



Extension - Lake County

Operating Procedures for Programs Involving Minors
Purdue University Extension

Dear Community Partner/Presenter,

On behalf of the youth in our Purdue Extension program, please accept my sincere thanks for your upcoming role in our 4-H program:

Program _____ Date _____ Location _____

Purdue Extension is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all of the youth in our programs. As a part of this commitment, we are asking each of our community partners to read the information below, and return the bottom of the form to us with your signature, indicating that you have read, understand, and agree to follow the information included. If you have any questions about this request or the information, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Julie Jones, Jennifer Haynes and Kasey Wilhoit
Extension Educators, 4-H Youth Development

Part 1: Youth Safety

Adults are positive role models for minors. They serve as the eyes and ears of the program. Appropriate behavior is expected of all adults and any behavior that could cause harm or be misinterpreted should be avoided. These behaviors include the following bullet points:

- To protect yourself from possible allegations of misconduct, do not be alone with a single minor. Meet with minors in open, well-lit rooms with windows that are observable by other adults. Include a second adult when meeting with a minor if possible.
- Do not meet with minors outside of the established time for the program's activities.
- Be alert for older children or adults who seek to take minors to secret places or who spend extra time with favorite minors.
- Beware of adults who want to touch, tickle, or wrestle a child who does not want that contact or attention.
- Avoid any sexual activity, comments, jokes, romantic conversations, or sharing of explicit sexual material with minors.
- Online communication with minors should not be conducted one-on-one and should be limited to that which is relevant to the program.
- Avoid inappropriate touching. Touch a minor only to address the minor's needs, in line with the purpose of the program, and for a clear educational, developmental, or health related purpose. Respect any resistance or concerns that a minor may express. Document any incidences.

- Eliminate any abusive behavior – verbal and physical. Do not shower or undress in the presence of minors.
- Do not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during the Purdue Extension program or when you are responsible for a minor's welfare.
- Do not possess or use any firearm or explosive device (exception: approved 4-H Shooting Sports activities).
- Avoid transporting minors. If transportation is needed, have at least two program adults present in the vehicle at all times.
- Eliminate any bullying behaviors that create an intimidating or hostile environment and unreasonably interfere with a person's ability to participate in the program or activity.

Failure to comply with the Purdue policy may lead to disciplinary action for the individual and/or the entire program or activity. Appropriate investigations by criminal justice and social service systems will be conducted. In summary, we must all work together to ensure the safety of minors in our programs. The earlier that abuse is caught, the better the chance of recovery for the child.

Part 2: Reporting Child Abuse

Reporting any suspected or witnessed abuse of a minor is required by Indiana law for anyone over the age of 18. Reports may be anonymous. Reports must be made to a law enforcement agency (call 911) or to Child Protective Services (800-800-5556). Reports will also be made to the Purdue Extension Program Director (the Program Director will also file a report). Reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability, unless they acted maliciously or in bad faith.

Anyone who has a reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report.

Less than one in ten children report abuse. Most carry the emotional scars and guilt of abuse throughout their lives. If a child tells you they have been abused, believe them and remain calm. Ask open-ended questions to encourage the child to share additional information. Thank the child for telling you. Submit the report.

We thank you for your commitment to the well-being of all youth!

___ I have read, and agree to follow, the information in this document related to Youth Protection policies.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed name _____

Please return this signed statement in person, electronically, or via postal mail.