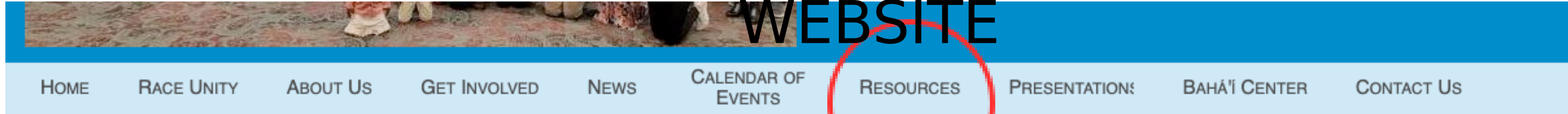


GUIDANCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES,
REVISED JANUARY 2023



WHERE TO ACCESS THE DOCUMENTS: INDY BAHAI WEBSITE



RESOURCES

OFFICIAL LINKS

[Official Website of the Bahá'í Community of the United States](#)

[Official Website of the Bahá'í World Community](#)

[Official Website of the Universal House of Justice](#)

[Bahá'í World News Service](#)

[Become a Bahá'í](#)

[Request to make a Pilgrimage or 3-day Visit to the World Centre](#)

[Working Towards ONE PLANET & ONE HABITATION \(Sustainability and Environmental Efforts\)](#)

BAHÁ'Í HOLY WRITINGS AND GUIDANCE

[Bahá'í Reference Library](#)



[Bahá'í Prayers](#)

[Messages and Letters of the Universal House of Justice](#)

[Selected Messages to the Baha'is of Iran \(English & Persian\)](#)

[Guidance for the Protection of Minors](#)

- [CHILDREN'S CLASSES](#)
- [DEVOTIONAL GATHERINGS](#)
- [JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS](#)
- [STUDY CIRCLES](#)

-  [Facebook](#)
-  [CHMeetings \(Directory\)](#)

- ### OFFICIAL LINKS
- [Bahá'í Community of the United States](#)
 - [Bahá'í World Community](#)
 - [The Universal House of Justice](#)



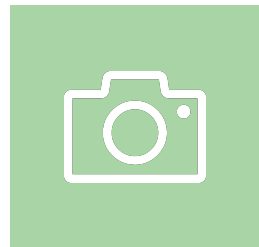
PART I



PRINCIPLES & STANDARDS- INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES



Every individual who will be regularly working with minors has the responsibility to seek clearance from the regional training institute



Those who work with minors must advise parents or guardians that photos may be taken of activities and may be posted on various social media.

PLEASE NOTE

Institutions have separate responsibilities. Visit the website to learn more.



Those who work with minors should always work in at least pairs, especially when they are working out of public sight or behind closed doors.



Special care must be taken to ensure that an adult is never alone with minors out of public sight or behind closed doors—both as a protection for the minors and as a protection for the adult.





POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, JY & YOUTH

OBJECTIVE

Provide a safe, protective environment for all who participate in Bahá'í-sponsored gatherings and activities.

- local ongoing Bahá'í activities,
- Bahá'í education classes and activities at permanent and seasonal schools,
- special activities which include an excursion and/or overnight arrangements, and
- activities connected with conferences, conventions, summer camps, and other

ADULTS AND YOUTH WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTIVITIES FOR MINORS SHOULD OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING



DRESS

MODERATELY

Refrain from wearing revealing or tight clothing or any clothing with derogatory messages on them.



BE

CLEARHEADED

No smoking, vaping, drinking alcohol or taking drugs other than those prescribed by a physician, during any activity.



USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

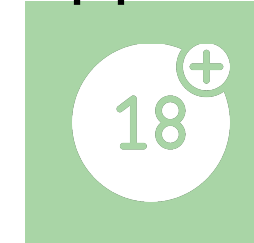
No cursing or abusive language should be used by anyone serving or participating in a Bahá'í activity.





DRIVING MINORS

All those transporting minors on behalf of a sponsored activity, in addition to getting a background check, must also complete a Motor Vehicle Records check and be approved to drive.



AGE

Drivers must be 18 years of age or older to transport minors on behalf of a sponsored activity or 19 years of age as required for age of majority in that state.



ELIGIBILITY

All drivers must have a current driver's license issued by a state within the United States, and auto insurance.

RATIO OF CLEARED ADULTS TO MINORS



CLEARED ADULT

At least two cleared adults or youth over the age of 15.



RULE OF THREE

At least three individuals will be present, with at least one being a cleared adult.



RATIO; NEVER 1:1

The adult-to-minor ratio will never be one-to-one behind closed doors or out of the line of sight of another adult.



DRIVING MINORS

There must be two cleared individuals in the vehicle when transporting minors on behalf of an activity. The driver must be at least 18 years of age.

PERMISSION SLIPS



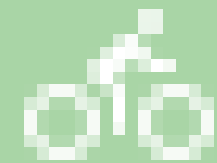
PERMISSION SLIPS

Parent/guardian of each minor will receive an explanation of the activity their child is participating in and must give written permission for child's participation.



PERMISSION FOR TRANSPORT

When a Bahá'í event provides transportation of minors from one location to another, written permission from the parent/guardian of each minor is required and the parent/guardian should be informed of the details of the transportation arrangements.



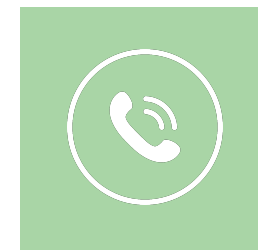
PERMISSION FOR ACTIVITIES

Written permission from a parent/guardian for each minor must be obtained prior to undertaking physical activities that could pose serious risks of injury, such as swimming, horseback riding, hiking, and so on.

I Agree

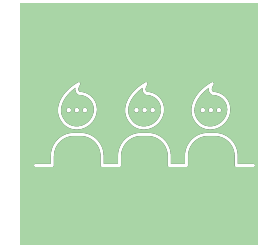


SOCIAL MEDIA



TEXTING, EMAILING, & PHONE CALLS

No text, email or phone call will be solely between a non-related adult and a minor without a parent's/guardian's permission.



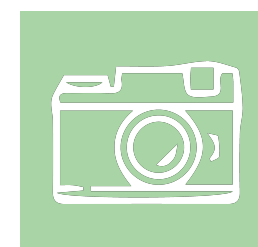
GROUP TEXTS

Group texts and/or emails are encouraged for conveying information about activity plans.



PHONE CALL TO GUARDIANS

Phone calls should be made to the responsible adult of the minor and the minor, not solely with the minor.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs, videos, or any form of reproducing images of minors taken during Bahá'í events should not be posted in social media or any publication without the express consent of the parent/guardian.

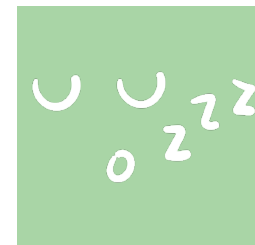


OVERNIGHT ARRANGEMENTS



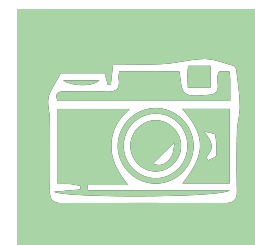
SUPERVISED BY 2 CLEARED ADULTS

Bahá'í overnight arrangements for minors are supervised at all times by teams of at least two cleared adults, including host families, when using private homes for sleeping quarters.



SEPARATED BY GENDER

There should be separate sleeping quarters for males and females that limits access between groups during the night, and at least two cleared adults of the same gender with each group.



GENDER BASED ARRANGEMENTS

Sleeping accommodations at Bahá'í activities are to be based on gender.

GENDER IDENTITY

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

There may be occasions when a youth or junior youth identifies as the opposite of the gender they were born with.

Some may have started transitioning from one gender to the other, others may just emotionally identify with the opposite gender.

A participant who is transgender and can provide legal and medical verification of such can be housed with the gender they identify with.

If such proof is not available, then separate accommodations either on- or off-site must be

Questions:
made

Office of Community Administration at the Bahá'í
National Center
community@usbnc.org or
847.733.3485



PART II





TRIGGER WARNING

Honor those with
lived experience.



RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

In cases of accidental harm to anyone participating in a Bahá'í activity or during any other emergency situation, those responsible for the activity shall promptly seek appropriate assistance as necessary, while ensuring that in the process no minor under the age of 15 is left unsupervised.

ENSURING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT



HOMES & BUILDINGS



VEHICLES



CAMPS



BAHÁ'Í CENTERS AND
INSTITUTE HOUSES



PROTECTION POLICY

TRAINING

Every individual serving should be aware of this policy and their responsibility in upholding the requirements of this policy. Every two years, every individual continuing to serve with minors should retake training related to this policy.



CASES OF ABUSE OR DELIBERATE HARM TO A MINOR AT A BAHÁ'Í SPONSORED ACTIVITY OR BAHÁ'Í FACILITY

Mandatory Reporters



Incidents of Violent or Abusive Behavior Occur during a Bahá'í-Sponsored Activity



Investigating a Violent Incident or Alleged Abuse Reported after Occurrence



Confidentiality



MANDATORY REPORTERS



It is the responsibility of all Bahá'í institutions and agencies which sponsor or supervise activities for minors to be informed of the state statutory requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse of a minor. Bahá'í institutions and agencies are expected to routinely inquire as to changes in the law.

Investigating a Violent Incident or Alleged Abuse Reported after Occurrence

INQUIRE & REPORT

If a minor reports that an incident took place previously at a sponsored event or in another location,

DO NOT

- do not attempt to interrogate the child beyond listening to the child's initial report.

DO

- do inquire to find out who the child has already informed.
- assure the child that he or she did the right thing to bring the matter to the attention of an adult.

You are required to report the child's allegations to the proper authorities before taking any other actions.



When Incidents of Violent or Abusive Behavior Occur during a Bahá'í-Sponsored Activity

REMAIN AT LOCATION

The alleged perpetrator(s) will be requested to remain at a location away from the other participants until the situation can be investigated and resolved.

If the alleged perpetrator is a minor, at least one parent/guardian will be asked to stay with him or her.

If the parent/guardian is not available, they will be contacted

DESIRE TO LEAVE

Should the individual(s) under investigation express a desire to leave the site of the activity, no attempt should be made to prevent them unless they are under 18 years of age and unaccompanied by a parent/guardian or unless a law enforcement officer has directed that the person remain at the location.

NOTIFY GUARDIANS

If the incident directly involves any person under the age of 18, the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible, and a written record will be made of the notification.

Civil authorities will be notified in accordance with state law as necessary. If the victim is a minor, the mandatory-reporting statutes of the state are to be complied with when applicable.

NOTIFY INSTITUTION

Those managing an activity must immediately contact either the Regional Bahá'í Council secretary or the secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly if the matter is deemed serious enough to contact either law enforcement or child protection agencies or if anyone involved requires serious medical treatment at a hospital. Individuals should not respond to media inquiries unless otherwise directed by the National Spiritual Assembly or its authorized representatives.

IF MINOR

↓
if unavailable

NOTIFY AUTHORITIES

DO NOT RESPOND TO MEDIA INQUIRIES



CONFIDENTIALITY



Maintaining confidentiality is an important element of all phases of inquiry. Information is shared only with those who need to know the facts or other information about the incident in order to avoid the spread of gossip and to prevent altering behavior toward those involved in the matter in question. Aside from the reporting procedures outlined above, the agencies and institutions at all levels must hold all allegations and investigations in strict confidence.

"These children must be reared with infinite, loving care, and tenderly fostered in the embraces of mercy, so that they may taste the spiritual honey-sweetness of God's love; that they may become like unto candles shedding their beams across this darksome world, and may clearly perceive what blazing crowns of glory the Most Great Name, the Ancient Beauty, hath set on the brows of His beloved, what bounties He hath bestowed on the hearts of those He holdeth dear, what a love He hath cast into the breasts of humankind, and what treasures of friendship He hath made to appear amongst all men."

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, P. 20

