

## **Rice University Policy No. 811**

### **University Programs or Activities Involving Minors**

#### **I. General Policy**

Rice University hosts or permits a number of university programs or activities involving minors who are visitors to Rice. These activities vary across campus and may include education programs, outreach programs, activity camps, student club activities, mentoring, instruction, tutoring, coaching and minors doing research. These Rice-hosted activities may occur on or off-campus.

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the protection of minors who are not Rice students when they are involved in Rice University programs or activities, regardless of location. This policy designates the Office of Risk Management as the Rice University authority on interactions involving minors, and further provides the mandatory requirements for individuals to participate in University programs or activities involving minors, including background checks and training.

This policy provides guidelines that apply to interactions between minors and university students, faculty, staff and volunteers in university-hosted or permitted activities, whether those activities are formal programs or involve one minor in a recurring interaction on campus.

This policy also establishes requirements for non-university organizations that operate programs or activities involving minors on campus. All University contractual agreements with these non-university entities are required to incorporate these requirements.

#### **II. Roles and Responsibilities**

All Rice Faculty, Staff, Students, Volunteers, or Visitors are required to report immediately to the Rice University Police Department any known or suspected allegation or instance of child abuse or neglect occurring at or in connection with Rice University. Further, any individual who will be an “Authorized Adult” in a program subject to this policy must complete the required training and submit a background check to Risk Management.

Any Department, Office, or Individual wishing to conduct a University program or activity involving minors must submit the program to Risk Management for approval.

Risk Management is primarily responsible for the oversight of the University’s minor protection program, and has authority to take any action necessary for the protection of minors in any University programs or activities involving minors (as defined below); this includes, but is not limited to, approving program structures, reviewing or amending contracts, prohibiting individuals from participation based on background checks or other available information, or curtailing any program or activity.

#### **III. Definitions**

“Minor” – For the purpose of this policy, a minor is an individual under the age of eighteen (18) who is not enrolled or accepted to enroll in a degree program at Rice.

“University Programs or Activities Involving Minors” or “Program” - As used in this policy, this term means programs and activities with participants who are minors offered or authorized by Rice University (regardless of the number of minors involved), held in campus facilities or off-campus, or involving Rice University students, faculty or staff. These include organized group campus tours, admissions activities, student club or association sponsored programs, athletic programs, music programs, summer school courses for high school students, youth camps held at Rice by Rice athletic coaches, recreation center summer activity programs, non-degree academic programs, internships at Rice, independent study or research, and community outreach programs whether conducted by Rice University, a faculty member, or

by student groups or clubs. University Programs or Activities Involving Minors include off campus activities sponsored by Rice organizations, faculty members or student clubs, but do not include sporting events, theater presentations or other public events where the individuals attending are not supervised by the employees, students or volunteers of the University. The term includes informal arrangements in which a minor is involved in a recurring interaction on campus with the Rice student, faculty or staff. The term does not generally apply to events or functions where a minor is under the supervision of their own parent or guardian (e.g., sporting events or concerts).

“Authorized Adult” - As used in this policy, this term means individuals (usually aged eighteen (18) or older, though they may be younger if a Rice student), whether paid or unpaid by Rice, who interact with, supervise or chaperone minors in University Programs or Activities Involving Minors and are Rice University faculty, staff, volunteers, undergraduate and graduate students, interns or independent contractors; and who have completed a background check and been authorized by Risk Management to participate in Programs

#### **IV. Elaboration of Policy**

A university employee, student, department, office, club, organization or visitor offering or organizing a Program must devise procedures and requirements that are prudent and appropriate for the activity, taking into account the presence of minors. These procedures and requirements must comply with the following sections.

##### **A. Registration with Risk Management**

All Programs must register at least 30 days in advance of program start with Rice’s Risk Management Office, and provide details about the program, including the number of minors participating, number of Authorized Adults supervising, nature of the supervision being provided and the duration and location of the program.

##### **B. Meet Programmatic Requirements**

Risk Management establishes and maintains guidelines for expectations of programs involving minors including: supervision, emergency planning, logistics, and other basic safety information. These can be found on the [Risk Management website](#), and are attached as an appendix to this policy (this appendix may be periodically updated by Risk Management, as needed).

##### **C. Background Checks**

Any adult participating in a Program who has direct contact or will be in a private or secluded area with minors must have a current background check (within the last three years) on file with Risk Management before participating in activities with minors. If a criminal background check or other credible information source reveals adverse information, the individual will not be an Authorized Adult, and the activity sponsor will be notified that the individual will not be allowed to participate in the program.

Authorized Adults must disclose in writing and as soon as possible any arrests or criminal convictions that are subsequent to their last background check by Risk Management and involve minors, sex crimes, domestic violence, or felonies. Disclosures will be used for reconsideration of authorized status.

Exempt from this requirement are students hosting siblings or other family members during campus events, students hosting high school students as part of a pre-enrollment visit for prospective students, or activities that involve large numbers of one-time volunteers who interact with minors only in public spaces.

#### D. Child Protection Training

Any adult participating in a Program who has direct contact or will be in a private or secluded area with minors must complete Child Protection Training offered online through Risk Management, at least once every two years. The training discusses signs and effects of child abuse and molestation, various forms of abuse, and steps for reporting known or suspected abuse.

#### E. Mandatory Reporting

Anyone who witnesses or suspects that there may be inappropriate conduct towards or touching of minors must immediately contact the Rice University Police Department (RUPD). Further, all participation in the activity by a person accused or suspected of inappropriate conduct with a minor must immediately cease until the allegations have been satisfactorily resolved by RUPD.

#### F. Non-University Organizations

Non-University organizations and entities that operate programs or activities involving minors at Rice must be aware of, and comply with, this policy. The specific requirements of this policy must be incorporated into any contract or subcontract that involves minors in order to hold programs at Rice University or involving Rice at off-campus locations.

#### G. Employees Bringing Children to Campus

Generally, employees must avoid bringing their children to the worksite in lieu of childcare. If an emergency necessitates bringing a child to work or to a classroom or academic activity, the employee must first obtain permission from the appropriate supervisor/faculty member and must not leave a child unsupervised at any time. The employee must find alternative childcare as soon as possible because the University cannot be responsible for the safety or supervision of children in the workplace. Rice offers its employees a “Back-up Care Advantage Program” that employees are encouraged to use. This program provides 10 days of care each calendar year for your children in the event a regular childcare arrangement is interrupted. For more information about this program, go to [www.people.rice.edu/benefits](http://www.people.rice.edu/benefits).

An exception to this general rule is a day recognized as “Bring Your Child to Work” day or a similar program. During such days, appropriate prior approval should be obtained and arrangements made for age-appropriate activity and supervision of the child; minors are allowed in University laboratories only if permitted under this Policy and Policy 313.

### V. Cross References to Related Policies

Policy 105, [Emergency Management](#)

Policy 313, [Laboratory Safety Policy](#)

Policy 802, [Use of University Facilities and Scheduling Campus Events](#)

Policy 810, [Signature and Approval Authority](#)

Policy 812, [Records Management](#)

Policy 813, [Whistleblower Protection](#)

### VI. Responsible Official and Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation

Responsible Official: Vice President Administration

Other Key Offices: Risk Management

Rice University Police Department (RUPD)

Institutional Crisis Management

## **VII. Procedures and Forms**

[Risk Management minor information page](#) which includes Programmatic Requirements and required training, forms, and reporting resources.

## **VIII. Links to Additional Information**

UE Risk Assessment Guide (available from Risk Management)  
Texas Education Code [§ 51.976](#)

*Signed David W. Leebron*  
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President

Policy History  
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# **University Programs or Activities Involving Minors Programmatic Requirements**

The following Programmatic Requirements are intended to be used in conjunction with University Policy 811, *University Programs or Activities Involving Minors*. In addition to meeting these requirements, individuals must meet requirements related to background checks and training.

## **General Guidelines and Adequate Supervision**

Ensure adequate supervision of minors while in University Programs or Activities Involving Minors. Currently the university recommends a minimum of one Authorized Adult for every 15 minors. However, depending on the age of the children and the activities involved, the hosting organization or department may determine higher or lower ratios are appropriate (e.g., participants aged 6-8 may call for 1 Authorized Adult per 5 minors, participants aged 9-13 may call for 1 Authorized Adult per 10 minors, participants aged 14-17 may call for 1 Authorized Adult per 15 minor participants).

Avoid exposing minors to adult topics and activities, such as exposure to sexually explicit material, alcohol, or harmful or potentially hazardous substances, tools, or equipment.

If the activity involves more than 50 minors, consult with RUPD about appropriate drop off and pick up areas for on campus activities. For these activities, the sponsor should also devise age-appropriate procedures for parents or guardians to pick up minors following the day's activities or the end of the Program. Consider the age of the minors, areas with less vehicle traffic, and the ability for minors to enter or leave vehicles without walking in the street.

Avoid picking up or dropping off minors at their homes unless this aspect is included in the registration process and is specifically authorization by the parents or legal guardians.

## **Minor Safety and Emergency Planning**

Refrain from engaging in one-on-one contact with a minor (unless this aspect is included in the registration process and is specifically authorized by the parent or legal guardian, such as with some music lessons).

Create an emergency action plan that includes establishing a procedure that will be used for emergency notifications to RUPD, a minor's parent or legal guardian, and appropriate university offices (e.g. Risk Management, Dean of Undergraduates, Academic Deans or others) in the event of an emergency involving a minor. This plan must include a complete list of minors participating in the Program and their emergency contact information. The department must identify the person responsible for managing this information. Immediately contact RUPD if a minor becomes lost.

## **Releases for Liability or Media**

Obtain liability releases and/or consents for medical treatment from the parents or legal guardians when these are appropriate for the activity. Maintain these documents in a protected file for a period of two years. Obtain a media release from parents or guardians if the minors will be photographed or recorded during the activity and the photos or recordings will be published.

## **Minors in Laboratories**

Consult with Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) if you plan to tour a lab or schedule lab work that involves minors. Follow appropriate safety measures approved by EH&S as outlined in "Guidelines for Minors in Laboratories" at [www.safety.rice.edu](http://www.safety.rice.edu). Students under the age of 14 are not permitted access to any research lab where chemical, radioactive material/lasers or biological agents are present. Without

prior approval from EH&S, students between the ages of 15-18 are restricted from any hands-on activity in labs where chemicals, radioactive materials/lasers or biological agents are present.

### **Record Retention**

University departments that oversee programs or sponsor activities involving minors are responsible for maintaining program registries, releases and third party contracts (if applicable) for a period of four years after the completion of the program or activity (unless instructed otherwise by the General Counsel's office). Thereafter, records should be destroyed on a specified schedule and in an appropriate manner.

### **Third Party Facility Users**

Third party facility users who sponsor programs or activities involving minors on campus must be aware of, and comply with, Policy 811, University Programs or Activities Involving Minors. Facilities users must sign a facilities use agreement and submit it to the Rice program manager prior to commencement of the Program. The Rice program manager should provide Risk Management with a copy of this agreement.