

Program Staff Code of Conduct

Program staff should be positive role models for minors and act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner that is consistent with the mission of the University. Program staff must abide by all relevant WMU Policies and all applicable laws. Staff may be removed from the program for non-compliance with the policies.

**Program staff may not do any of the following:**

* Engage in any sexual activity, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or share sexually explicit material with minors or assist in any way to provide access to such material to minors;
* Engage or allow minors to engage them in romantic or sexual conversations, or related matters, unless required in the role of resident advisors, counselors, or health care providers;
* Touch minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. If touching is necessary, it should only be done in the open, in response to the minor's immediate physical needs, for a purpose that is consistent with the program's mission and culture, or for a clear educational, developmental, or health-related purpose (i.e., treatment of an injury). Respect and adhere to any resistance from the minor unless it is a life-threatening emergency;
* Use profanity, vulgarity, harassing language, or language that would violate the [University Sexual Misconduct policy](http://wmich.edu/policies/sexual-assault);
* Be alone with a minor. Program staff must follow requirements for One-on-One Interaction as set forth elsewhere in this policy;
* Meet with minors outside of established times for program activities. Any exceptions require written parental authorization and must include more than one program staff member;
* Invite individual minors to your home or other private location. Any exceptions require authorization by the program Administrator and the Office of Precollege programming and written authorization by a parent/guardian;
* Provide gifts to minors or their families independent of items provided by the program;
* Engage or communicate with minors through email, text messages, social networking websites, phone, internet chat rooms, multiplayer online games, or other forms of social media at any time except in the case of an emergency. Upon request, the Office of Precollege programming may authorize such communication if there is an educational or programmatic purpose for the communication and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the program and the University;
* Engage in abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a minor, including but not limited to verbal abuse, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining. If restraint is necessary to protect a minor or other minors from harm, all incidents must be documented and disclosed to the Office of Precollege programming, the program Administrator, and the minor's parent/guardian;
* Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or while in the presence of minors involved in a program;
* Provide alcohol or illegal drugs to a minor;
* Provide medication to a minor unless authorized by the program’s medication management guidelines;
* Possess or use any type of weapon or explosive device unless authorized in advance by campus law enforcement.

**Transportation of minors**

* Minors may not operate a WMU-owned and/or controlled motor vehicle while they are attending and participating in the program.
* Any staff who transport minors must have undergone and passed a Michigan driver records check within the last twelve months.
* If staff are transporting minors, more than one adult or more than one minor must be present in the vehicle for the duration of the transportation.

**Reporting possible criminal or questionable activity**

All members of the University community should act immediately if they experience or witness possible criminal or questionable activity. In such instances, please take one of the following steps:

* Dial 9-1-1 to connect to the police if you require immediate emergency assistance or believe a crime is in progress.
* Call the Department of Public Safety at (269) 387-5555 for non-emergency situations.
* You may also contact WMU’s Office of Institutional Equity at (269) 387-6316 if you have witnessed or believe there has been sexual abuse or misconduct involving a minor.

**Mandated reporters and their legal obligations**

* All non-volunteer staff are Mandated Reporters. (MCL § 722.621, et seq.)
* Mandated reporters must immediately report known or suspected mental or physical abuse or neglect of a child directly to Michigan’s Department of Human Services by calling 855-444-3911 (24/7 toll free number). You must submit a written report to the Department of Human Services within 72 hours of the initial verbal report.
* Reporters must also inform the program Director or the Office of Precollege programming. If reported to the program Director, the program Director must report to the Office of Precollege programming. The Office of Precollege programming, in conjunction with the Office of the General Counsel, will evaluate whether further action is required.

**Accountability**

* If an allegation of inappropriate conduct has been made against any staff, the suspected individual shall immediately discontinue any further participation in any programs until such allegation has been resolved.
* Violations of this policy will subject the violator to appropriate progressive discipline, up to and including termination of employment (for faculty and staff) and dismissal from the University (for students).