



Yale Programs for Children & Youth *Guidance for Running Youth Programs*

This guide offers guidance for Yale University program organizers, volunteers, students, and staff (“Program Staff” or “Staff”) should implement in creating and managing safe and effective youth programs. Each program is unique, so these good practices may not be applicable or relevant to every program.

For any questions on these good practices or for additional guidance, contact the Manager of Youth Programs at youth.programs@yale.edu.

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Accountability & Supervision

- Every program needs a system to account for all program participants throughout the duration of the program. To account for participants, programs should take and periodically retake attendance, keep attendance logs, and use a buddy system.
- Include the topics of accountability and supervision in the pre-program staff training. You can find more information in the Staff Training section below.
- Staff supervision should normally meet the following staff-to-participant ratios (***Only minors over the age of 13 are allowed to stay overnight***):
 - **8 years & younger** 1:8 for day programs.
 - **9 – 14 years** 1:10 for day programs, and 1:8 for overnight programs ages 13 – 14.
 - **15 – 17 years** 1:12 for day programs, and 1:10 for overnight programs.
- Accounting for all participants is especially critical when participants are on the move (e.g., from one activity area to another, from residential space to dining hall, and at the start and end of field trips). Conduct head counts by calling out names rather than counting the number of heads.
- Proper restroom supervision is important. Create a plan to supervise restroom breaks. Consider the following practices:
 - Use restrooms as a group by incorporating bathroom breaks into the schedule of the program.
 - A staff member may escort a participant to the restroom and wait outside the restroom for the participant.
 - Program staff should monitor and regularly check restrooms.
 - Permit one person to use the restroom at a time. Remain mindful of the amount of time a participant is using the restroom. If someone is taking too long, a staff member should check on them.
 - If your program uses multiple classrooms or has more than 50 participants, it can be helpful to have a staff member stationed near the restrooms.
- Establish program check-in and check-out procedures, particularly for programs with younger participants. Maintain a list of persons authorized by the participants parent or legal guardian to pick up, and check IDs to confirm the person's identity upon pick up. Have a backup plan to cover extenuating circumstances if the authorized person is unable to pick up a participant. For example, a parent might send a text message or email with the name of an approved one-time alternate, whose ID should be checked upon pick up.
- Cell Phones:
 - Consider prohibiting staff members from using cell phones except for program purposes. Cell phones can distract staff members from paying attention to program participants.
 - Consider prohibiting participants from using their cellphones during a program. For full day programs, consider collecting cell phones to limit participants' distractions. For shorter programs, participants could be directed to turn off their phones and put them away until the end of the session.

Missing Participant

- Each program should appoint a search director for the program before the program begins.
 - The search director would be responsible for overseeing, in collaboration with Yale Police, the search for a participant believed to be missing from the program.
 - The search director should be an adult who is involved with the program. All program staff members should have the name and cell phone number of the search director.
- If a participant does not attend a scheduled activity, including bed check for overnight programs, the search director and program organizer (if different) must be notified immediately.
- The search director or program staff should notify, Yale Police (203 432-4400 or 911) and department leadership if the participant cannot be located promptly. Avoid delays in notifying authorities. If the program is taking place off campus, notify local authorities first and then alert Yale Police.
- Include the program's protocol for missing participants in the program's instructions and pre-program training for staff.
- For help with developing a missing participant protocol, please contact the Youth Programs office.
Youth.programs@yale.edu

Communication

- Program organizers should develop an effective communication procedure for program organizers and staff to relay information in a timely manner. Program organizers should hold regular staff meetings and debriefs throughout the program. Strong, continuous communication should be the standard.
- In their training, staff should be instructed to promptly communicate important information to the program organizers, such as incidents involving participants, medical situations, and any other issues.
- Communication among program staff is also a critical component of effective operations including work shift coordination.
- Programs should maintain contact information for the following stakeholders, to contact them when appropriate:
 - Yale Police (203-432-4400 or 911)
 - Participant's parent/guardian
 - Unit leadership
 - Yale Youth Programs Office - 475-254-5092, youth.programs@yale.edu
 - Yale Risk Management - risk.management@yale.edu
 - Parents/guardians of all participants
- For communication guidelines between participants and staff, review the [Communication Guideline](#) on the Youth Programs website.
- For recommendations on communication systems, contact [Youth Programs](#) at youth.program@yale.edu.

Discipline

All programs should be prepared to and have procedures in place to manage situations where participants violate the rules set forth by the program.

- All programs should set forth program rules and expectations, including consequences for failing to follow such rules, and require participants and their parent/legal guardian to sign an acknowledgement of those rules. An example is available at the [Youth Programs website](#).
- Upon their arrival, remind participants of program rules and behavioral expectations. This can be done during orientation or in small groups.
- Program organizers need to be prepared to [manage difficult conversations](#) with parents/guardians about disciplinary issues, inappropriate behavior, and removing participants from programs.
- Train staff on appropriate steps to take should a participant violate program rules, including the process for escalation and notification to the participant's parent/legal guardian, as appropriate.
- Physical punishment is not appropriate and is strictly prohibited. Depending on the behavior at issue, discipline may include verbal reminder of the program rules and expectation, temporary removal of the participant from an activity, and removal from future program activities.
- Participants must remain under staff supervision during periods of removal from activities. Participants should not be sent to a residential space or any other area away from staff supervision.
- Program organizers should be prepared for situations where removal of a participant from the program should be considered. Situations that may result in removal from the program should be included in the program's rules and expectations acknowledgement.
- Parents/guardians must be notified of any disciplinary action that has taken place.
- The program organizer should keep a written report of each disciplinary action, outlining the issue, actions taken, and all persons involved.

Medical and First Aid

Training:

- Programs should include at least one organizer/supervisor currently certified in [first aid](#). Other staff should have at a minimum basic first aid training (how to deal with cuts, scrapes, mild burns).
- [CPR/AED](#) training is recommended for residential programs staff. Familiarize staff with the locations of all AEDs.

First Aid:

- Programs should have access to fully stocked first aid kits.
- Regularly review of the contents of the kit and replenish items as needed.

Medical Care:

- In advance of the program, obtain written permission to seek emergency medical care for participants. Forms can be found on the [youth programs website](#).
- Develop plans to manage medical issues beyond basic first aid.
 - For non-emergency situations in day programs, parents/guardians should be called and asked to pick up their child.
 - Residential programs will need to take participants to an urgent care center or a local hospital.
- Obtain information from parents/guardians about special medical considerations (allergies, activity restrictions, prior injuries, and use of prescription medication). Ensure the [security and confidentiality](#) of such medical information. Collect medical information only after a participant has been accepted into the program.
- Ensure program staff is aware of participants' specific needs.
- Avoid storing or administering participants' medications. For special situations, contact youth.programs@yale.edu for advice.
- Have protocols and procedures for notifying parents/guardians of their child's illnesses or injuries.
- Report all injuries involving participants, regardless of severity, to youth.programs@yale.edu. For serious injuries, also contact the Youth Program Manager by phone, (475) 254-5092 as soon as possible.
- If a participant experiences a serious medical emergency, have a plan for managing and supervising the other participants.
 - Move program participants away from the injured person.
 - Maintain a suitable ratio of remaining staff to participants.

Misconduct Reporting

Reporting staff misconduct is critical to safe programming. It is essential that all program staff, participants, and parents/guardians understand misconduct reporting and the process to make a report.

- Misconduct can range from mildly inappropriate language to serious abuse. Any misconduct witnessed or reported should be made known to the program organizers immediately.
- Read the University's Policy on [Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect](#) on our website.
- All program staff and organizers are required to take the [Mandated Reporter Training](#) provided by Connecticut Department of Children and Families. This training provides the most updated information regarding the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.
- All program participants and parents/guardians should be informed of the process for reporting misconduct, including who to contact regarding concerns about suspected misconduct in the program.
- Advise program staff about the process for reporting suspected misconduct, including a primary and secondary contact or other University official.
- All reports of misconduct should be taken seriously and evaluated promptly. Depending on the type of alleged misconduct, the program organizers should contact the Yale Police (203-432-4400 or 911), or [Youth Programs Office](#) for assistance.

Parental Engagement

- [Effective parental engagement](#) will result in much smoother program operations.
- Provide parents/guardians with information such as program timing, activities, itinerary, locations, residential housing procedures (if applicable), program rules and guidelines, the participant code of conduct, and contact information for program organizers.
- Providing parents/guardians with a good understanding of your program can reduce the number of parental questions and enhance engagement during the program.
- Only a program organizer should communicate with parents/guardians in the event of a significant incident. Program organizers should be [trained](#) in how to best communicate information to parents/guardians, including details about their child and actions the program has taken to provide for the safety of all participants.
- Program organizers should strive to maintain the confidentiality of information about participants in the program. If program organizers are unsure of what information to share, they should engage their department leadership or Yale Youth Programs.
- Parent/guardian engagement is a critical component of successful programs. Prepare program staff to interact correctly with parents/guardians during times such as drop-off and pick-up. Staff might answer straightforward questions during these limited periods and refer more complex matters to the program director.
- Any questions regarding discipline or any issues should be addressed solely by the program organizer.

Residential/Overnight Housing

- Only participants of the same age or within a year or two in age should be housed together. This will mitigate potential issues of inappropriate behavior based on larger age differences and should help protect against bullying. If rooming participants two or more to a room, they should be housed by age and each participant must have their own bed.
- Residential staff must not be housed in rooms with participants. Staff can be interspersed around the participants' rooms. This will allow staff to be close enough to resolve issues and be readily available to participants as needed.
- Programs benefit from clear rules about the residential component of the program. Rules might cover, for example, common areas that participants can use, off limit floors, and times for curfew and lights out. Participants need to know the rules and the consequences if they are found in off limits areas or leave the dormitory without permission or supervision.
- Overnight hours are typically the only times when participants are alone with other participants without staff supervision. Staff need to be aware of the potential for inappropriate behavior at these times, including misconduct, bullying, and cyberbullying.
- All residential staff must have a background check completed in accordance with the [Policy on Health and Safety of Children and Youth](#).
- Program staff should not enter participant rooms alone. In emergency situations, when another staff member is not available, the door(s) must always remain open.
- Inform participants about emergency exit locations, policies, and common meeting areas in the event of an emergency or building evacuation. Provide them with 24/7 contact information in case of emergency.
- Take gender identity and gender neutrality into consideration when making room assignments. Decide if you want same-gender housing or gender inclusive housing. Email Youth Programs for help in navigating this subject.

Safety and Security

- Develop effective plans, document the plans, and train all program staff on their role in safety and security.
- Overall safety begins with a detailed review of all program elements to identify areas of risk, and then the creation of a plan for risk mitigation, considering program activities, movement between program areas, and continuous supervision.
- Inspect of facilities, equipment, and safety items before programs begin.
- All programs benefit from having safety plans for events like [severe weather response](#), [evacuation of facility](#), [active shooter/active threat](#), and [medical emergencies](#).
- If a potentially unsafe situation develops, staff should notify campus police or other appropriate authorities.
- Review the [Office of Emergency Management's](#) resources for creating safety plans, including the [Emergency Response Guidebook](#) will help you prepare for different situations.
- All Yale University staff and volunteers should download and activate the [LiveSafe app](#).

Program Staff Screening

- In selecting Yale and non-Yale program staff, consider the use of a cover letter, resume, and written application. Closely review these for experience working with minors. Evaluate whether the applicant has the necessary background and skills for the position.
- During the interview, use questions such as:
 - Why are you applying for this position?
 - Why are you interested in working with youth?
 - What special responsibilities are involved in supervising minors?
- Contact references and ask about prior experience working with minors and their impression of the candidate's approach to safely engaging with minors in their care. Phone calls are better than emails for reference checking.
- Evaluate prior experience to gauge the level of training the individual may need in order to gain a solid understanding of the supervision and safety elements of the position.
- Only permit fully qualified personnel to work with participants. Do not just fill a position, select the right individual to promote safety in your program.
- If you need help with screening an individual, please email Youth Programs.

Staff Training

- Well-run programs provide effective staff training tailored to the program.
- Core components of a training program include staff rules and procedures, emergency response procedures, general safety discussion, first aid/medical situations, and behavior management.
- All program staff must take the [Health & Safety Training](#) and the [Mandated Reporting Training](#).
- For programs that run for multiple weeks, develop training refreshers on key areas like safety and security to maintain continued staff awareness.
- Background checks will be required in the following situations:
 - Overnight programs.
 - Athletic programs.
 - Any program that will have 1-on-1 interaction outside of the view of others with a minor.

Transportation

- Use an outside transportation vendor for all program activities and take the following steps:
 - Purchase services in consultation with [Yale Procurement](#)
 - Confirm that the vendor maintains current and appropriate certifications and licenses.
 - Confirm that the vendor carries current and appropriate levels of liability insurance.
- Contact youth.programs@yale.edu if using an outside vendor is not possible.
- Review the following Yale University Policies, Procedures, Forms and Guides:
 - [Policy 1705](#), “Automobile Fleet, Rental and Safety Program;”
 - [Guide 1705.12](#), “Auto Safety Rules and Regulations;” and
 - [Policy 1110](#), “Personal and Off-Campus Use of University Property, Including Vehicles.”
- Bring emergency contact information while traveling. This includes, for example, contact information for participants’ parents/guardians, program organizer, and other supervisors.
- Consider the availability of transportation in the event of an emergency at an off-campus program.
- Enforce use of seat restraints/seatbelts by participants.
- Avoid dropping off or picking up participants in locations not approved by parents/guardians or Yale.
- Never transport people in vehicles, such as pickup trucks, which are not intended for passengers.
- Avoid transporting participants in personal vehicles.

Contact Information

1. Youth Programs Manager
 - a. Dimitrios Lemonas – dimitrios.lemonas@yale.edu or youth.programs@yale.edu
Desk Phone: 203-436-8049 Cell Phone: 475-254-5092
2. Risk Management
 - a. Risk.management@yale.edu Phone Number: 203-432-0140
3. Office Of General Counsel
 - a. Phone Number: 203-432-4949
4. Yale Police Department
 - a. Safe@yale.edu Phone Number: 203-432-4400 Emergencies: 911
5. Office of Emergency Management
 - a. oem@yale.edu
6. Yale Environmental Health & Safety
 - a. Phone Number: 203-785-3550
7. Yale Procurement
 - a. <https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/financial-management/procurement>
8. Yale Conferences & Events
 - a. conferencesandevents@yale.edu Phone Number: 203-432-0465