**Introduction:** Youth outreach programs are some of the most impactful experiences that children and college students can have in their lives. Adults often point to a mentor, tutor or role model they worked with early in life that contributed to their future success. Students participating in mentorship programs routinely speak of their experiences as some of the best they have while in college; however, they also include a variety of risks. A well thought-out plan is vital for successfully managing these risks so that student organizations operating youth outreach programs can complete their goals and objectives. This document will help you integrate risk management practices into your organization’s work with youth.

**Expectations document:** Develop a written document that clearly explains the rules and expectations for your program. This document will set the foundation for your program creating a safe environment. It will also contribute to program leaders being able to consistently enforcing the program’s rules, which will lead to accountability within the organization. Every program’s document will be different, but here are examples of what should be in the document:

* 1. Safety first!
  2. Be relatable, but professional at all times
  3. Only participate in activities that contain a low risk of sustaining personal injuries
  4. Your role is to mentor, not supervise. The host site staff is responsible for supervising the minors at all times, including during field trips.
  5. Maintain appropriate boundaries
     1. Define developmentally appropriate and inappropriate physical, verbal, emotional interactions
     2. No private one-on-one interactions, including electronic communication
     3. Do not give gifts to minors, unless the program is providing the gift to the mentees
     4. Do not visit or interact with the mentees outside of regularly scheduled program activities
     5. Do not use vehicles to transport minors
  6. Report suspected inappropriate, uncomfortable, neglectful or abusive behaviors to organization leaders, advisors and the designated host site official.

Require members to review and sign the expectations documents. Student organization advisors should retain the signed documents in their records for at least three years from the program’s start date.

**Reporting Procedure:** It is good practice to reference reporting in the expectations document, but your organization should also develop a reporting procedure. This will enable members to know how to report boundary violations or suspected inappropriate behaviors involving minors.

**Training** Provide a brief 15 - 20 minute long training session on the expectations document and other program rules. Encourage members to complete the online training resources that are available on the risk management website: <http://www.risk.cornell.edu/learning-resources/>

**Vehicles:** Please review the following if you need to use vehicles for any program activities:

* **University vehicles**: Independent Student Organization may not use University vehicles. University Student Organizations are eligible to use University vehicles. University organization members needing to use University vehicles must register with Fleet Services in Agile Fleet Commander.
* **Privately owned vehicles:** If you choose this option, the drivers and passengers should be informed that they are using their vehicles on a voluntary basis. The vehicle owner should understand that their insurance is primary for any accident. The University does not provide any coverage for damages to an individual’s personal vehicle or reimburse employees for such damages.
* **Rental Vehicles:** Independent Student Organizations and University Student Organizations may rent vehicles from external rental agencies.

**Memorandum of Understanding:** Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are not always necessary, but they are good to have in place to clarify the roles and responsibilities between student organizations and host sites for long-term relationships. Student organizations should forward MOUs to the Office of Risk Management and Insurance for additional guidance and review prior to finalizing the agreements.

**Certificates of Insurance**: The Office of Risk Management and Insurance can provide Certificates of Insurance to host sites that request proof of insurance.

**Waivers:** Host sites may require organization members to sign waivers or liability release documents. Please review the waivers so that you understand what you are agreeing to before signing the document. The Office of Risk Management and Insurance can provide general guidance on waivers and liability release documents.

Please contact the Office of Risk Management and Insurance for additional guidance

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