



Youth Safety Policy

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Scope

Protection of youth is a shared responsibility. The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) is committed to providing a safe environment for youth who participate in organized university-sponsored and university-endorsed youth programs.

This policy applies to youth programs, activities, or camps ("youth programs") sponsored, operated, administered, or conducted by UNO or a sponsoring unit, whether on or off property owned, leased, or controlled by UNO. It also applies to third-party youth programs conducted on UNO property or pursuant to an agreement with UNO.

The presence of youth on UNO property does not, by itself, make an event or activity subject to this policy.

Policy Statement

1. Responsibility and Oversight

Each sponsoring unit must designate a program leader for every youth program for which the unit is responsible. The sponsoring unit and program leader are responsible for ensuring that the youth program is properly registered with Youth Safety and operated in accordance with this policy and the Youth Safety Procedures Manual. The program leader must ensure that required program staff screening and training are completed; appropriate supervision is maintained; required participant information and permissions are obtained; emergency and incident procedures are in place; and required program records are maintained.

Program staff must follow applicable Youth Safety requirements, maintain appropriate professional boundaries, and promptly report safety concerns, suspected misconduct, and other incidents as required by law and university policy.

2. Program Registration and Approval

Youth programs must be registered with Youth Safety and receive any required approval before beginning. Registration must include information that is reasonably necessary to evaluate the program, including dates, locations, participant ages, the program leader, program staff, supervision arrangements, and any transportation, overnight stay(s), or other elevated-risk components.

The program leader must notify Youth Safety of any changes that affect the program's approved safety plan or compliance requirements.

3. Program Staff Eligibility, Screening, and Training

Program staff who will have direct contact with youth participants must satisfy university-established background screening requirements before direct contact occurs and at intervals established by university procedure.

Screening requirements may vary based on role, nature of contact, and program risk.

Program leaders and program staff must complete the Youth Safety Training Course before participating in the youth program. Training requirements, screening procedures, eligibility determinations, and documentation requirements are established through the Youth Safety Procedures Manual and are not restated in this policy.

4. Supervision and Conduct

Youth programs must provide supervision appropriate to the ages of the youth participants and the nature, location, duration, and risk of the activity. Programs must comply with minimum staffing ratios and additional supervision requirements established in the Youth Safety Procedures Manual.

Group programs should be structured so that two or more program staff members are always present or readily available. Individual experiences and other one-on-one interactions must be authorized and structured to remain observable and interruptible or use other safeguards approved by Youth Safety.

Program staff must maintain professional boundaries with youth participants. Abuse, harassment, grooming, sexual or romantic conduct, hazing, retaliation, unauthorized private contact, and other conduct that threatens the safety or wellbeing of a youth participant are prohibited.

Additional requirements for electronic communication, transportation, restrooms and changing areas, overnight activities, physical contact, photography and media, and similar situations are addressed in Youth Safety Procedures Manual, the Program Staff Code of Conduct, and other Youth Safety documents.

5. Participant Information, Emergency Planning, and Release

Youth programs must obtain participant and parent or guardian information, permissions, releases, emergency contacts, health information, and other documentation appropriate to the activity and participant age.

Each youth program must have reasonable procedures for attendance, participant release or pickup when applicable, emergency communication, response to illness or injury, missing participants, and other foreseeable emergencies. Youth programs must have access to emergency medical services and any first aid or CPR resources required by university procedure based on the nature of the activity. Program leaders must ensure program staff are familiar with these procedures and prepared to respond appropriately during an emergency.

Program communications and registration materials must provide the University's established method for requesting disability-related accommodations.

6. Transportation, Overnight Programs, and Elevated-Risk Activities

Transportation provided or arranged as part of a youth program must comply with applicable university transportation requirements and youth safety procedures. One-on-one transportation of a youth participant by program staff should be avoided except when specifically authorized or necessary because of an emergency.

Overnight programs and activities involving housing, travel, laboratories, athletics, recreation, or other elevated risks may be subject to additional planning, supervision, permission, or safety requirements established by Youth Safety, the Office of Risk Management, Environmental Health and Safety, or another responsible university office.

7. Reporting and Incident Response

Any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a youth has been subjected to abuse or neglect must make the report required by Nebraska law. When a concern arises in connection with a youth program, program staff must also follow applicable university reporting procedures. An internal university report does not replace a report required by law.

Injuries, missing participants, significant safety concerns, suspected policy violations, and other reportable incidents must be reported promptly in accordance with Youth Safety Procedures Manual. Matters involving sexual

misconduct, discrimination or harassment, criminal conduct, or other areas governed by separate university policies must also be reported through the channels required by those policies.

8. Third-Party Youth Programs

Third-party youth programs must be registered with Youth Safety and operate under a university-approved agreement before the program begins. The agreement must address the third-party organization's responsibility for youth safety and compliance, including applicable requirements for program staff screening and training, supervision, reporting, participant documentation, insurance, and compliance with university rules.

UNO may require a third-party organization to certify compliance or provide supporting documentation such as proof of insurance. Third-party organizations remain responsible for the conduct of their employees, volunteers, and other responsible adults who are part of their team.

UNO may review documentation or audit compliance before, during, or after a third-party youth program.

9. Related University Requirements

Youth programs remain subject to other applicable university policies and procedures, including requirements concerning nondiscrimination, sexual misconduct, disability accommodation and accessibility, transportation, facility use, records and privacy, emergency safety, and employee or student conduct. This policy does not replace or restate those requirements.

10. Compliance and Exceptions

Youth Safety may review youth programs for compliance with this policy, require corrective action, impose additional safeguards based on program risk, or suspend or prohibit a program that does not meet applicable requirements.

Exceptions or alternative safeguards must be approved in writing before the program begins by Youth Safety and any other university office with responsibility for the requirement at issue. An exception may not waive a requirement imposed by law.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

1. General public events, including university-sponsored and university-endorsed community events such as performances, athletic events, festivals, fundraisers, giveaways, student de-stress events, and similar activities, when the event is not specifically designed for or directed toward youth participants and youth remain under the supervision and responsibility of a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult.
2. Regularly scheduled, credit-bearing UNO courses in which a youth is enrolled or accepted as a UNO student.
3. Research in which youth participate solely as human research subjects under an Institutional Review Board-approved protocol. Youth who participate in research settings as interns, mentees, assistants, trainees, volunteers, or similar participants remain covered by this policy.
4. Licensed childcare, clinical care, or medical services governed by applicable professional, licensing, or regulatory requirements.
5. Campus visits, tours, recruitment activities, or similar events in which youth remain under the supervision and responsibility of a parent, guardian, school, coach, or other responsible organization or have applied or otherwise been admitted to UNO.
6. Ordinary employment of youth through established university employment processes, unless the employment is part of a structured youth program.

Questions regarding whether a program or activity is covered by this policy must be referred to Youth Safety before the youth program or activity begins.

Reason for Policy

This policy establishes consistent, risk-based requirements for youth programs and identifies responsibility for protecting youth participants while they are participating in UNO-sponsored or UNO-endorsed programs.

Procedures

Youth Safety maintains the Youth Safety Procedures Manual, guidelines, training requirements, and forms necessary to implement this policy. These materials may be updated as operational, legal, or risk-management needs change without restating those details in the policy.

Definitions

Direct Contact: Interaction with youth participants as part of a youth program that is more than incidental and involves supervision, instruction, coaching, mentoring, chaperoning, transportation, caregiving, or other responsibility for or oversight of youth participants.

Elevated Risk Activity: Any youth program or component of a youth program that, because of its nature, location, duration, participants, or activities, presents an increased potential for injury, illness, abuse, misconduct, or other safety concerns and may require additional planning, supervision, training, permissions, or risk management measures.

General Public Event: An event intended for and open to the general public or university community, rather than specifically designed for or directed toward youth participants, at which youth may attend but remain under the supervision and responsibility of their parent, guardian, or other responsible adult.

Internship: A structured educational or career-development experience, conducted in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format, in which a youth participant engages in supervised learning, observation, or practical work under the direction of a sponsoring unit or third-party organization. An internship may be paid or unpaid and may be conducted individually or as part of a group.

K-12 School/School District Use of University Property: A K-12 school or school district's use of UNO facilities or grounds for its own activities. Unless UNO sponsors, administers, or assumes responsibility for the activity, the school or school district retains jurisdiction over participating students.

Jurisdiction: Responsibility for the care, custody, supervision, and safety of a youth participant during a particular program, activity, or period of time. Jurisdiction may rest with a parent or guardian, school or school district, third-party organization, or youth program, depending on who has assumed responsibility for the youth participant.

Program Leader: The individual designated by the sponsoring unit or third-party organization as having primary responsibility for the administration, operation, supervision, and compliance of a youth program.

Program Staff: Any individual paid or unpaid, who works or volunteers in a youth program and has responsibility for supervising, instructing, coaching, mentoring, chaperoning, transporting, advising, or otherwise overseeing youth participants. Program staff may include UNO faculty, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, and employees or volunteers of third-party organizations.

Responsible Adult: An individual who is legally or organizationally responsible for the care, supervision, or custody of one or more youth participants inside or outside of a youth program, such as a parent, guardian, teacher, coach, or group leader.

Sponsor: The individual, university unit, or third-party organization that authorizes, funds, organizes, operates, administers, or assumes responsibility for a youth program.

Sponsoring Unit: The UNO college, school, department, office, center, institute, recognized student organization, or other university unit that funds, operates, administers, or assumes responsibility for a youth program.

Supervision: The active oversight of youth participants by program staff that is appropriate to the participants' ages, abilities, activities, locations, and level of risk, and is sufficient to promote participant safety, wellbeing, and appropriate conduct.

Third-Party Organization: A person, group, business, school, nonprofit organization, governmental entity, or other organization that is not part of UNO and sponsors, operates, or conducts a youth program on UNO property or pursuant to an agreement with UNO.

Third-Party Youth Program: A youth program sponsored, operated, or conducted by a third-party organization on property owned, leased, or controlled by UNO or pursuant to an agreement with UNO.

University-Endorsed Youth Program: Authorized, approved, promoted, or otherwise recognized by UNO as having an official relationship with the University, regardless of whether the University directly operates or administers the youth program.

University-Sponsored Youth Program: Organized, operated, administered, or substantially controlled by UNO or a sponsoring unit as part of the university's educational, outreach, service, research, recreational, or other institutional mission.

Youth Program, Activity, or Camp ("youth program"): A youth program may involve one or more youth participants and includes organized individual or group experiences such as internships, mentorships, research and job-shadowing experiences, volunteer placements, camps, clinics, workshops, conferences, competitions, and similar arrangements or events.

Youth: Any person under the age of 19.

Youth Participant: Any person under the age of 19 who is enrolled, registered, accepted, invited, assigned, or otherwise participating in a youth program.

Additional Contacts

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>

This section may be modified to include responsibilities if necessary. **This section is optional.**

Forms

List any related forms and link if possible. **This section is optional.**

Related Information

List any other policies or information that should be cross-referenced such as legal or regulatory information. There is no room for any explanatory text in this section – only a list of titles and/or links. **This section is optional.**

History

Created university wide policy - 2012

Updated - May 2016

Transferred to current Policy Template – May 2016

Updated additional contact information; updated policy contact - June 2026

Updated incorrect phone number - September 2026

Policy updated with additional information such as definitions, reasons, and policy statement. September 2026