

Allegany College of Maryland

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Adopted 2025
Submitted to Board of Trustees 11/17/25
Approved by Board of Trustees: 11/17/25
Implementation Date 12.01.25
Type of Policy: Mandatory

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Allegany College of Maryland is committed to providing a healthy and safe community for learning and engagement for all students, employees, and guests. It is the responsibility of every person to ensure his/her actions do not compromise the health and safety of any person or the campus community. Minor children are vulnerable populations and deserve particular care. The College welcomes minors to campus in myriad ways including, but not limited to, early college students, special programs such as CHEER and P-TECH and A Taste of ACM, campus tours/visits, youth camps, youth sports league practices and games, dance recitals in our theater, and with families for Willowbrook Woods move-in days. The College also rents a building adjacent to campus to a local Head Start program. The College has always been compliant with federal and state requirements including the Clery Act, Title IX, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and state mandated reporting of child abuse/neglect. Long-standing institutional policies prohibit abuse, mandate reporting, address child abuse, and place limit/requirements for young children on campus, and manage facility rentals. ACM has not had a previous policy to guide youth events or youth-focused activities. This policy combines all these important subjects into one policy and reference point for employees and campus guests.

POLICY

I. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all Allegany College of Maryland programs, activities, and services; youth campus and youth-centered recreational programs offered by the College or using College personnel, facilities, or resources; and 3rd party programs, activities, and services that include minors. This policy applies to all students, employees, volunteers, interns, vendors, visitors, parents, spectators, Trustees, and/or any person who is present on any College property or participating in any College program/activity unless otherwise noted. College owned or managed property includes (but is not limited to) Cumberland Campus, Bedford County Campus, Somerset Educational Site, Gateway Center, Garrett site, Makerspace, and Willowbrook Woods. This policy also applies to any student or employee who is engaged in any college-sponsored or college-affiliated activity at an off-campus location including but not limited to sporting events, field trips, clinical/practicum course requirements, and conferences. This policy applies while using College owned or rented vehicles.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Allegany College of Maryland is committed to providing an environment where the welfare of minor children is protected. No person may commit crimes against any person; this policy specifically prohibits crimes against minors or harm inflicted upon a minor as defined below. The College embraces its responsibility to implement necessary and reasonable measures to promote the safety and wellbeing of minors thereby limiting risk of harm, to respond promptly to any harm that occurs, and to fully comply with federal, state, and local laws if any minor child is endangered.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Child Abuse or Neglect: Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) defines child abuse and child neglect as:
1. Physical injury (not necessarily visible) of a child under circumstances that indicate that a child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.
 2. The failure to give proper care and attention to a child, leaving a child unattended where the child's health or welfare is harmed or a child is placed in substantial risk of harm.

3. An act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation whether physical injuries are sustained or not.
 4. Identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.
 5. Finding credible evidence that has not been satisfactorily refuted that physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse occurred.
- B. **Child Pornography:** a form of child sexual exploitation, federal law defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor (persons less than 18 years old). Images of child pornography are also referred to as child sexual abuse images. Federal law prohibits the production, distribution, importation, reception, or possession of any image of child pornography.
 - C. **Credit student:** a person who is enrolled in any credit-bearing course (as distinguished from a non-credit course) whether full-time, part-time, early college, or dual enrolled. Some elements of this policy do not apply to credit students and are noted below.
 - D. **Human Trafficking:** human trafficking is a violation of both state and federal law. A victim of human trafficking is an individual who has been recruited, harbored, transported, provided, or obtained for labor, services, or a sexual act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Force, fraud, and coercion are not required if the victim is under 18 years of age.
 - E. **Mandated Reporter:** a person who, by virtue of their job is required by law to report suspected or known child abuse, child neglect, human trafficking of a minor, and/or child pornography. Mandated reporters include educators, health practitioners police officers, human service workers. All ACM employees are mandated reporters.
 - F. **Minor:** a minor is any person under the age of 18.
 - G. **Registered Sex Offender:** a person who has been convicted of one or more enumerated sex-related crimes and has been ordered to register in accordance with the classification of the crime(s). In addition to other statutory and regulatory requirements, registered sex offenders must report enrollment (or terminating enrollment) at an institution of higher education to local law enforcement within three days. This policy requires registered sex offenders to report their enrollment (or terminating enrollment) to Campus Safety/Special Police within three days.
 - H. **"Rule of 3":** a principle in child protection that typically requires at least three people including two (2) responsible adults are present during any program, activity, or service involving minors who are not credit students to prevent isolation of one child with one adult who is not their parent or guardian.
 - I. **Third party organizer:** the responsible person who is not a College Official who leads a program, activity, or event that involves minor children.

IV. CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

Any suspected or known child abuse, child neglect, human trafficking of a minor, and/or child pornography against any child will be reported to local law enforcement, child protective services, and Campus Safety/Special Police. Any College Official with knowledge of the suspected or known crime shall cooperate with investigation(s), and no College Official shall interfere with investigation(s). Third parties are expected to fully cooperate and not interfere with investigation(s).

V. BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

All persons present on campus or participating in any program/activity have an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the College's function as an educational institution and community partner. Each person is presumed to have fundamental knowledge of proper conduct. Misconduct directed toward any person or property is not permitted. Standards and rules must be followed. In addition to institutional policies, laws and court orders must be followed. Minors and others on campus who cannot comply with these standards may be required to leave campus or the program/activity (Safety Risk Policy)

VI. INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, PERMISSIONS, PROHIBITIONS

- A. For any minor who is **not** a credit student, College officials and/or third party organizer(s) must
 1. Supervise minors in their charge at all times.
 2. Comply with the "Rule of 3" at all times and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct when interacting with minors.
 3. Comply with all response and reporting requirements as detailed in Section IV: Crimes Against

Children

4. Maintain a safe environment for the program/activity, and promptly address or report any unsafe condition of the environment or facility.
 5. Obtain and preserve name and contact information (including an emergency phone number) of the minor's parent or guardian.
 6. Obtain and preserve written permission from the minor's parent or guardian to participate in programs, events.
 7. Immediately notify the minor's parent or guardian in the event of an emergency, injury, or illness involving the minor. 911 must be called for health/safety emergency. Any injured or ill minor (non-emergency) may not be left alone until their parent or guardian (or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian) arrives to assume care of the child.
 8. Immediately report any violations or incidents to Campus Safety/Special Police and/or law enforcement;
 9. Enforce institutional policies at all times.
 10. Comply with applicable local and state laws.
- B. College officials and/or third-party organizer(s) may
1. Require minimum youth to staff ratios
 2. Require supervisors and adult participants to complete a one-time or regular criminal background checks. The College will use its own process/service and institutional resources to complete any required background check. Third-party organizers are responsible for conducting any required background checking with their own process/service and their own resources unless there is a specific, written agreement for the College to conduct the background check. If the criminal background check reveals prior conviction(s), the College or other responsible adult will conduct an individualized, thorough, and fair assessment to determine potential risk to minors; where indicated, the person may be prohibited from participating in the program, activity, or event. Records of background checks will be kept confidential.
 3. Require supervisors and adult participants to notify the organizer(s) of any new charges which are addressed via the organizer's internal policies. Any new charges which become known by other means may be addressed via the organizer's internal policies.
 4. Require verification of compliance with local, state, or federal health/medical requirements for participation in certain programs, activities, and events. If such verification is necessary, it is the responsibility of the external program/event organizer to obtain and preserve the documentation.
- C. For any minor who is **not** a credit student, College officials and/or third-party organizer(s) may not
1. Allow any person to remove a minor who is not their child from the activity to an isolated or secluded location without permission from the minor's parent or guardian. College employees may also be required to obtain their supervisor's permission.
 2. Knowingly allow any Registered Sex Offender with restrictions related minors (including contact or location) to participate in or supervise any program or event. If the presence of a Registered Sex Offender becomes known and the Registered Sex Offender is not permitted in the presence of minors, Campus Safety/Special Police must be notified and the Registered Sex Offender must be immediately removed from the presence of any minor child. Law enforcement will be notified as necessary.
 3. Knowingly allow any person to solicit sexual contact with a minor whether in-person or via technology.
 4. Allow minor children to be unaccompanied on campus or any College owned/managed property.
 5. Administer medication without specific written permission and directions by the minor's parent or guardian.
 6. Travel overnight with any minor not their own child without specific written permission by the minor's parent or guardian.
 7. Discriminate against any person on the basis of their age.

VII. Procedures

Allegany College of Maryland shall use currently existing procedures or adopt new procedures to implement this policy.

VIII. EDUCATION

Allegany College of Maryland shall provide prevention and awareness education to its employees, interns, and volunteers. This education shall be designed provide information regarding this policy, related procedures, and their responsibilities as mandated reporters.

IX. OTHER PROVISIONS

- A. Registered Sex Offenders who are restricted from locations where minors are present are prohibited from being in campus locations with minors. Such locations include but are not limited to learning spaces dedicated to minors, athletic facilities being used by minors for events, and classrooms if a minor is enrolled in the course. It is the Registered Sex Offender's responsibility to comply with court orders and/or any conditions of the registry. Registered Sex Offenders will be removed from the location(s) as necessary.
- B. Accommodations for a documented disability are the responsibility of the external program/event organizer or the minor's parent/guardian to disclose a disability and to request accommodations. Any written contract or memorandum of understanding between the College and a third party that delineates responsibility/process for requesting, approving, and providing approved accommodations will be the controlling authority.
- C. Nothing in this policy relieves any third party from any separate approvals required by the College for programs, activities, and events.
- D. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit any party's pursuing criminal or civil remedies against any person who commits a crime against a minor child.
- E. Application of this policy may directly or indirectly require the application of other institutional policies; nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the application of related policies which include, but are not limited to the policies listed here. Related policies include: ADA/504 Policy, Personnel/HR policies, Title IX Policy, Non-Discrimination Policy, Safety Risk Policy, FERPA Policy, and First Amendment Policy. Where an allegation that this policy has been violated and the underlying acts would also violate (or prompt a formal complaint to) another policy, the College shall make reasonable efforts to determine which policy has primacy and to apply that policy and its accompanying procedures as required or permitted by law; for example, if an abuse incident included sexual elements to which Title IX may apply, the Title IX Coordinator will first review the incident so the specific and unique procedures and protections are observed.
- F. If another College policy or state law conflicts with this policy, the College shall make reasonable efforts to resolve the conflict without violating any policy or law. If such resolution is not possible, the College shall apply the relevant policy or law in this order: constitutional protections, federal law, federal regulations, institutional policy to implement federal law/regulations, Maryland law, Maryland regulations, institutional policy to implement Maryland law/regulations, other state law, other state regulations, institutional policy to implement other state law/regulations, institutional policy unrelated to a federal or state law/regulation.

X. ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY

The Dean of Student & Legal Affairs is responsible for the implementation, administration, and oversight of this policy in consultation with Campus Safety/Special Police, other College Officials, and/or General Counsel as needed. Questions, concerns, and reports of non-compliance should be promptly reported to the Office of Student & Legal Affairs.

XI. Policy Changes

Substantive changes to this policy require approval by the Board of Trustees; editorial changes, title/position changes, and/or changes to its implementation procedures may be made as required by federal or state mandate and/or institutional need with timely notice to students and employees.