



Tufts University Code of Conduct Involving Interactions with Minors

Tufts University is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct, along with the “*Tufts University Policy to Protect Children and Prevent Abuse*” applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the University and who interact with children or young people in both a direct and/or unsupervised capacity.

The public and private conduct of faculty, staff, employees, students, and volunteers acting on behalf of Tufts University can inspire and motivate those with whom they interact, or can cause great harm if inappropriate. We must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany our work.

We should be aware of our own and other persons’ vulnerability, especially when working alone with children and youth, and be particularly aware that we are responsible for maintaining physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. We must avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors with those for whom we have responsibility. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that exploits, abuses, or harasses. We are to provide safe environments for children and youth at all Tufts campuses, schools, and institutions.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, especially children and youth, and be aware of how physical touch will be perceived or received, and whether it would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, or celebration. Tufts University personnel and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.

Physical contact with children can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. One-on-one meetings with a child or young person are best held in a public area; in a room where the interaction can be (or is being) observed; or in a room with the door left open, and another staff member or supervisor is notified about the meeting.

We must intervene when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that children are being abused in any way. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate school and civil authorities as described in the *Tufts University Policy to Protect Children and Prevent Abuse*.

Faculty, staff, employees, and volunteers should refrain from the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol at all times, and from the use of tobacco products, alcohol and/or drugs when working with children. Adults should never buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos, or

reading material that is inappropriate and give it to young people. Staff members and volunteers should not accept or give gifts to children without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Communication with children by Tufts University personnel and volunteers is only allowed for Tufts University business. For the protection of all concerned, the key safety concept that will be applied to these interactions is *transparency*. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication between Tufts personnel, volunteers, and minors:

- Communication between Tufts University personnel (including volunteers) and minors that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited.
- Where possible, email exchanges between a minor and a person acting on behalf of the university are to be made using a tufts.edu email address.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a Tufts University network or platform may be subject to periodic monitoring.
- Faculty, staff, and volunteers who use text messaging or any form of online communications including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc) to communicate with minors may only do so for activities involving Tufts business.

Applicants for first year admission to Tufts University are often under the age of 18. For the safety of our applicants and of our Tufts Alumni Admissions Program (TAAP) interviewers, and in order to comply with the *Tufts University Policy to Protect Children and Prevent Abuse*, TAAP interviewers cannot have unmonitored contact with applicants. Interviews must:

- Be conducted in public settings in open sight of other people, such as in coffee shops or libraries;
- Not take place behind closed doors, even in public settings (i.e., if the interview is being conducted at a workplace, the office door should remain open); and
- Never be conducted in private settings (especially not at the interviewer's personal residence).

Similarly, TAAP members should refrain from transporting applicants to or from the interview. Interviewers who do not comply with this policy will be asked to resign from TAAP.

Statement of Acknowledgement

I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth participating in Tufts University programs.

I will:

Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.

Never be alone with children and/or youth at University activities without another adult being notified.

Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.

Maintain appropriate physical boundaries at all times and touch children – when necessary – only in ways that are appropriate, public, and non-sexual.

Comply with the mandatory reporting regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and with the *Tufts University Policy to Protect Children and Prevent Abuse* to report suspected child abuse. I understand that failure to report suspected child abuse to civil authorities is against the law.

Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

I will not:

Touch or speak to a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.

Inflict any physical or emotional abuse such as striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading children and/or youth.

Smoke or use tobacco products, or possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children and/or youth.

Give a child who is not my own a ride home alone.

Accept or give gifts to children or youth without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Engage in private communications with children via text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter or similar forms of electronic or social media except for activities strictly involving Tufts University business.

Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth at any time.

I understand that as a person working with and/or providing services to children and youth under the auspices of Tufts University, I am subject to a criminal history background check. My signature confirms that I have read this Code of Conduct and that as a person working with children and youth I agree to follow these standards. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the university.

Name (print): _____ Signature/Date: _____