

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF
Policy on
Protection of Minors on Campus

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff is strongly committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for children. This policy briefly summarizes important steps to protect children on campus or participating in programs that may be connected with the University, and to comply with applicable legal requirements and institutional policies.

I. Reporting Suspected Child Maltreatment

If any University employee or volunteer reasonably suspects or observes child maltreatment, he or she should immediately do the following, (and must immediately do the following if a mandated reporter):

1. Report, as required by State law, the suspected maltreatment to the state's Child Abuse Hotline, at 1-800-482-5964. The hotline is toll-free and is staffed 24 hours per day. (In a nonemergency situation only, a report form available at the web site: http://www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse/report_child_abuse.html may be faxed to 1-501-618-8952.)

2. Report the suspected maltreatment to the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Public Safety Department at 870-575-8102. This must occur immediately after the Hotline report is made. After receiving a report of suspected maltreatment, the UAPB Public Safety Department shall promptly coordinate an appropriate response with state officials and local law enforcement, as appropriate. In addition, the UAPB Public Safety Department shall notify the appropriate vice chancellor for any program, location or employee involved in the allegations.

Again, immediate action is essential to protect children present on the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff campus or participating in programs that may be connected with the University and is required by law for mandated reporters. Arkansas law prohibits any person from prohibiting or requiring prior permission for any mandated reporter to make a report of suspected maltreatment. A person, acting in good faith, who makes a report of suspected maltreatment, is immune to suit and to civil or criminal liability for making the report. Likewise, University policy prohibits retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report of child maltreatment.

Information on who is a mandated reporter and defining child maltreatment is in the attached Appendix A. Failure to report child maltreatment by a mandated reporter may have civil or criminal consequences.

Questions regarding mandatory reporting obligations may be directed to Chief Maxcie Thomas at (870) 575-8102.

II. Background Checks

The University of Arkansas System and this campus have adopted and begun implementing policies requiring certain types of background checks based on job duties. It is important for all units with programs or personnel involving care or supervision of minors to review and ascertain whether they have identified all positions (including part-time and student worker positions) that must be subjected to criminal background checks (including sex offender checks) as part of the hiring process.

Questions regarding background checks may be directed to the Office of Human Resources at 870-575-8400.

III. Camps and Other Programs, Activities or Locations Involving Minors

Numerous University units either operate, host programs, or permit third parties to use University facilities involving minors, such as camps. All campus units should carefully review all programs that they operate or host which includes participation by minors, or locations that they control which are frequented by minors, to determine whether additional training or protocols may be needed to help prevent child abuse.

For example:

Units that operate their own camps or similar on-campus programs should consider whether further training on preventing child sexual abuse or additional policies governing staffing patterns and interactions between minors and adults is needed. For example, units should prohibit or strictly limit staff from being alone with children, especially in a place that is isolated or not easily visible to others.

Units that operate facilities or locations frequented by children, and where inappropriate interactions could occur, should consider whether additional policies or measures are needed.

Campus units that host camps operated by non-University entities should require that contracts with such entities properly address such elements as criminal background checks, staffing patterns, training, and insurance/liability.

Appendix A: Mandated Reporters & Child Maltreatment

Arkansas Code § 12-18-402(a) requires certain public officials, including “school officials,”¹ to report instances of suspected child maltreatment. Specifically, Arkansas law requires such “mandated reporters” to report if they: (1) have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to child maltreatment or has died as a result of child maltreatment or (2) observe a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in child maltreatment. Arkansas Code § 12-18-103(6) defines “child maltreatment” as “abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or abandonment.”

A regulation recently issued by the Arkansas Department of Human Services indicates that “school officials” required to report maltreatment includes “any person authorized by a school to exercise administrative or supervisory authority over employees, students or agents of the school,” and also includes “a volunteer exercising administrative or supervisory authority in a program conducted by a school.”² Furthermore, under the regulation, the definition of “school” includes any “two-year or four-year college or university.”³ Failure to report child maltreatment by a mandated reporter may have civil or criminal consequences. Aside from persons that are required to report, the Arkansas Code provides that any person who has reasonable cause to suspect or observes child maltreatment may make a report.

May 2012

¹ Individuals designated as “mandated reporters” also include, but are not limited to, child care workers, nurses, medical personnel, resident interns, mental health professionals, peace officers, physicians, domestic abuse advocates, rape crisis advocates or volunteers, victim assistance professionals or volunteers, school counselors, social workers, and teachers. Ark. Code § 12-18-402.

² Ark. Dept. of Human Services., Div. of Children and Family Services., Policy & Procedure Manual, Appendix I: Glossary.