

Youth Activity Safety Policy: Activity Worker Guidelines

(Activity Directors: Provide one copy of this document to Activity Workers)

The following guidelines were developed to avoid questionable contact between Activity Workers and youth participants. The preferred method is to avoid private one-on-one interactions and always have another adult observer present during all interactions with youth. This will provide greater protection to the youth and the Activity Workers.

Definitions

Youth – Any person under the age of 19, excluding full- and part-time UNO students

Activity Worker – includes directors, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, student assistants, staff, faculty, officials, referees or contracted teachers or any other adult or student acting as a supervisor/mentor/worker in a paid, unpaid, or volunteer status

Activity Director – a person who plans, directs and supervises all youth activity programs and staff

Activity Support Staff – any person who provides support services such as food service, custodial, maintenance, etc. for the activity

Activity Worker Judgment

Activity Workers are role models for the youth and should act accordingly. As an Activity Worker, you must ask yourself the following questions regarding your decisions and the situations in which you may find yourself. Contact the Activity Director if you have questions or concerns.

- a. What are the physical risks involved in this activity/decision?
- b. Are there any foreseeable risks? What dangers can be avoided?
- c. How will youth benefit from this activity and how is it related to the purpose of the activity?
- d. What would I do if the youth or their parents were watching?
- e. What would I do if the Activity Director was watching?
- f. Could my action/decision cost me my job?

Interaction Guidelines

The primary interaction guidelines are provided below and are to be followed by all Activity Workers.

1. Immediately report any suspected abuse and neglect (including sexual assault or contact) of youth to UNO Public Safety (402-554-2911), local law enforcement, Nebraska Child Protective Services (800-652-1999), or the Iowa Department of Human Services (800-362-2178).
2. UNO reserves the right to suspend an Activity Worker or Activity Worker Support Staff from youth Activities for engaging in illegal activities or sexual misconduct while off duty.

3. Alcohol and tobacco products should not be used in the presence of youth and any use must comply with University policies. Use of illegal drugs or non-over the counter drugs without a prescription is prohibited. Activity Workers and Activity Support Staff should not conduct any activity under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances.
4. Use of profanity in front of youth is prohibited.
5. Avoid making inappropriate comments when in the presence of youth(s), including but not limited to comments that are sexual, racial, or related to sexual or gender orientation, and/or religious comments.
6. A youth requiring medical attention is to be directed to the activity's designated first-aid contact immediately.
7. Always have youth follow safety directives (i.e. fire alarm evacuation, severe weather, etc.)
8. The possession of weapons or explosive devices is prohibited, except where use is a recognized part of the Youth Activity, as determined solely within UNO's discretion.
9. Use of an Activity Worker's or Activity Support Staff's personal room or home for meetings/interacting with youth that are affiliated with the Youth Activity is prohibited. Activity Workers and Activity Support Staff are prohibited from meeting youth off-site or off hours. Exceptions require parental written approval and the Activity Director's approval in advance.
10. Any participating UNO Activity Worker who will be responsible for transporting youth by vehicle must undergo and pass a Driving Record Check as required by the UNO Large Passenger Van Policy. Non-UNO Activity Workers who transport youth must have a valid driver's license and be approved by the Activity Director to transport youth. If one-on-one travel must occur, the Activity Worker must contact his/her supervisor or designee immediately before departure and immediately upon arrival at the destination.
11. Taking pictures of youth or posting pictures or information about youth to social media sites without parent/guardian permission is prohibited.

Interactions with Youth

1. Respect the privacy of youth.
2. Supervise in pairs whenever possible; avoid being alone with a youth.
3. Never leave youth unsupervised.
4. All physical contact should be appropriate (i.e. high fives, fist bumps). Activity Workers should not engage in, initiate, or encourage inappropriate contact, such as chest bumps, kisses, hugs, butt slaps or sitting on laps.
5. Sexual touching or related activity is prohibited.
6. Physical restraint is prohibited, except to protect youth.
7. Any touching of youth should be restricted to areas not covered by a typical bathing suit.
8. Always be in view of others (i.e. when meeting in an office), leave the door open, and have another Activity Worker present in the room or close proximity. If privacy is required, inform another Activity Worker that the door will be closed for a private conversation and make sure the other Activity Worker will remain nearby in the area. If no other Activity Worker is present in the building, the meeting should be rescheduled or moved to a more public location.
9. When in bathrooms or locker rooms, Activity Workers must be the same gender as the youth. Activity Workers showering or bathing with youth is strictly prohibited under all circumstances. Activity Workers will not be in the shower or bath areas with youth except during extreme medical emergencies.
10. Whenever possible, youth should not be transported in an Activity Worker's personal vehicle.

11. All youth must have adult supervision until released to a parent or guardian unless specific written parental permission is received.
12. Do not share personal or intimate information with youth.
13. Do not give personal gifts to youth.

Overnight Activities

In addition to the above, the following are further precautions related to youth who stay in campus/other housing overnight.

1. A ratio of at least one adult supervisor to every 15 youths is required, with a minimum of two adult supervisors regardless of the size of activity. At least one adult supervisor of the same sex as the youth is required.
2. Activity Workers are not allowed to have individual youth in their private rooms.
3. Do not enter a bathroom or shower area to assist a youth without another Activity Worker present.
4. Never leave youth unsupervised in the residence halls.

Child Abuse and Neglect Including Sexual Assault Reporting Requirements

Nebraska statutes require any person who becomes aware of any child abuse or neglect, including sexual assault, to report such abuse, neglect, or assault to law enforcement or the Department of Health and Human Services. Law enforcement is likewise required to notify DHHS of any such incidents reported to them. Activity Workers are required to notify the Public Safety Department at 402.554.2648 immediately when these situations are suspected.

This means that if you suspect any child abuse or neglect, including sexual assault:

1. You must report it.
2. You should give as much information about the circumstances as possible.
3. You are immune from any civil or criminal liability if you have reported the information in good faith.
4. If you know of child abuse, neglect, or sexual assault but are not reporting it, you are breaking the law.

Reference: Nebraska Statutes 28-710; 28-711; 28-716; 28-717