Resources and/or Office of Student Employment will provide the training for any College employee working for an applicable program.

External programs utilizing College facilities must confirm that they provided training to each adult in their program that meets these requirements.

e. Reporting Abuse

Every member of the Springfield community has an expectation to immediately report instances or suspected instances of the abuse or neglect of or inappropriate interactions with Minors to the Springfield College Police Department and/or to the Program Director. This includes information about suspected abuse, neglect, or inadequate care provided by a parent, guardian, or custodian/caretaker.

The Springfield College Police Department can assist in determining whether additional reporting may be required, such as mandated reporting to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF), and can assist in making such reporting.

When a program is associated with an external agency, such as a school district, the Program Director may also have the responsibility to report to the agency.

The College will protect the anonymity of the member(s) making the report to the extent possible. Members making a report in good faith will be protected from criminal and civil liability for making the report. Further, it is the policy of the College that no member making a good faith report of suspected abuse or neglect will be retaliated against in the terms and conditions of employment or educational program.

f. Minors in the workplace

Unless participating in an approved Springfield College program for minors, employees are responsible for the safety, care and supervision of their child(ren) while on campus. This includes ensuring that the child(ren) is not disruptive to campus activities.

g. Minors in the residence halls

Guests under the age of 18 are not permitted unless Housing and Residence Life receives prior written permission from their parent or legal guardian three business days prior to the visit. Overnight guests under the age of 13 are not permitted.

V. Contacts for Reporting Abuse:

To report abuse of children:

Springfield College Public Safety
413-748-5555
25 Portsmouth St., Springfield MA
Department of Children and Families (MA)
Child At-Risk Hotline: 800-792-5200
Springfield Area Office: 413-452-3200

For questions about the policy or its violation:

Office of General Counsel
Marsh Memorial, Second Floor
Office: (413) 748-3628

VI. Related Policies and References:

Related College Policies:

[Background Check Policy](#)

[CORI Policy](#)

[SGBM Policy](#)

Resources:

<https://www.ue.org/risk-management/sexual-assault-and-misconduct/protecting-minors-on-campus/>
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-children-families>

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