

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS
BOARD POLICY

Policy Number: 418

Subject: Protection of Minors on Campus

Date Adopted: 05/12 Revised: 08/13

The University of Central Arkansas is strongly committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for minors (those persons under the age 18). For purposes of this policy, the term “minor” and “children” are used synonymously. This policy sets forth the process to follow in order to protect minors on campus or participating in university-related programs, and to comply with all applicable laws and university policies.

1. Reporting Suspected Child Maltreatment

Any university employee or volunteer who reasonably suspects or observes child maltreatment should immediately report the following (in the case of a mandated reporter, the following must be reported immediately):

- a. Report, as required by Arkansas law, the suspected maltreatment to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-482-5964. This hotline is toll-free and is staffed 24 hours per day. (In a non-emergency situation only, a report form available at http://www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse/report_child_abuse.html may be faxed to 501-618-8952.)
- b. Report the suspected maltreatment to the University of Central Arkansas Police Department at 911 or 501-450-3111. This must occur immediately after the hotline report is made. After receiving a report of suspected maltreatment, UCAPD shall promptly coordinate an appropriate response with state officials and local law enforcement. In addition, UCAPD shall notify the appropriate vice president regarding any program, location, or employee involved in the allegations.

Immediate action is necessary in order to protect children present on the University of Central Arkansas campus or participating in university-related programs and is required by law for mandated reporters. Arkansas law prohibits any person from prohibiting or requiring prior permission for any mandated reporter to make a report of suspected maltreatment. A person, acting in good faith, who makes a report of suspected maltreatment, is immune to civil or criminal liability for making the report. In addition, the university prohibits retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report of child maltreatment.

Appendix A to this policy provides information regarding who is a mandated reporter and defines child maltreatment. A mandated reporter who fails to report child maltreatment may be subject to civil or criminal consequences.

Questions regarding mandatory reporting obligations should be directed to the Office of General Counsel.

2. Background Checks

The University of Central Arkansas requires background checks on persons who are assigned certain job duties. All departments with programs or personnel involving care or supervision of minors must review and ascertain whether the department has identified all positions (including part-time and student worker positions) that must be subjected to criminal background checks (including sex offender checks) as part of the hiring process.

Questions regarding background checks should be directed to the Office of Human Resources.

3. Camps and Other Programs, Activities or Locations Involving Minors

Numerous university departments may operate, host programs, or permit third parties to use university facilities involving minors, such as camps. All campus departments should carefully review all operated or hosted programs that include participation by minors or locations that are frequented by minors, to determine whether additional training or protocols may be needed to help prevent child abuse.

For example, departments that operate camps or similar on-campus programs should consider whether further training on the prevention of child sexual abuse or additional policies governing staffing patterns and interactions between minors and adults is needed. Departments should prohibit or strictly limit staff from being alone with children, especially in a place that is isolated or not easily visible to others.

Departments that operate facilities or locations frequented by children, and where inappropriate actions could occur, should consider whether additional policies or measures are needed.

Campus departments that host camps operated by non-university entities should require that contracts with such entities may address such elements as criminal background checks, staffing patterns, training and insurance/liability.

Appendix A: Mandated Reporters & Child Maltreatment

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-402(a), certain public officials, including “school officials,”¹ are required to report instances of suspected child maltreatment. Specifically, Arkansas law requires such “mandated reporters” to report if they: (1) have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to child maltreatment or has died as a result of child maltreatment or (2) observe a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in child maltreatment. “Child Maltreatment” is defined in Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-103(6) as “abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or abandonment.”

A regulation recently issued by the Arkansas Department of Human Services indicates that “school officials” required to report maltreatment includes “any person authorized by a school to exercise administrative or supervisory authority over employees, students or agents of the school,” and also includes “a volunteer exercising administrative or supervisory authority in a program conducted by a school.”² Furthermore, under the regulation, the definition of “school” includes any “two-year or four-year college or university.”³ Failure to report child maltreatment by a mandated reporter may have civil or criminal consequences. Aside from persons who are required to report, Arkansas law provides that any person who has reasonable cause to suspect or observes child maltreatment may make a report.

¹ Individuals designated as “mandated reporters” also include, but are not limited to, child care workers, nurses, medical personnel, resident interns, mental health professionals, peace officers, physicians, domestic abuse advocates, rape crisis advocates or volunteers, victim assistance professionals or volunteers, school counselors, social workers, and teachers. Ark. Code Ann. § 12-18-402.

² Ark. Dept. of Human Servs., Div. of Children and Family Servs., Policy & Procedure Manual, Appendix I: Glossary.

³ Id.