

UGA Programs and Activities Serving Minors

Guidelines on the Two-Adult Rule

I. Purpose

To provide for a safe and healthy environment for all who participate in University programs and activities, at least two background checked and trained Program/Activity Staff should always be present with a minor. The Two-Adult Rule reduces the risk of opportunities for inappropriate behavior and/or unsubstantiated allegations, protecting both minors and Program/Activity Staff.

If Program/Activity Staff have an important reason to be alone with a minor, such as for music lessons or individual meetings, safeguards should be discussed in advance with the Sponsoring Unit and Program Administrator. For example, approved “one-on-one interactions” should only take place in open, well-illuminated spaces or rooms observable by other adults.

Additional guidance on interacting with minors is available on the Program/Activity Staff Code of Conduct.

II. Examples

Following are a few examples of how the two-adult requirement applies (but should not be considered an exhaustive list):

a. Transportation to/from University Programs/Activities, including but not limited to, giving a minor a ride home:

When transporting minors on behalf of a University Program/Activity, more than one Program/Activity Staff member should be present in the vehicle, except when multiple minors will be in the vehicle at all times during the transportation. Transportation in personal vehicles is discouraged.

When it is not possible to comply with the Two-Adult Rule during transportation, parents/guardians of minors should sign a consent form acknowledging that they understand their minor is engaged in a University program that requires one-on-one interaction (minor to adult).

b. Electronic communication involving minors:

Program/Activity Staff should not engage in or converse one-on-one with minors through electronic means, including but not limited to, email, text messages, social networking websites, or other forms of social media at any time unless the following conditions are met:

- (1) there is a legitimate educational or programmatic purpose;
- (2) the content of the communications is consistent with the mission of the approved program and the University;
- (3) at least two Program/Activity Staff (or a parent/guardian) are included in the electronic communication; and
- (4) only University or University-approved communication tools are utilized (official e-mail, preferably group account, for example).

This recognizes the continued and evolving reliance on emerging electronic technologies and the interaction between those and approved Programs/Activities.

c. Private spaces (*e.g.* Dorm, Bathroom, Locker Room) and/or private activities:

If Program/Activity Staff need to check on a minor in an otherwise private space, such as a sleeping room, locker room, or bathroom, two staff members should be present. A single Program/Activity Staff member should not be allowed in a sleeping room, locker room, bathroom, shower room, or other dressing or housing area whenever minors are using such facilities for private activities such as bathing, dressing, toileting, or showering.

III. When the Two-Adult Rule is not Possible

It is expected that University Programs/Activities where minors are present will adhere to the Two-Adult Rule. Occasionally, a program or activity may require a one-on-one interaction with a minor. If a one-on-one interaction is necessary, it should adhere to the following best practices:

a. Obtain pre-approval from the minor's parent or legal guardian using a consent form identifying the nature of the program/activity and the necessary one-on-one interaction.

b. Individual meetings with a minor are to be held in an open, public, or otherwise interruptible, observable, and well illuminated area. If that is not appropriate or possible, then the door to the room should be left open, or a window that allows for unobstructed observation should be present. Remaining visible to other people protects the minor as well as the Program/Activity Staff.

c. In a time-sensitive or emergency circumstance, it may be necessary for a Program/Activity Staff member to attend to a minor's needs without adherence to the two-adult rule. When this occurs, the Program/Activity Staff member should report the emergency as soon as possible to the Program Administrator.