

Standards for Virtually Interacting with Youth

The following describes the minimum expectations we hold for personnel who have virtual interactions with youth in a University youth program. Virtual interactions may include the use of technology, but are not limited to e-mail, smart phones, text messaging, learning management systems, online communications platforms, and social media to carry out program activities.

The following standards apply to **any** interaction between youth and youth program personnel (faculty, staff, students and volunteers), whether held in-person, online, or via other technologies. Specifically, in virtual settings, as youth program personnel you are expected to:

- Limit virtual contact to purposes consistent with the program’s mission and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health-related purpose, in the presence of another staff member, and with the consent of the youth and the youth’s parent/guardian.
- Conduct all virtual interactions in a manner that promotes safety and complies with the general contact guidance outlined in the Standards, including:
 - Observing the Rule of Three in online meetings and all other virtual communications.
 - Using only program-sponsored e-mail, phone, video conferencing, or social media platforms.
 - Avoiding text and electronic one-on-one communication between a single staff person and a youth. Instead, use technologies and platforms which are accessible by multiple staff members (e.g., a shared e-mail inbox or a group chat functionality) and/or a youth’s parent.
 - Not engaging in purposeful communications or contact, including phone or electronic communication or social networking, with youth outside of sanctioned program activities.
- Treat all youth equitably, including ensuring equitable access to and support for any technology needed to fully participate in program activities.
- Proactively address harassment, bullying, or other inappropriate conduct of youth participants.
- Never share sexually implicit or explicit content online with youth.
- Be mindful of your online presence and the content shared publicly via your social media or other platforms.
- Ensure online and virtual interactions are conducted via safe, known platforms that limit risks to youth participants.

BOG Rule 1.7 Rule on Child Protection: Standards for Virtually Interacting with Youth

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To request disability-related accommodations, please contact WVU’s ADA Coordinator in the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at 304-293-5600 (Phone), 304-293-8279 (Fax), or e-mail at Diversity@mail.wvu.edu. More information is available at Diversity.wvu.edu.

Consequences of Violating Virtual Interactions

In the case of violations of the Standards for Virtual Interactions with Youth, West Virginia University and **[Program Name]** will adhere to existing policies and procedures for corrective action. Actions taken will first and foremost consider the need to ensure the safety of youth participating in the program.

[Program Name] Specific Expectation Regarding Virtual Interactions

[If you have specific expectations to convey to your staff regarding virtual interactions you may include them here.]

Confirmation of Understanding

I have read the **[Program Name]** Standards for Virtual Interactions with Youth and I agree to abide by the standards as stated. I understand violations of the Standards for Virtual Interactions with Youth may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. I acknowledge I am aware of my responsibilities and have access to a copy of the Standards for Virtual Interactions with Youth found at <https://diversity.wvu.edu/equity-assurance/children-on-campus>

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

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