

Working with Minors

» MONTGOMERY COLLEGE



Q: I work for Montgomery College (MC) and I am coordinating an event that involves minors. Do I need to register the event with the youth protection coordinator?

A: Most events and activities involving minors need to be registered, but there are key exceptions.

- A minor is defined as a person under 18 years of age
- However, if the event involves minors who are registered in a credit or noncredit program, the event does not need to be registered.
- If the program is operating through WDCE, it does not need to be registered.
- If the event is an activity that occurs within the normal course of your work duties, such as a Recruiter conducting a campus tour, there is no need to register the event. Likewise, a Financial Aid Advisor operating under Student Services and meeting with a minor would not need to be registered. Only activities that are outside normal, daily work duties must be registered, such as a special conference or event.

Q: I work for MC and will be volunteering to help with a College-sponsored event involving minors. Do I have to have a background check? I've been with MC for 15 years and this has never been asked of me.

A: Yes, all individuals who interact with minors on behalf of the College must complete a criminal history check through HRSTM. This screening is different from the universal screening that is completed upon hire.

The College recognizes that this is a shift from previous practice. However, universal screening has become the norm at colleges and universities across the nation and MC's procedure is in line with current best practices in the field.

Criminal history checks provide a measure of protection for the College, its employees and the minors in our care.

Q: I am planning an event that is sponsored by MC, but also relies on support from outside groups. What is the procedure for screening them?

A: For events lasting only one day, volunteers who are not MC employees are subject to a check of the national sex offender database. The individual responsible for organizing

the event will have volunteers sign a waiver that authorizes the youth protection coordinator to run the volunteer's identifying information through the registry. (www.nsopw.org).

Q: I am an MC employee and planning an event involving minors. However, minors will attend the event with their parent or guardian. What are my obligations?

A: When an event is structured so that minors are under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian at all times and positive notice of responsibility is provided to parents/guardians in advance of the event, then the event falls outside many of the provisions of the Protection of Minors procedure. For example, supervision ratios do not apply.

However, such programs still must be registered 30-days before the event and background checks on MC employees will still be required.

Q: I am a Montgomery College employee. Who pays for the background check and how do I go about completing it?

A: The College pays for the background check. The youth protection coordinator will provide directions to the designated event planner on the background check process, including required documents and instructions on how to schedule the appointment. Once the process has been completed, results are generally submitted to HRSTM in 24 to 48 hours. If there are any adverse findings, additional time is required to reconcile the results. It is important to allow 30 days for the complete process.

Q: The procedure states that I am obligated to distribute educational materials provided by the College to the adults participating in the program. Where do I get those materials?

A: Here: cms.montgomerycollege.edu/protectminors/training

Q: What training is required for the compliance with the Protection of Minors policy and procedure?

A: Employees, faculty, and staff who interact with minors on behalf of the College are required to complete the training on identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect. This includes faculty teaching in the dual enrollment program. The training is available through MC Learns.

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Q: I coordinate a youth mentoring program. What are my obligations?

A: Formal and informal youth mentoring programs must register and provide the names of youth being served. The mentors must undergo criminal background checks and training.

Q: The Protection of Minors procedure states that program directors must “establish staffing ratios for the program or follow staffing ratios already established.” Are there any guidelines for me to follow?

A: Yes. Staffing ratios should account for factors including the type and length of the program, the numbers, ages, and experience levels of the youth; the ages and experience levels of the staff; whether the program involves transportation, swimming, changing clothes, showering, or other special circumstances; and how the program will function if a staff member is unavailable or attending to emergency needs of a single child rather than supervising the whole group.

The “rule of three” calls for two responsible adults to be present at all times. Any exception to the “rule of three” must be made, in advance, by the supervisor or program director. The College will provide additional guidance on behavioral standards through training, educational resources, and consultation facilitated by the youth protection coordinator.

Q: An outside group would like to hold an event using College facilities. What requirements do they have?

A: Outside groups must meet the following requirements for the protection of minors:

- Register the program at least 30 calendar days in advance.
- Structure the program to eliminate any one-on-one time between an adult and a minor in a private area not readily observable by others.
- Distribute educational materials provided by the College to the adults participating in the program and review the contents with adult participants.
- For outside groups required to have commercial general liability insurance, the insurance must have appropriate limits and types of coverage as determined by the general counsel.
- For events lasting more than one day or involving an overnight stay, conduct criminal history checks on all paid staff and volunteers.
 - > Outside groups must use a College-approved vendor to conduct the checks and certify to the College that the outside group’s staff and volunteers have satisfactory results from a completed criminal history check.
 - > No staff member or volunteer in an outside program lasting more than one day or including an overnight stay may work with youth on College premises until a satisfactory criminal history check has been completed.
- Outside groups must also comply with instructions from the youth protection coordinator concerning program operations.

SUPERVISION OF MINORS

AGE	ADULT	# OF MINORS
4-5		6
6-8		8
9-14		10
15-17		12

These are recommended adult-to-participant ratios for youth activities. The youth protection coordinator may approve or require changes to these. Groups with multiple ages—supervision number requirements are determined by the youngest members of the group.

Q: What is the “rule of three?”

A: The College requires those working with youth not to be alone with a minor before, during, or after the program or

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