



King's Student Guidelines for Interaction with Children

As King's students and volunteers, it is our duty to model and maintain appropriate professional relationships with minors. There are many basic things that students and volunteers can do to help prevent child abuse and help maintain appropriate professional boundaries with minors. Some are obvious, some are less so, but each act to safeguard all participants in King's activities. It is important, however, that students and volunteers use good judgment and interact with minors in developmentally-appropriate ways.

As a foundational matter:

- 1) All students or volunteers working with children in a College-affiliated program must have appropriate background clearances consistent with the College's *Clearance, Education, and Training Requirements for King's College Employees, Students, Vendors and Volunteers*.
- 2) All students or volunteers working with children in a College-affiliated program must have received education and training consistent with the College's *Clearance, Education, and Training Requirements for King's College Employees, Students, Vendors and Volunteers*.
- 3) All students or volunteers working with children in a College-affiliated program must be familiar with their mandatory child abuse reporting obligations under the College's *Protection of Children Policy*.

In addition, the following guidelines may be helpful:

- 1) When organizing a College activity involving children not enrolled at the College, the person in charge of the event should consult the College's Child Safety Protection Officer to ensure that appropriate levels of supervision are present.
- 2) Children not enrolled at the College must have parental permission for the child's participation in the activity.
- 3) When facilitating programs for children, the program supervisors must ensure that each child's whereabouts can be accounted for at all times and that activities are conducted in open areas with appropriate levels of supervision whenever possible.

4) With the exception of medical or other emergencies, students should not be alone with a child, particularly in an isolated or private setting. Follow the “rule of three.” Always have at least two adults or one adult and two children present. This provides safety for the children in the event of an injury or other emergency and is most protective of the student and the program. Professors and professional staff may meet privately in college offices with students enrolled at the College on matters related to their common work.

5) During sports camps and other organized activities involving young children, safety requires adult supervision in locker rooms, restrooms, and changing areas. When supervising showers or changing areas, or any circumstance in which a child may be dressing or undressing, two adult supervisors should be present nearby. Supervisors are always to respect the privacy of the child. In addition, supervisors should not undress in front of or shower with minors.

6) If the program involves overnight accommodations, never sleep in the same bed or share sleeping accommodations (e.g. hotel rooms, bedrooms, tents) with a child.

7) Whenever possible, require children to use the buddy system (each child is assigned to another child as a companion) when participating in an off-campus program. Children should not be permitted to leave the group by himself or herself.

8) Do not hit or strike a child in any manner. Do not use any form of physical discipline or verbally abuse a child. Regarding verbal abuse, for example, do not ridicule, demean, bully, threaten, or scream at a child.

9) Always respect a child’s physical boundaries and use good judgment about physical contact. Physical contact is not always necessary or appropriate in conveying concern. When physical contact seems appropriate the least intrusive form that communicates concern and support ought to be chosen. While it may seem perfectly natural, at times, to initiate an appropriate form of physical contact (e.g. placing your hand on the shoulder of a crying child), remember that not all children are comfortable with physical contact; children have the right to reject displays of affection. Hugs, initiated by the child, are permissible, but ought not to be prolonged. Respecting the child’s physical boundaries while remaining supportive is key.

10) Do not engage in any form of inappropriate contact, for example, holding a school-aged child on your lap for an extended period of time, or slapping a child on the buttocks. Do not engage in physical “play” (e.g. tickling or wrestling) with children.

11) Treat all children consistently and fairly and avoid displaying favoritism.

12) Use age-appropriate language. Do not curse and do not discuss sensitive personal matters, especially anything sexual in nature. If a child initiates a conversation that leads you to suspect child abuse, follow the guidelines in # 17.

13) Do not use alcohol or drugs or encourage the use of alcohol or other drugs with or in front of children.

14) Do not give gifts to children without the permission of the child's parents or guardians. If a child gives you a gift valued at \$25 or more acknowledge receipt of the gift to the child's parent or guardian.

15) As a general rule, do not exchange any personal information such as phone numbers or email addresses, and do not respond to or initiate any relationships with children outside of the program (e.g., do not "friend" children on Facebook, engage in other social media, exchange texts, or initiate any face-to-face meetings). Any contact with minors through personal email, telephone, or social media must be with parental knowledge and permission.

16) If a child is initiating contact outside of the program setting, especially multiple times, inform your professor, supervisor or department chairperson.

17) If you have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, or a child discloses abuse to you, follow the protocols established in the College's "Protection of Children Policy." If a child is in immediate danger call 911. If the danger is not immediate contact the PA ChildLine hotline (800-932-0312) and the Executive Director of Campus Safety and Security.

18) Students who have questions about appropriate boundaries should speak with their supervisors, department chairs, program director, the College's Child Safety Protection Officer, or the Executive Director of Safety and Security.

I certify by my signature below that I have read and understand King's Guidelines for Interaction with Children.

Name (printed) _____

Signature _____

Date _____