

# Code of Conduct

## STANDARDS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH

### in research settings and studies

As University of Washington employees and volunteers, it is our duty to safeguard the youth in our care. The following code of conduct describes the minimum expectations that we hold for personnel who interact with youth in a University led research setting. “Youth” refers to any individual under the age of 18 years old. “Personnel” or “Authorized Personnel” includes both employees of the University of Washington and volunteers who supervise, chaperone, or have custodial or caregiving responsibilities for, or who have unsupervised access to youth. “Parent” refers to both parents and legal guardians.

#### Included:

1. University Standards for Interacting With Youth
  2. How to Report Violations of the Standards
  3. How to Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect
  4. Confirmation of Understanding
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## 1. UNIVERSITY STANDARDS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH

### GENERAL CONTACT: IN PERSON, ONLINE, VERBAL, PHYSICAL

#### Expectations

- Observe the “Rule of Three” – have at least one other adult present during all interactions with youth, unless the research protocol or question demands 1:1 contact disclosed to and approved by IRB.
- Limit physical contact to purposes that are consistent with the research study’s mission and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health related purpose, in the presence of another staff member, and with the consent of the youth.
- Use study-sponsored email, phone and social media accounts for communication with youth limited to when there is an essential research-related reason to do so.
- Disclose any pre-existing relationships with youth who are human subjects immediately to the principal investigator. Abide by these standards while affiliated with the youth-involved research study, despite any pre-existing personal relationships.

#### Discouraged or prohibited

(Note: Discouraged behaviors are indicated by use of the word “avoid.” All other behaviors are prohibited.)

- Avoid being alone with a single youth where you cannot be observed by other staff or other adults.
- Do not act in a manner that can be perceived as physical or verbal abuse.
- Do not discipline youth by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
- Do not engage in purposeful communication or contact (including in-person meetings, phone or other electronic communication including social networking) with youth outside of sanctioned research activities.
- Avoid texting and other forms of electronic one-on-one communication between a single staff person or researcher and a youth. Instead, use technologies and platforms which are accessible by multiple staff members (e.g., a shared email inbox or a group chat functionality) and/or a youth’s parent.

## **EQUITABLE TREATMENT**

### **Expectation**

- Treat all youth equitably, i.e. consistently as allowed by the IRB-approval protocol, and fairly, regardless of their actions or behavior, sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, culture, place of birth, age, class, ability, health, citizenship, language, or other identities.

### **Prohibited**

- Do not discriminate against a youth based on their sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, culture, place of birth, age, class, ability, health, citizenship, language, or other identities. This prohibition does not refer IRB-approved studies for which these categories are a necessary part of the study design in assigning participants to study groups or arms.
- Do not give personal gifts to youth or their parents, e.g., any item intended to give a youth and/or parent special attention that is not given to others. Financial or other compensation or remuneration for participation in the study is excluded from this provision, provided it is distributed consistently to all participants and has been approved by IRB.

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **Expectation**

- Understand and respect the physical and personal boundaries set by youth.

### **Prohibited**

- Do not engage in sexual contact of any kind (including any verbal or physical contact that can be perceived as sexual in nature).
- Do not date or become romantically involved with youth.
- Do not discuss your own sex life or sexual activities with youth. Do not discuss a youth's sex life or sexual activities unless required by the study for research purposes. In these cases, the research protocol and questions must be approved by the IRB.
- Do not share sexually explicit material with youth unless required by the study for research purposes and approved by the IRB.

## **SAFETY**

### **Expectations**

- The safety of youth must be your primary concern above all others.
- Report any concerns for suspected abuse or neglect of a youth to authorities per University requirements. Requirements are outlined in Executive Order 56, or for UW Medicine, by your department.
- Notify University representatives per policy requirements of any violations of these standards for interacting with youth.
- Follow all University transportation procedures for transporting youth.

### **Prohibited**

- Do not possess, sell, use, or be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco or illegal drugs while engaged in research activities or on site.
- Do not bring or carry a weapon into the research location.
- Do not transport youth in a personal vehicle.

## **EDUCATING YOUTH**

Youth should be informed in an age-appropriate manner of their right to set their own physical limits for personal safety. They should be encouraged to tell an adult if someone is abusing them, or if they are in a situation or observe something that makes them uncomfortable.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING UNIVERSITY STANDARDS**

The University of Washington takes these matters seriously. In the case of suspected abuse or neglect of a youth or violations of the Standards for Interacting with Youth, the University will adhere to existing policies and procedures for corrective action. Actions taken will first and foremost consider the need to ensure the safety of youth participating in the research study.

## **2. HOW TO REPORT VIOLATIONS OF THE STANDARDS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH**

**Authorized personnel of youth-involved research studies are required to report violations of the Standards for Interacting with Youth.**

If you believe a staff member involved in a UW youth-involved research study has violated the Standards for Interacting with Youth you must notify **SafeCampus** at **206-685-7233** within 48 hours.

Information to provide when you call:

- 1) Information about the behaviors of concern including any concerns for safety or well-being of youth.
- 2) Information about the persons involved and date, time, location of the event(s).
- 3) Information about the youth research study.

**If you believe the staff member has violated the Standards in a way that raises concerns for abuse or neglect, you must follow your institution's process for reporting abuse or neglect to authorities.**

If you are unsure about whether someone's behavior is a violation of the standards, you can consult with your supervisor or the study principal investigator, contact SafeCampus, or contact the Office for Youth Programs Development and Support with your concerns and they can provide guidance.

## **3. HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

**All University of Washington employees and volunteers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities. Processes for reporting abuse and neglect may vary by institution. Refer to your institution's process for reporting abuse or neglect.**

If you have reasonable cause to believe that a youth has experienced abuse or neglect, or if a youth has disclosed abuse or neglect to you, you are required to report that abuse to the proper authorities within 48 hours.

Failure to do so is a violation of University of Washington policy and state statutes. Those who are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect and who fail to do so may be charged with a gross misdemeanor and/or subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**When making a report to authorities, you may be asked to provide:**

- 1) Information about the youth, e.g., name, age, contact information and name of parent/guardian(s).
- 2) Information about the person suspected of committing the abuse or neglect.
- 3) The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect, including location and description of the incident.
- 4) Any knowledge of previous incidents.

You do not need to have all of the above information to make a report, but the more accurate information you can provide, the better equipped the authorities will be to assess the child's risk.

If you are unsure about whether a report is required, you may use Child Protective Services (CPS) as a sounding board to help determine whether a report should be made and to whom.

**For cases involving abuse occurring in a UW research study, or on UW property,** contact your supervisor or the study principal investigator immediately after making your report to authorities, and contact SafeCampus at 206-685-SAFE (7233). Describe what occurred and who was involved, and any details regarding your conversation with authorities.

Your department will adhere to existing policies and procedures for corrective action regarding the employee or volunteer, including suspension or termination from employment or volunteer status.

Confidentiality of information related to abuse is crucial and should be limited to the immediate supervisor, any authorities called, and designated UW internal reporting recipient(s).

#### **4. CONFIRMATION OF UNDERSTANDING**

I have read the University of Washington Standards for Interacting with Youth and I agree to abide by the standards as stated.

I UNDERSTAND VIOLATIONS OF THE STANDARDS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL (SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT). I ACKNOWLEDGE I AM AWARE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES AND I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE STANDARDS FOR INTERACTING WITH YOUTH.

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_