CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING CONTRACT

I acknowledge and understand that while everyone should be concerned about child abuse and neglect, certain individuals are required by law to report suspected instances. I acknowledge and understand that I am required to comply with all applicable federal laws, state laws, and federal, state, and University policies, procedures and regulations.

The Law of Virginia requires that "any person employed by a public or private institution of higher education" report suspected child abuses or neglect pursuant to §63.2-1509 to the local social services department or Department of Social Services toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline 1.800.552.7096.

Definition:
The Law of Virginia in §63.2-100 defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 years of age whose parent or any person responsible for his or her care:

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
- Has a child present during the manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance where such activity would constitute a felony violation;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care;
- Abandons the child;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child’s age and level of development;
- Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person, not related by blood or marriage, who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender; or
- Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

I agree that

- I have reviewed and will comply with the documentation “Guidelines for Working with Minors”
- If I have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child to report abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services hotline, or the local social services department, and my supervisor or other University official soon as possible; but, not longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense of child abuse or neglect.

Employee Signature     Print Name     Date

Supervisor Signature    Print Name     Date

Questions? Contact University Human Resources (703.993.3878)
Guidelines for Working with Minors

George Mason University is committed to the safety of all individuals in its community, with particular concern for those who are potentially vulnerable, including minor children, who require special attention and protection. The University is committed to do what it can to prevent the victimization of child and adolescent minors and promote their safety. This document contains important information you must review if you are participating in programs or activities involving minors that are internal, sponsored or operated by external organizations or entities in University facilities.

You must review the information and submit the “Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Contract” indicating that you have read the material and agree to comply with the requirements it describes. You may also be required to review additional materials that are germane to your specific situation.

Review:

1) Guidelines for working with minors that will help you maintain safe and positive interactions and reduce the risk of mistaken allegations;

2) Steps to take if you suspect that a minor has been abused or neglected or is otherwise unsafe, including information about how to report your suspicions or ask questions;

3) Information on the signs of child abuse and neglect from the Virginia Department of Social Services; and

4) “Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Contract”, an acknowledgement form that you must submit to certify that you have read and understood the information and will comply with your obligations if you are a mandated reporter.

1. Guidelines for Working with Minors

Adults 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. Adults working in programs/camps covered by this policy must follow these expectations to avoid behaviors that could cause harm or be misinterpreted:

- Do not engage in any sexual activity, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or share sexually explicit materials (or assist in any way to provide access to such materials) with Minors.
- Do not be alone with a single Minor. If one on one interaction is required, meet in open, well illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other adults from the Program, unless the one on one interaction is expressly authorized by the Program Director, dean, department chair person or is being undertaken by a health care provider.
- Do not meet with Minors outside of established times for Program activities. Any exceptions require authorization by the Program Director and written authorization by a parent/guardian.
- Do not engage or allow Minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations, or related matters, unless required in the role of resident advisors, counselors, or health care providers.
- Do not engage or communicate with Minors through email, text messages, social networking websites, internet chat rooms, or other forms of social media at any time except and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the program/camp and the University.
- Do not touch Minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. Touching should generally only be in the open and in response to the Minor’s needs, for a purpose...
that is consistent with the Program’s mission and culture, and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health related (i.e., treatment of injury) purpose. Any resistance from the Minor should be respected.

- Do not engage in any 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 program/camp Director and the Minor’s parent/guardian.
- Do not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or when responsible for a Minor’s welfare.
- When transporting Minors in a program or camp, more than one adult from the program/camp must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple Minors will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation. The use of personal vehicles is prohibited.
- Possession of or use of any type of weapon or explosive device is prohibited.

2. Steps to take to Report Suspected Abuse Or Neglect Of A Minor

If you know, suspect, or receive information indicating that a minor has been abused or neglected, or if you have other concerns about a situation involving the safety of minors, follow the procedures described below.

**Emergencies**

- In case of an emergency, immediately call University Police (703) 933-2810 or the local police department at 911.

**All Other Reports of Known or Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Minors**

- If there is a reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, report the matters as soon as possible, but no longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense of child abuse or neglect. Reports must be submitted to the local office of the Department of Social Services or to the Department’s state-wide toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline, 1-800-552-7096.

**If you are a “Mandated” Reporter:**

- The Code of Virginia requires that certain injuries to children be reported immediately by persons who, in their professional or official capacity have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, to the local department of the county or city where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Department’s toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline 1-800-552-7096.

**Mandated Reporters under Virginia Law:**

- Mandated reporters include any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children; any athletic coach, director of other person 18 years of age or older employed by or volunteering with a private sports organization or team; and administrators and employees 18 years of age or older of public or private day camps, youth centers and youth recreation programs; and others. If you have questions about whether you may be considered a mandated reporter, please contact your supervisor, program director, dean or vice president. The Office of University Counsel is also available to provide advice and can be reached at 703-993-2619.

**George Mason employees**

- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to your supervisor or other University officials pursuant to Virginia Law (§63.2-1509) Mason employees may report suspected child abuse to University Police (703-993-2810) to University Human Resources (703-993-3878) or to their Departmental or School administration.
3. Information on the signs of child abuse and neglect from the Virginia Department of Social Services

Resources:

- Child Protective Services Video
  
  [link]

  Presentation to George Mason University Faculty/Staff December 7, 2012

- A Guide For Mandated Reporters in Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
  
  [link]

  Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services

Other Information:

Reports must be submitted to the local office of the Department of Social Services (in Fairfax, Fairfax County Department of Family Services (703.324.7500) or to the Department's state-wide toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline (1.800.552.7096).

Mason employees may also report suspected child abuse or neglect to their supervisors or other University officials. Virginia Law (§63.2-1509) allows persons who receive information concerning child abuse or neglect in the course of providing professional services to certain state institutions to immediately notify those in charge of their institution or department of such abuse or neglect, in order for those persons to make the mandated report to DSS. Mason employees may report suspected child abuse to University Police (703.993.2810), to University Human Resources (703.993.3878) or to their Departmental or School administration.