

Toronto Skillz Academy Code of Conduct

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS

Included:

1. Guidelines for Appropriate Behavior with Minors
2. Preventing Harmful Relationships with Minors
3. Appropriate & Inappropriate Interactions
4. How to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Minor
5. Confirmation of Understanding



1. GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR WITH MINORS

As a Toronto Skillz Academy employee or volunteer, it is our duty to prevent harm towards minors in our care. The following are behavior guidelines for staff while working with minors. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a safe environment for both staff and minors, and to raise awareness of how to manage risk when minors are present in the program. “Minors” includes any youth under the age of 18 years old. “Staff” includes both employees of the Toronto Skillz Academy and volunteers. “Parent” is considered both parents and legal guardians. This policy should be provided to all new staff upon hire and reviewed with returning staff on an annual basis. These guidelines emphasize the responsibility that staff, volunteers, parents, and minors each have in ensuring a safe and successful program.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFELY WORKING WITH MINORS

1. Avoid being alone with a single minor where you cannot be observed by staff or other adults.
2. Do not discipline minors by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
3. Physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse of minors is unlawful and is prohibited by provincial and federal law and Toronto Skillz Academy policy.
4. Appropriate guidelines around physical contact should always be followed. Please see the following pages for these guidelines.
5. Do not have off-hours contact with minors. Separate your private life from your work or volunteer activities.
6. Understand and respect the boundaries set by minors regarding physical touch or sharing personal information.
7. In sensitive situations and in case of injury, involve another staff member, adult, or parent.
8. Always provide clear communication about the program. Communicate the codes of conduct/rules/behavior to staff and minors at the onset of each program or event. Share with parents how and what you are doing with minors and keep parents involved in an ongoing relationship.
9. Allow minors to opt out of distribution of contact information (except to designated staff as needed).
10. Minors are not allowed on program premises without a staff member present.

11. No Internet social networking with minors for *personal* reasons or through personal profiles is allowed by staff. Networking through approved program sites/profiles may be used when the contact is related to programming.
12. Staff should understand the program emergency plan for responding to a crisis. In case of emergency, contact minor's emergency contact person as soon as possible.
13. Communicate to your program lead all situations that may be questionable or a possible breach of these guidelines. If you believe someone has perpetrated abuse or neglect, immediately and confidentially report such violation to Child Protective Services or the police, and follow Club guidelines for internal reporting, as applicable.

2. PREVENTING HARMFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MINORS

The following are specific actions staff can follow in order to avoid harmful relationships with minors.

1. Establish clear boundaries with minors, i.e. stating what are or are not appropriate conversation topics.
2. Do not have inappropriate physical contact (see chart below).
3. Treat all minors equitably, i.e. fairly and consistently. Avoid showing favoritism.
4. Do not discuss your personal life with minors.
5. Follow appropriate professional attire guidelines and avoid provocative or revealing attire.
6. Do not swear or tell off-color jokes.
7. Do not allow minors in your living quarters.
8. Do not transport minors in a private or club operated vehicle without explicit program permission
9. Do not discuss your own or minor's sex life or activities.
10. Do not smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of minors.
11. Do not share sexually explicit literature, magazines, books, music, or videos except those in the context of a sanctioned, appropriate activity that relates to the educational objective of your program.
12. Seek support for high risk situations, such as discussions of very personal stories.
13. When in doubt, seek assistance from a program lead or supervisor.

3. APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS

The following chart lists unacceptable and acceptable behaviors and actions with minors. It is intended to give clarity to unacceptable interaction between staff (employee or volunteer) and minors and the consequences for those actions. **The lists are illustrative and not all-inclusive; other behaviors may be identified.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Zero Tolerance</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">These behaviors, when substantiated, represent gross misconduct and may include termination of employment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Not Allowed</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">These behaviors <i>could</i> result in corrective action up to and including termination of employment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Appropriate</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">These behaviors are generally ok. However, even appropriate touch can be inappropriate when excessive, done for staff's personal pleasure or when the intention is to give preferential treatment.</p>
<p><u>PHYSICAL CONTACT:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sexual abuse, molestation. 2. Physical abuse, punishment, discipline (e.g. use of physical force, striking, squeezing, whether used for behavior management or not). 3. Physical interaction involving intimate touch or other risk of injury (e.g. tickling, wrestling, twisting nipples, swinging minors by ankles or wrists, massages, caressing, sitting on lap, patting on bottom, kissing). <p><u>OTHER ACTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Verbal abuse (e.g. yelling in aggressive or threatening manner; belittling, including making fun of the individual/ individual's family, national origin, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation; threatening bodily harm to the individual or individual's family/friends). 5. Bullying, taunting; intimidation of physical force. 6. Using inappropriate consequences for behavior (e.g. closing minor in closet, cabinet; restraining minor inappropriately such as tying their hands with string, taping their mouth). 7. Neglect – failure to provide for basic needs of minors (e.g. failing to provide appropriate medical care, access to restrooms, or access to food/water). 8. Telling or asking a minor not to tell an adult or parent of words or actions of staff or volunteers. 9. Founded violation from Child Protective Services or law enforcement agency relating to the safety of a minor. 10. Failure to fully cooperate with an investigation by program staff, the Toronto Skillz Academy, law enforcement agency or other authorized outside agency. 11. Sexual exploitation (e.g. sharing or taking nude pictures). 12. Being nude in front of minors under your care or direction. 	<p><u>PHYSICAL CONTACT:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frontal hugs and bear hugs. 2. Holding hands - intent is to eliminate special, singular relationships (ok for groups, games and with very young children who need assistance). 3. Patting on head (demeaning in some cultures) 4. Touching any parts of the body without consent. 5. Restraint of a minor (unless minor is an immediate danger to self or others; to avoid harm to a minor, physically redirecting minor to safety). 6. Being rough with minors for behavior management (eg. yanking arm, grabbing shoulder, pushing minor into position). 7. Roughhousing (aggressive physical contact, often for fun, minor not in control of body). 8. Lifting, carrying, piggy-back or arm-chair rides (exceptions could be for challenge course activities, group games, moving an injured minor). <p><u>OTHER ACTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Emotional abuse (eg. sarcasm, harsh or abusive words; rejecting or stating you do not like a minor). 10. Neglect – denying snack or other comfort as a behavior consequence. 11. Personal gifts to minors or their parents (include any gift, note, craft, food or beverage intended to give a minor and/or parent special attention not given to others). 12. Losing a minor (depends on duration, when/where minor found, how occurred). 13. Crossing boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate interaction with minors (including telling stories of personal sexual relationships, illegal activity, siding with minors as opposed to supporting staff with rules). 14. Singling a minor out for favored attention or giving the appearance of grooming. 	<p><u>PHYSICAL CONTACT:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shaking hands. 2. High fives. 3. Hand signs and greetings. 4. Side hugs. <p>Even physical contact that is considered 'appropriate' must be consented to by the minor and be appropriate for the situation.</p>

ABUSE PREVENTION RULES, cont'd

<u>Zero Tolerance</u>	<u>Not Allowed</u>	<u>Appropriate</u>
<p>PROCEDURES:</p> <p>13. Supervisory staff instructing employee in mandatory reporting situation not to make a report.</p> <p>14. <i>Unauthorized</i> off-hours contact, including but not limited to: babysitting, movies, foster care, weekend trips, dating, social networking and texting.</p> <p>15. Dating a program participant who is a minor.</p> <p>16. Serving food with nuts or other allergens to a minor with known allergies.</p> <p>ADDITIONAL:</p> <p>17. Illegal activity on work time.</p> <p>18. Undisclosed past criminal history (as required by routine background check performed at hiring).</p> <p>19. Using, selling or providing alcohol or illegal drugs on site, or in program. Selling or providing over-the-counter drugs to minors, except by documented parental authorization.</p>	<p>PROCEDURES:</p> <p>15. Failing to report suspicion of abuse or neglect internally and to Child Protective Services.</p> <p>16. Violating reporting procedures or failing to report rule-breaking to supervisor.</p> <p>17. Supervisory staff instructing employee <i>not</i> to report a situation to risk management or human resources.</p> <p>ADDITIONAL:</p> <p>18. Illegal activity outside program hours or off site.</p> <p>19. Bringing or carrying a weapon into the program.</p> <p>20. Being in possession of or being under influence of alcohol or drugs on site and/or in program.</p>	

Educating minors

Minors may be informed in a manner that is age appropriate of their right to set their own physical limits for personal safety. They will be encouraged to tell an adult if someone is abusing them. They will also be encouraged to tell an adult if they are in a situation or observe something that makes them uncomfortable.

Consequences of inappropriate behaviors

The Toronto Skillz Academy take these matters seriously. In the case of suspected abuse or neglect of a minor, the club will adhere to existing policies and procedures for corrective action. Actions taken will first and foremost consider the need to ensure the safety of minors participating in the program.

4. HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A MINOR

All Toronto Skillz Academy employees and volunteers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities, as outlined below.

Abuse can occur:

1. At home or away from the program; signs of abuse may be observed at the program, or a minor makes a written or oral disclosure.
2. During the program by an employee, volunteer or other adult or minor:
 - a. Staff can break rules or cross boundaries of appropriate interaction with minors.
 - b. Minors can act out by themselves or with other minors, including bullying, intimidation or other prohibited acts.

If you have reasonable cause to believe a minor has been abused, or if a minor has disclosed an abuse to you, you have a duty to report that abuse to the proper authorities. Failure to do so is a violation of club Guidelines for Working with Minors and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Even if you're not sure whether something constitutes abuse, it's better to have others help you decide, rather than keep information to yourself.

If you are a mandated reporter, you are required by law to report known or suspected instances where a minor has been abused or neglected. Not doing so is considered a gross misdemeanor. You are a mandated reporter if you are an educator OR if you have regular supervisory authority over any staff whom you believe has caused a minor to suffer abuse or neglect.

At the first reasonable cause to believe that *abuse or neglect* occurred (off-site or on-site), or if you witness abusive behaviors, you must:

1) If the safety of a minor is of immediate concern, call the police:

- Call 9-1-1 for immediate intervention.

2) For all other cases, call either Children Aid society (CAS) or local law enforcement within 48 hours:

- CAS reporting Hotline for Toronto is - 416-924-4640 hotline.
- Alternatively, call local police, specifically the jurisdiction where the incident occurred.

Questions that will be asked when you call:

- The name, address and age of the minor.
- The name and address of the minor's parent, guardian or other persons having custody of the minor.
- The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect, including location and description of the incident.
- Any knowledge of previous incidences.
- Any other information which may be helpful in establishing the cause of the minor's abuse or neglect and the identity of the perpetrator.

You do not need to have all of the above information when you call to make a report, but the more accurate information you can provide, the better equipped the office will be to assess the child's risk. Provide the information you are able to obtain, as clearly and objectively as possible. Describing actions, symptoms, physical observations or telling what is said, is more helpful than giving your opinion.

If you are unsure about whether a report is justified, you may use Children Aid society (CAS) as a sounding board to help determine whether a report should be made and to whom.

3. **For cases involving abuse occurring within Toronto Skillz Academy Program ,** contact the club Administrator after making your report to CAS or law enforcement, and follow club instructions on internal reporting. Describe what occurred and who was involved, and any details regarding your conversation with CAS or law enforcement.

Toronto Skillz will adhere to existing policies and procedures for corrective action regarding the employee or volunteer, including suspension or termination from Toronto Skillz Academy employment or volunteer status.

Confidentiality of information related to abuse is crucial and should be limited to the immediate supervisor, any authorities called, and designated UW internal reporting recipient(s).

5. CONFIRMATION OF UNDERSTANDING

I have read Toronto Skillz Guidelines for Working with Minors and I agree to abide by the program rules and boundaries for staff relationships with minors as stated.

I UNDERSTAND VIOLATIONS OF TORONTO SKILLZ ACADEMY GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL (SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT). I ACKNOWLEDGE I AM AWARE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES AND I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS.

Print Name _____ **Date** _____

Signature _____