

Working with Minors Online

Guidelines for Working with Minors Online



Disclaimer

This training module contains general guidelines and information. It is not intended to be a comprehensive summary or to address all possible applications of, or exceptions to, the topics described herein. Various scenarios and issues are covered, but please note that these are to be used as a tool for further guidance and do not represent an exhaustive list of possible scenarios and topics that Program Staff may encounter. This training module should not substitute for additional training to be provided by individual Covered Programs or for guidance on specific situations to be provided by administrators of Covered Programs.



Reason

It is important for the minor participants and staff to understand that this program is offering a positive opportunity to explore, learn and play and that there are rules they must follow to help stay safe online, just as there are for in person programming.





Objectives

- Identify risks in order to safeguard children and protect program staff while delivering programs online.
- Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly.
- Recognize acceptable/unacceptable behavior.
- Identify a range of ways to report concerns about content or contact.





Risks: Content

- Exposure to inappropriate videos, pictures or messages which might upset, worry or frighten them.
- Imitating harmful or inappropriate behavior they see online.
- Searching for inappropriate content on purpose or stumbling upon it by accident. This would include using voice activated tools to search for content.
- Inadvertently giving apps or websites permission to share their location or other personal information.



Risks: Contact

- Being abused online (including sexually) by people they don't know.
- Being abused online (including sexually) by people they know, such as friends and family members.
- Sending images or information to people on the device's contact list (sexting, etc.).



Risks: Conduct (how minors may act)

- Exhibiting unhealthy behaviors and boundaries around their use of screens.
- Bullying and harassing each other online as well as offline.
- Using words or terminology which are not appropriate for their age.
- Engaging in unhealthy relationships.
- Taking inappropriate or indecent images and videos of themselves.



Using Technology Safely, Respectfully and Responsibly

- Respect is a key concept in online behavior. Encourage the need for courtesy, tolerance and respect online and highlight the importance of seeking help if they are the target of bullying.
- Two or more program staff must participate in all online interactions with minor participants.
- Parents must sign a release form advising them if the session is recorded, their responsibility to monitor their child's online session and the risks of participating in online programming.
- Minors and their parents must comply with code of conduct.



Using Technology Safely, Respectfully and Responsibly (continued)

- Staff will not share personal email or social media sites with minor participants, nor will they have contact with the participants outside of program scheduled events. A group texting app should be used.
- Provide parents with procedures on reporting technical problems.
- Staff/monitors should ensure that all discussions pertain to the program activities, all participants are encouraged to contribute and that all participants are respectful to everyone.



Using Technology Safely, Respectfully and Responsibly (continued)

- Learn how to spot common scams and fraud.

Resource: <https://www.usa.gov/online-safety>

- Keep your computer software updated.
- Don't share passwords or sensitive information with anyone.
- Don't use the same passwords for multiple accounts.
- Keep crashers out of your online event:
 - Zoom: <https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/20/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/>
 - Microsoft Teams: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/security-compliance-overview>



Using Technology Safely, Respectfully and Responsibly (continued)

- The concept of personal information and sharing it with others must be established with the minor participants and program staff.
 - Identify what personal information is
 - What personal information should or shouldn't be shared
 - Identify ways to report when a minor participant or staff member is asked to enter any personal information on a site/service, or if another user is asking them for details about themselves.
 - Minor participants and staff should be aware of the additional risks associated with sharing too much personal information, such as cyberbullying, unwanted contact from strangers, and identity theft.



Using Technology Safely, Respectfully and Responsibly (continued)

- **Concerns about content**

- While there is plenty of positive content online for children, there is also content for older/adult audiences: extremist content, pornography, content that promotes hurtful or harmful behavior and illegal content.
- It is important to question the reliability of online information.
- Inform minor participants that they may come across upsetting or worrying things online and to report it to an adult.



Using Technology Safely, Respectfully and Responsibly (continued)

- **Concerns about contact**

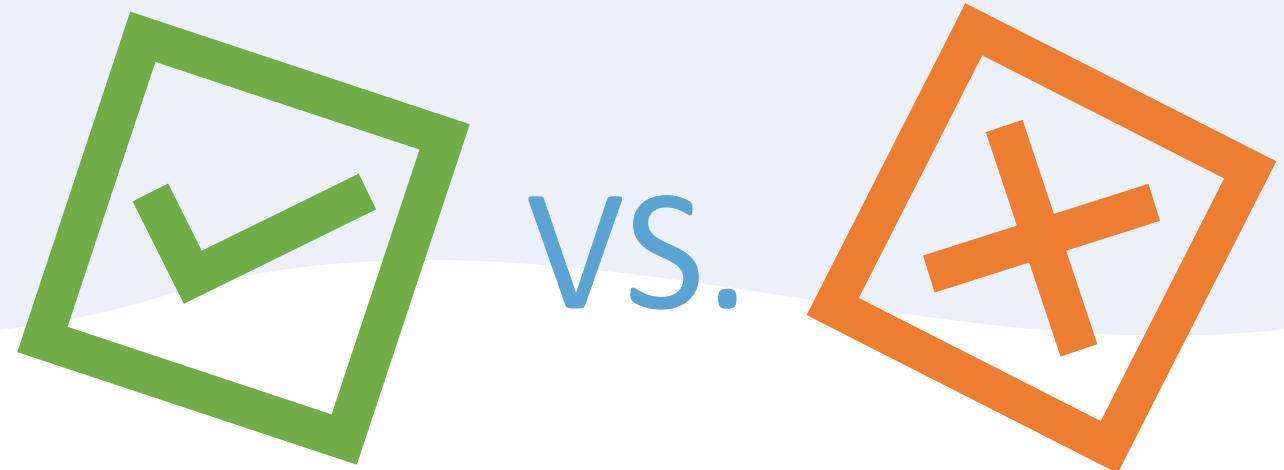
- Online programming offers minor participants ways to potentially communicate with people they have never met. Ensure minor participants, as well as staff, that they should not disclose personal information to strangers, and that they should always report any online interactions that ask for personal information or upset or worry them.
- Add only trusted people to contacts or friends list



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

Minors and staff should develop an awareness of their digital footprints/online reputation and the consequences associated with this.

- “Think before you post” and maintain control over the content you/they choose to share with others.





Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior (continued)

Comply with University Policy on online behavior for students and employees.

- Students
 - <https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/>
 - <https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>
- Employees
 - <https://www.unc.edu/social/social-media-guidelines/>
 - <https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior (continued)

Cyberbullying-

- Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.
- Cyberbullying can happen via social media, text messages, video gaming, online forums, and through a variety of apps. It typically comes in the form of negative or false content or media that is designed to embarrass or humiliate another person.
- NC Cyberbullying laws and penalties:
https://www.ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bysection/chapter_14/gs_14-458.1.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior (continued)

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Obscene literature and exhibitions. (a) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to intentionally disseminate obscenity:

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-190.1.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior (continued)

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Preparation of obscene photographs, slides and motion pictures:

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-190.5.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Dissemination to minors
 - Dissemination to minors under the age of 16 years. Every person 18 years of age or older who knowingly disseminates to any minor under the age of 16 years any material which he knows or reasonably should know to be obscene shall be guilty of a Class I felony:

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-190.7.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Dissemination to minors
 - Every person 18 years of age or older who knowingly disseminates to any minor under the age of 13 years any material which he knows or reasonably should know to be obscene within the meaning of G.S. 14-190.1 shall be punished as a Class I felony.

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-190.8.pdf

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-190.9.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Indecent Exposure:

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-190.9.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Stalking: involves severe intrusions on the victim's personal privacy and autonomy. It is a crime that causes a long-lasting impact on the victim's quality of life and creates risks to the security and safety of the victim and others, even in the absence of express threats of physical harm. Stalking conduct often becomes increasingly violent over time

NC State Statute:

https://www.ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bysection/chapter_14/gs_14-277.3a.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

North Carolina Laws referencing Internet activity:

- Identity Theft: A person who knowingly obtains, possesses, or uses identifying information of another person, living or dead, with the intent to fraudulently represent that the person is the other person for the purposes of making financial or credit transactions in the other person's name, to obtain anything of value, benefit, or advantage, or for the purpose of avoiding legal consequences is guilty of a felony.

https://www.ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bysection/chapter_14/gs_14-113.20.pdf



Recognize Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior

Provider regulations

- Learn the terms of service and policies of the social media sites in which you participate and pay attention to updates.



Acceptable Behaviors



- Communicate appropriately by using the right language for your audience.
- Keep things private. Do not share personal information.
- Respect others by being courteous and polite, even when disagreeing.
- Be an “upstander.” If someone is being bullied, stand up for that person and report the behavior.
- Report inappropriate behavior.
- Follow the code of conduct.
- Think before you post, text or share by considering how you or others might feel after your post.



Unacceptable Behaviors



Cyberbullying-

- Posting comments, rumors, or photos online that are mean, hurtful, embarrassing or illegal
- Threatening to hurt someone.
- Encouraging someone to kill themselves.
- Pretending to be someone else in order to obtain personal information or post personal or false information about someone else.



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Cyberbullying-

- Posting information that violates policy on discrimination .
- Creating a webpage targeting someone in an inappropriate or illegal manner.
- Online harassment (doxing) used to exact revenge and threaten and destroy the privacy of someone by making their personal information public.

Resource: www.stopbullying.com



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Inappropriate Content

- Includes information or images that upset the child, material that is for adults, inaccurate information or information that might lead or tempt the child into unlawful or dangerous behavior. Can include but not limited to:
 - Pornographic material
 - Inappropriate language for participant's age
 - Sites that encourage illegal activity or suicide
 - Pictures, videos or games showing violence or cruelty towards people or animals
 - Gambling sites
 - Unmoderated chat rooms – where there's no one supervising the conversation and barring unsuitable comments



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

- Grooming occurs when a sexual predator initiates and forms a relationship with a child online that can lead to:
 - Taking sexual photos
 - Sending sexual messages, videos, etc. (sexting)
 - Sextortion- Refers to the crime of extortion as it applies to sex-related photographs sent via the Internet or text messaging. It is a form of blackmail. For example, if two people are sexting one another, and one of those people threatens the other with distribution of the explicit content, this is sextortion.
 - In-person sexual abuse
 - Trafficking



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

- Targeting

Many predators initiate conversations on public chat apps or in the chat section of games for kids, pretending to be younger than they really are.

- Engaging

Many times, the predator will try to fill some sort of need the child has, such as a desire for attention. The adult might also try to connect with their victim by paying them compliments, listening to them, or buying gifts.



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

- Boundary Testing

The predator might ask questions to see how closely the child's devices are monitored and try to figure out whether the child would be believed if they tell staff or their parents about the relationship. During this time, kids may become more secretive about their online activity, so pay attention if their attitude changes when discussing what they do while they're on their devices.



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



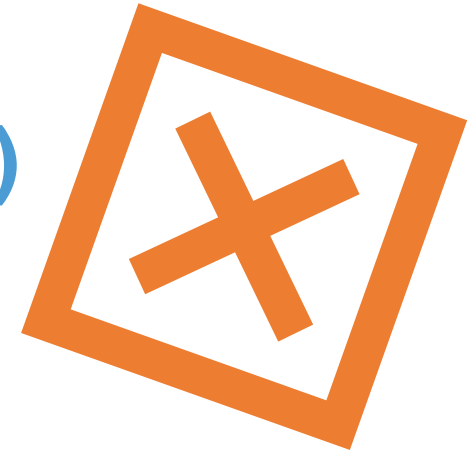
Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

- Isolating

A predator will also look for opportunities to create emotional distance between the child and the program staff and their family, often using sly tactics to create situations to reinforce the idea of a “special relationship.” Trust your instincts when something isn’t right when it comes to how the child is acting.



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

- Sexualizing

This stage culminates in sexual activity. While some perpetrators might attempt to meet their victims in person, others carry out their sexual abuse entirely online. Predators will begin to discuss sex explicitly, mentioning sexual activities with the child to desensitize them. Some predators have been known to show children pictures of other minors without their clothing in order to make it appear more normal. This influx of sexual information will make the child know far more about sexual activity than is age-appropriate. At this point, the predator may also begin to request sexual videos of their victim and/or send their own.



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)



Grooming Behaviors of Sexual Predators

- Controlling

When a predator starts to abuse a child, they will go to great lengths to maintain control and ensure the child is emotionally dependent on them. In most cases, the offender uses secrecy, blame, and even threats of retribution to keep children from saying anything. Let your participants know they can come to you when anyone asks them to do something, they are not comfortable with, even if that person is their parent, step-parent or guardian.



Unacceptable Behaviors (continued)

Sexting

- There are no laws in North Carolina specifically regarding sexting. However, sexting falls under child pornography regulations, which state that pictures of a person under 18 engaged in sexual behaviors is a crime.
- Ensure staff and minor participants understand that having someone's permission to take or share images of them is important, but even if they have permission, taking or sharing nude or sexual images of someone under 18 could be considered illegal.





Reporting

Identify where to go for help and support.

- While children will very often ask an adult for help related to something offline, it is important to create ways for them to do the same for anything online.
- This may be for something that makes them feel worried, uncomfortable or upset.





Reporting (continued)

Both as a matter of University Policy and North Carolina State Law, any member of the University Community who reasonably suspects that a Minor has experienced Child Abuse, Neglect or Violent Offense (Per G.S. 14-318.6) by a parent, guardian, caretaker, peer, non-custodial adult or Covered Program Staff member has an absolute obligation to report that suspicion to:

- The UNC-CH Police Department; and/or DSS
- The UNC-CH Protection of Minors Coordinator



Making a Report

Before making a report, you **do not** need to conduct your own investigation or be certain that mistreatment has occurred.

Make a report if...

- You know that a minor is suffering abuse or neglect or is a victim of a crime.
- You suspect that a minor is suffering abuse or neglect or is a victim of a crime.

Make a report regardless...



- Of whom the suspected culprit may be – a family member, teacher, religious leader, student, or coach, well-respected or not.
- Of where the abuse or neglect may be occurring, for example in the home or at UNC.





Who to make a report to?

- **All suspected incidents of Child Abuse, Neglect or Violent Offense must be reported immediately to the UNC-CH PD, regardless of the residence of the Minor involved or the suspected perpetrator.**
- **If the child requires immediate medical services call 911.**

UNC-Chapel Hill Police Department

 919-962-8100 (Non-emergency) or
 911 (Emergency Line)

Office of the Protection of Minors

 919-843-8995
 protectionofminors@unc.edu



Who to make a report to?

- The reporting county in Chapel Hill is Orange County. You can report abuse or neglect by calling Orange County Child Protective Services (CPS).
- A directory of all 100 county DSS can be found on the [Local DSS Directory](#).
- **If the child requires immediate medical services call 911.**

Orange County Child Protective Services



919-245-2818 (Intake Line) or



919-732-8181 (Emergency Line)

Office of the Protection of Minors



919-843-8995



protectionofminors@unc.edu



Who to make a report to? (continued)

In addition, the reporting party may have to notify one of the following offices. For instances involving:

Alleged sexual misconduct, harassment or assault contact:

UNC-Chapel Hill

Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EOC) Office

☎ (919) 966-3576

Any other forms of alleged inappropriate behavior or misconduct contact:

UNC-Chapel Hill

Employee and Management Relations Office

☎ (919) 843-3444



Who to make a report to? (continued)

In addition, the reporting party may have to notify one of the following offices. For instances involving:

Suspicious of abuse within organizations governed by a “National Governing Body” or “Paralympic Sports Organization”:

US Center for Safe Sport

 (720) 531-0340



Certification

Date: _____

Program Name: _____

By signing this document, I agree that I have read and completely understand the responsibilities, policies and procedures outlined in Training Module 6: Guidelines to Working with Minors Online. I agree to all rules and expectations while performing my duties as a Program Staff Member.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Please make a copy of the signed form and forward to your program director.



Questions

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