

1:1 INTERACTIONS: AN EXPLAINER



Syracuse University's Minors Safety and Abuse Reporting Policy requires faculty and staff participating in programs involving minor children to follow the rule of three: at least one other authorized adult (or the minor's parent or legal guardian) or minor should also be present at all times in any interaction with a minor. The reason for this requirement is to reduce the risk of inappropriate behavior or false allegations of inappropriate behavior - in short, it is to protect the participants and the program faculty and staff.

The minimum ratio requirements apply in the following circumstances, which are used as examples only and are not an exhaustive list:

- All transportation to/from activities including but not limited to giving a minor a ride home. When transporting minors on behalf of a University program, more than one authorized adult from the University program must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple minors will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation. Transportation in personal vehicles is prohibited, unless previously approved. When it is not possible to comply with this guideline, parents/guardians of minors must sign a parent/legal guardian disclosure acknowledging that they understand their minor is engaged in a University program that requires one-on-one interaction (minor to adult) AND the event must be approved by Risk Management.
- Electronic communication involving minors. Do not engage or converse one on one with minors through electronic means, including but not limited to: email, text messages, social networking websites, or other forms of social media at any time unless there is a legitimate educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communications is consistent with the mission of the approved program and the University, AND so long as another authorized adult or parent/guardian participates in the communications. This recognizes the continued and evolving reliance on emerging electronic technologies (such as: email, text messaging, social media, skype, etc.) and the interaction between those and sponsored programs. This does not hold true in a time-sensitive, emergency-based situation, such as a last-minute program cancellation.

Occasionally, a program may require a 1:1 interaction with a minor. All programs involving minors must be registered with Risk Management, including any 1:1 interaction, and pre-approved by the minor's parent or legal guardian using the parent/legal guardian sign-off form. Additionally, if a 1:1 interaction is necessary, it must adhere to the following best practices:

Individual meetings with a minor are to be held in an open, public, or otherwise interruptible, observable, and well illuminated area. If that is not appropriate or possible, then the door to the room should be left open, or a window that allows for unobstructed observation should be present. It is expected that activities where minors are present will adhere to the 'rule of three'. Remaining visible to other people protects the minor, and also protects you. If you need to check on a minor in a private area such as a sleeping room, locker room, or bathroom, bring another authorized adult along. Never be the only adult in a restroom, shower room, locker room, or other dressing or housing area whenever minors are using such facilities.

If you have an important reason to be alone with a minor, such as for music lessons or individual meetings, discuss safeguards in advance with your director or supervisor and obtain written approval from both the minor's parent/legal guardian AND Risk Management. If, for whatever reason, a 1:1 interaction cannot adhere to the foregoing requirements, the activity must be further screened and approved by the Office of Risk Management in advance of the interaction.

For more information, contact:

Sarah Ross Cappella
Youth Program Compliance Coordinator
cappella@syr.edu or 315.443.4131

riskmanagement.syr.edu
youthprograms.syr.edu