

**University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture  
Protection of Minors**

**Purpose:**

The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture (“the Division”) is strongly committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for children and youth. This policy briefly summarizes important steps to protect minors on Division campuses or participating in programs that may be connected with the Division, and to comply with applicable legal requirements and institutional policies.

**Definitions:**

Arkansas Code § 12-18-103(6) defines child maltreatment as “abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or abandonment.” Arkansas Code § 12-18-402(a) requires school officials, broadly interpreted as including those in institutions of higher education, to report instances of suspected child maltreatment. The Arkansas Department of Human Services indicates that “school officials” required to report maltreatment include “any person authorized by a school to exercise administrative or supervisory authority over employees, students or agents of the school,” and also includes “a volunteer exercising administrative or supervisory authority in a program conducted by a school.” For purposes of this policy, such school officials are considered mandated reporters. Arkansas law requires mandated reporters to report if they: (1) have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to child maltreatment or has died as a result of child maltreatment or (2) observe a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in child maltreatment.

**Policy:**

Immediate action will be taken to protect minors present on Division campuses or participating in programs connected with the Division. Furthermore, it is required by law for mandated reporters to take such immediate action. Failure by a mandated reporter to report child maltreatment may have civil or criminal consequences. Questions regarding mandatory reporting obligations may be directed to the University of Arkansas System Office of General Counsel at 501-686-2520.

Arkansas law prohibits any person from prohibiting or requiring prior permission for a mandated reporter to make a report of suspected maltreatment. A person, acting in good faith, who makes a report of suspected maltreatment, is immune to suit and to civil or criminal liability for making the report. Likewise, University of Arkansas policy prohibits retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report of child maltreatment.

## **I. Reporting Suspected Child Maltreatment**

If any Division employee or volunteer reasonably suspects or observes child maltreatment, he or she should immediately do the following, (and must immediately do the following if a mandated reporter):

1. Report the suspected maltreatment to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-482-5964. The hotline is toll-free and is staffed 24 hours per day. If it is an emergency, you are advised to call local law enforcement. In a nonemergency situation, a report form available at [http://www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse/report\\_child\\_abuse.html](http://www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse/report_child_abuse.html) may be faxed to 1-501-618-8952.
2. Immediately after the Hotline report is made, report the suspected maltreatment to local law enforcement, the University of Arkansas Campus Police at 476-575-2222, or the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Campus Police at 501-569-3400, as appropriate for the program, location or employee involved in the allegations.
3. Finally, report the suspected maltreatment to the Dean of the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food & Life Sciences; the Associate Vice President-Experiment Station; or the Associate Vice President-Extension, as appropriate.

## **II. Background Checks**

As part of the hiring process, the Division requires new employees to undergo certain background checks based on the assigned responsibilities of the position.

## **III. Camps and Other Programs, Activities or Locations Involving Minors**

A number of Division units either operate camps, host programs, or permit third parties to use Division facilities for activities involving minors. All Division units should carefully review (a) all programs they operate or host which include participation by minors or (b) all locations they control which are frequented by minors to determine whether additional training or protocols may be needed to help prevent child abuse, e.g., limiting staff from being alone with children, especially in a place that is isolated or not easily visible to others.

Units that host camps operated by non-Division entities should require that contracts with such entities properly address items such as criminal background checks, staffing ratios, training, and insurance/liability.