Georgetown’s Protection of Minors Policy: EJF Fellowship Recipients

Georgetown University’s Protection of Minors Policy was adopted in October of 2012 to provide guidance to students involved in programs that serve individuals under 18. Programs and activities that involve minors, including those that are sponsored by or that involve Georgetown Law students, are integral to the University’s mission and identity. At the core of all of these programs is a commitment to providing a safe environment and a positive experience for all participants.

The attached Protection of Minors Policy sets forth guidelines to help prevent the abuse or neglect of minors and for reporting and responding to incidents in which the safety of minors may be compromised. In addition, the policy imposes on those who participate in programs or activities involving minors certain requirements that must be met in advance of the start date of the program or activity.

Following these instructions, you will find a form called Working with Minors: Information for Those Participating in University-Run or -Affiliated Programs or Activities Involving Minors. Please read the document carefully and then sign the Certification that follows it. Please remember that you should not sign certification documents unless you have complied with its requirements.

EJF Placements that do not involve minors:

Students working at EJF placements that do not generally represent or serve minors must still review and sign the attached Protection of Minors policy in case they end up interacting with minors in the course of their summer placement.

EJF Placements that involve minors, but not legal representation of minors:

Students working at EJF placements that serve minors, but that do not represent them, must comply with the attached Protection of Minors policy and must comply with their host program’s rules related to mandatory reporting of child abuse.

EJF Placements that involve legal representation of minors:

Students working at EJF placements that represent minors, where the student participant is supervised by an attorney, in many cases are not mandatory reporters and therefore do not need to comply with the mandatory reporting requirements in the attached Protection of Minors policy. In DC, lawyers and legal personnel (including volunteer law students) working with minors are exempt from mandatory reporting requirements if information about abuse is acquired during the course of representation. Your reporting obligations are determined by the law of the jurisdiction in which your placement exists and the policies of your host organization. Rules related to mandated reporting vary jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction. Check with the supervisor at your host organization to determine your reporting obligations. You are required to inquire about and follow your host organization’s polices related to mandatory reporting.
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Working with Minors:
Information for Those Participating in University-
Run or -Affiliated Programs or Activities Involving Minors

Programs at Georgetown Law

The Georgetown University community has a strong interest in how our society cares for children and the most vulnerable among us and wants to do what it can to prevent the victimization of child and adolescent minors and promote their safety. To further this goal, this packet contains important information that individuals must review if they are participating in programs or activities involving minors that 1) the University operates; 2) that others operate in University facilities; or 3) that Georgetown students, faculty or staff are involved with in the community. ¹

You are receiving this information because you have been identified as participating in a covered program or activity. You must review the information in this packet and return the attached certification indicating that you have read the packet and agree to comply with the requirements it describes. You must also determine whether you may be a mandated reporter and agree to comply with the obligations imposed by law and by the University on mandated reporters. You may also be required to review additional materials that are germane to your specific situation.

This informational packet contains the following:

1) Guidelines for working with minors that will help you to maintain safe and positive interactions and reduce the risk of mistaken allegations;

2) Steps to take if you suspect that a minor has been abused or neglected or is otherwise unsafe, including information about how to report your suspicions or ask questions;

3) Advice on the signs of child abuse and neglect from the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency; and

4) An acknowledgement form that you must sign to certify that you have read and understood the information and will comply with your obligations if you are a mandated reporter.

¹ This packet describes requirements applicable to Georgetown students, including those under the age of 18, who participate in programs involving minors.
Guidelines for Working with Minors

Those associated with programs or activities involving minors should observe the following "dos" and "don'ts" in order to maintain a safe and positive experience for program participants, encourage parental confidence, and avoid mistaken allegations. ²

DO:

• Maintain the highest standards of personal behavior at all times when interacting with minors.
• Whenever possible, try to have another adult present when you are working with minors in an unsupervised setting. Conduct necessary one-on-one interactions with minors in a public environment where you can be observed.
• Listen to and interact with minors and provide appropriate praise and positive reinforcement.
• Treat all minors in a group consistently and fairly, and with respect and dignity.
• Be friendly with minors within the context of the formal program or activity while maintaining appropriate boundaries.
• Maintain discipline and discourage inappropriate behavior by minors, consulting with your supervisors if you need help with misbehaving youth.
• Be aware of how your actions and intentions might be perceived and could be misinterpreted.
• Consult with other adult supervisors or colleagues when you feel uncertain about a situation.

DON'T:

• Don’t spend significant time alone with one minor away from the group or conduct private interactions with minors in enclosed spaces or behind closed doors.
• Don’t engage in inappropriate touching or have any physical contact with a minor in private locations.
• Don’t use inappropriate language, tell risqué jokes, or make sexually suggestive comments around minors, even if minors themselves are doing so.
• Don’t give personal gifts to, or do special favors for, a minor or do things that may be seen as favoring one minor over others.
• Don’t share information with minors about your private life or have informal or purely social contact with minor program participants outside of program activities.
• Don’t strike or hit a minor, or use corporal punishment or other punishment involving physical pain or discomfort.
• Don’t relate to minors as if they were peers, conduct private correspondence or take on the role of "confidant" (outside of a professional counseling relationship).
• Don’t date or become romantically or sexually involved with a minor. Don’t show pornography to minors or involve minors in pornographic activities.

² These guidelines are not meant to inhibit medical, psychiatric or other professional interactions with minors where professional standards apply.
• Don’t email, text, or engage with minors through social networking media unless there is an important educational or programmatic reason to do so and you are communicating consistently to all minors in the program.

• Don’t provide alcohol or drugs to minors or use them in the presence of minors.
Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

Nationally and in the District of Columbia, most reports and substantiations of child maltreatment are neglect, followed by physical abuse and sexual abuse.

**Neglect** occurs when parents or caretakers do not provide proper supervision, control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care necessary for healthy development. By itself, lack of financial means to provide for a child is not neglect.

Physical signs may include:
- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate or ill-fitting clothing.
- Being left alone or with people unable to provide proper supervision.
- Obvious lack of necessary medical treatment.

Behavioral signs may include:
- Chronic hunger or sleepiness.
- Delayed language development.
- Clinging behavior or development of indiscriminate attachments.
- Frequent complaints of feeling unwell.
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school.

**Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury of a child by a parent or caretaker.

Physical signs may include:
- Bruises, welts, or swelling.
- Sprains or broken bones.
- Burns.
- Lacerations or abrasions.
- Bite marks.
- Unexplained or repeated injuries.

Behavioral signs may include:
- Attempts to hide injuries.
- Difficulty sitting or walking.
- Wariness of physical contact with adults.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Depression or self-mutilation.
- Fear of parent(s) or caregiver(s).

**Sexual abuse** is exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child.

Physical signs may include:
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Torn, stained, or bloody clothing.
- Genital pain or itching.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy.

Behavioral signs may include:
- Precocious sexual knowledge or behavior.
- Extremes—hostile and aggressive or fearful and withdrawn.
- Self-mutilation.
- Substance abuse.
- Running away.

To report child abuse and neglect in the District, call 202-671-SAFE.


CFSA 4/2010
Working with Minors Policy
Certification

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the foregoing Information for Those Participating in University-Run or -Affiliated Programs Involving Minors. I have had an opportunity to raise any questions I have about this information and have done so if necessary.

I agree to take any necessary further steps to determine whether I may be a mandated reporter. If I am a mandated reporter, I will complete required training and comply with all reporting and other obligations for mandated reporters under law of the jurisdiction in which I am working as an EJF Fellow.

______________________________  __________________________
Signature                          Date

______________________________
Printed Name

EJF Summer Employer:

______________________________

[Please submit only the Certification page of the policy with your EJF application]