

Standards for Interacting with Minors

Caltech is committed to the safety and protection of minors. A minor or child is anyone under the age of 18. These standards apply to every member of the Caltech community, including all faculty, staff, volunteers, and students who interact with minors in any activities at campus, or at any Institute location, or in off-site Institute activities which involve minors.

Members of the Caltech community have a responsibility to children involved in Caltech sponsored or approved programs to prevent abuse and improper behavior. Members of the Caltech community also have a duty to prevent unfounded accusations of abuse by adhering to proper standards when interacting with minors.

Members of the Caltech community MUST:

- Whenever possible, avoid one-on-one situations with children.
- Be aware of situations in which actions can be misconstrued by others (for example, being alone with the last child to leave); conduct all dealings with children in a public environment as much as possible, in order that all behavior can be readily observed.
- Be professional and maintain the highest standards of personal behavior at all times.
- Treat everyone with respect, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Be aware of the impact of your words and language on young children.
- Whenever possible, maintain a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 2 children or greater.
- Whenever possible, use the buddy system of 2 children working together.
- Ensure that children do not work alone. Be prepared to escort them from a facility in case of an emergency.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children only when necessary, and only in ways that are appropriate, public and non-sexual.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism or comparison when working with children.
- Stop any activity with a child who appears suspicious or afraid, immediately.
- Report any suspected child abuse immediately. Procedures are set forth in the Violence Prevention personnel memoranda and summarized below.

Members of the Caltech community MUST NOT:

- Engage in private communications with children via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or other forms of electronic or social media except for activities strictly involving Caltech business.
- Meet with children outside of established times for program activities.
- Give any child a ride in a car or van unless you have express permission from the parents, and always have a second adult present.
- Drink alcohol or smoke when interacting with minors.
- Appear to favor one child more than another; give gifts to any child in a program (e.g. special gifts to one child but not to the others) and do not accept gifts from any child.
- Tell children “this is just between the two of us” or use similar language that encourages children to keep secrets from their parent/guardians.
- Use any form of physical or emotional punishment to discipline children.
- Allow children to sit on your lap.
- Engage in rough or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow inappropriate touching, including between children.
- Share gossip or inappropriate personal information with children.
- Use profanities, or use or respond to sexual innuendo; never make a sexually suggestive comment, even in fun.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Provide children with alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while supervising children.

When Traveling Away From Campus, the following additional standards apply:

- Ensure that a parent or legal guardian or other adult counselor travels with the group.
- Never stay in the same room overnight with a child who is not your own child (unless the parent or guardian is also in the room).
- Never assign male and female children to sleep in the same room overnight unless accompanied by and with the permission of all parents involved.
- Do not allow adults and children (even of the same sex) to use shower/bathing facilities on trips simultaneously. If there are not separate facilities, a trip leader must publish a schedule that allows individual privacy.

Reporting Child Abuse

- **All employees:** As set forth in the [Violence Prevention](#) personnel memoranda, every member of the Caltech community who knows of, or reasonably suspects, child abuse, has a personal responsibility to report to Caltech Security immediately at (626) 395-5000 (emergencies) or (626) 395-4701 (non-emergencies).
- **Mandated Reporters:** Mandated reporters are employees whose duties bring them into contact with minors on a regular basis, or who supervise those who do. Mandated reporters must report immediately or as soon as practicably possible by telephone to the LA County Child Protection Hotline (800) 540-4000 (or from out of state (213) 639-4500) or Pasadena Police Department at 911 (for emergencies) or (626) 744-4501 (for non-emergencies), or to another local police department. Mandated Reporters must file a written Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) within 36 hours of receiving information concerning the incident. The SCAR can be completed online at <https://mandreptla.org>

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, often by adults they know and trust. The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. Children suffering from abuse may develop behavioral difficulties, problems at school, delays in development and emotional problems like depression and withdrawal.

Child abuse affects children of every age, race and income level. Be aware of child abuse by recognizing some of the signs. Some are: unexplained injuries, changes in behavior, fear of going home, returning to earlier behaviors, changes in eating or sleeping habits, changes in program attendance or performance, lack of personal care or hygiene, risk-taking behaviors and inappropriate sexual behaviors.

There are four major types of child abuse: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or proper supervision.

Possible symptoms:

- The child shows signs of malnutrition or begs, steals or hoards food.
- The child has poor hygiene; matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odor.
- The child has unattended physical or medical problems.

- The child states that no one is home to provide care.
- The child or caretaker abuses drugs or alcohol.

Physical abuse is injury intentionally inflicted upon a child. It may include severe shaking, beating, kicking, punching, or burning that result in minor marks, bruising, or even death.

Possible symptoms:

- The child has broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns or welts in various stages of healing.
- The child is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given by the child or caretaker are inconsistent with the injury.
- The child is unusually frightened of a parent or caretaker, or is afraid to go home.
- The child reports intentional injury by parent or caretaker.

Sexual abuse refers to any sexual act with a child by an adult or older child. It includes fondling or rubbing the child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure and using the child for prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Possible symptoms:

- The child has pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling.
- The child displays age-inappropriate play with toys, self or others.
- The child has inappropriate knowledge about sex.
- The child reports sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse may occur when a parent fails to provide the understanding, warmth, attention, and supervision the child needs for healthy psychological growth.

Possible symptoms:

- The parent or caretaker constantly criticizes, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child with no evidence of love, support or guidance.
- The child exhibits extremes in behavior from overly aggressive to overly passive.
- The child displays delayed physical, emotional or intellectual development.

If you suspect a child has been abused....

- Stay calm and tell the child you believe them.
- Show interest and concern.
- Be honest and explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the abuse.
- Reassure and support the child.

- Do not confront the alleged abuser or investigate on your own.
- ALWAYS REPORT.