

Service-Learning and Minors in Duke University Programs

In August 2012, Duke University implemented a new policy designed to protect minors participating in Duke activities and programs. (See Duke Today article [at http://today.duke.edu/2012/08/minorsoncampus](http://today.duke.edu/2012/08/minorsoncampus).)

The policy (available at <http://www.hr.duke.edu/policies/expectations/minors.php>) requires the person in charge of a program involving minors to register the program, list all adults (including students) who will be interacting with minors, and obtain written permission agreements from parents or guardians of participating minors. It requires the adults who will be interacting with minors through the program (including students) to complete a background check and a short online training session.

The Service-Learning Program agrees that we all share a responsibility to help protect the minors in our midst, and supports Duke's efforts to implement this policy. We initiated a discussion with Duke Human Resources' Employee Relations staff to ascertain whether and how this policy would apply to service-learning courses and came to the following understanding:

- **Faculty members teaching a course in which students will interact with minors must register their courses with Corporate Risk Management** (at http://events.duke.edu/event_planning/minors/index.php) and complete an application that briefly describes the course, names all adults who will interact with minors, and provides information about any existing training requirements and background checks.
- All those listed as interacting with minors through the course will receive an e-mail instructing them to complete the short online training session developed by Duke, which includes information about sexual abuse, Duke's behavioral expectations, and reporting potential abuse.
- The Employee Relations office will determine the necessity of permission agreements and background checks on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the instructor as needed.
- When background checks are required, they may be conducted by Duke (coordinated by Duke Human Resources) or by an external organization (such as Durham Public Schools).

Service-learning faculty should begin this process before the start of the course.

General questions about the policy can be directed to Tracey Perry, Program Coordinator, Staff and Family Programs.

Kristin Wright
Assistant Director
Duke University Service-Learning Program
(919) 668-4134

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