

Northern Michigan University CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PROGRAM STAFF WORKING WITH MINORS

NMU strives to provide the highest quality program in a safe environment for every participant. Please assist us in maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment by following the following code of conduct.

Program staff should be positive role models for minors and act in a responsible manner. It is expected that all program staff will adhere to the below expectations.

1. Anyone who knows, suspects, or receives information indicating that a child or teen has been abused or neglected, or who has other concerns about the safety of children or teens **MUST** inform the program administrator, the NMU Police Department (906) 227-2151 or the Michigan Department of Human Services at (855) 444-3911.
2. Do not engage in any sexual activity, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, share sexually explicit material with minors, or assist in any way to provide access to such material to minors.
3. Do not engage or allow minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations or related matters. Similarly, do not treat minors as confidantes; refrain from sharing sensitive personal information about yourself. Examples of sensitive personal information that should not be shared with minors are information about financial challenges, workplace challenges, drug or alcohol use, and romantic relationships.
4. Do not touch minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. All personal contact 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, or for a clear educational, developmental, or health-related purpose (e.g., treatment of an injury). Any refusal or resistance from the minor should be respected.
5. Do not shower, bathe, or undress with, or in the presence of, a minor.
6. Profanity, vulgarity, or harassing language is prohibited.
7. Do not be alone with a minor. If one-on-one contact is required, meet in open, well-illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other program staff.
8. Do not meet with minors outside of established times for program activities. Any exceptions require written parent/guardian authorization and must include more than one program staff.
9. Do not invite minors to your home or other private locations. Any exceptions require authorization by the program administrator and written authorization by a parent/guardian.
10. Do not provide gifts to minors or their families independent of items provided by the program.
11. Do not 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 and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the program and the university. Should communication be necessary, include a third person.

12. 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 administrator and the minor's parent/guardian. All incidents involving such conduct must be documented and disclosed promptly to the program administrator.
13. NMU is a tobacco-free campus; the tobacco-free policy is available online. Do not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty, or in the presence of minors involved in a program, or when responsible for a minor's welfare.
14. Possession or use of any type of weapon or explosive device is prohibited unless authorized in advance by campus law enforcement.
15. Do not provide alcohol or illegal substances to a minor.
16. Do not provide medication to a minor unless authorized by the program's medication management guidelines.
17. When transporting minors, more than one program staff from the program must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple minors will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation. Avoid using personal vehicles if possible and comply with the program's transportation guidelines. All incidents involving such conduct shall be reported to the program administrator.
18. Do not tell minors, "This is between the two of us," or use similar language that encourages minors to keep secrets from their parents/guardians or for you to keep secrets from the program administrator.
19. Program staff may not take pictures of minors or post information about minors to social media sites without permission from a parent/guardian and the program administrator.
20. While this code contains specific rules, there is also an expectation that if program faculty, staff, volunteers or others witness a violation of these rules that they will act immediately. For instance, if you witness any program staff isolating a program participant, speak up, bring the participant back to the group, or take other appropriate action and remind all participants of the code rules designed to keep all persons safe. Further, you must report the incident to the program supervisor so that further action can be initiated if necessary.

Individuals associated with a youth program alleged to have violated NMU policies or conduct rules of the program will be reported to the NMU Police Department for possible dismissal and removal from the program. The full policy is located at nmu.edu/minorsoncampus.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the code of conduct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____