



TEXAS TECH™

Operating Policy and Procedure

**OP 40.09: Youth Programs**

**DATE:** September 1, 2025

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish a policy and procedure to assist Youth Programs operating at Texas Tech University in ensuring the safety of minors participating in camps or other minor-oriented programming, and in complying with state law.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed every two years after publication by the Office of Institutional Compliance, the Office of General Counsel, and the Office of Emergency Management with substantive revisions forwarded to the Vice President for Administration and Chief of Staff.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

1. Youth Programs are governed by [Texas Tech University System Regulation 07.17](#).

**2. Definitions**

- a. Youth Participant – A minor (under age 18) who is attending a Youth Program or a person 18 or older who is a current secondary school student and is attending a Youth Program. This does not include Texas Tech students who are under the age of 18.
- b. Designated Individual – Any Texas Tech employee, Texas Tech student, parent, legal guardian, independent contractor, or other volunteer involved in and assisting with a Youth Program, who has contact with a Youth Participant. Please contact Institutional Compliance with any fact-specific questions and/or requests for guidance regarding what may be considered sufficient contact or who may be properly considered as a Designated Individual. All Designated Individuals must have completed Sexual Abuse and Child Molestation Awareness Training within the past two (2) years, and a criminal background check annually.
- c. Youth Program – A camp, program, internship, mentorship, event, or activity held by or on the Texas Tech campus that offers recreational, athletic, religious, or educational activities to Youth Participants, including any “Campus program for minors” as defined by [Section 51.976 of the Texas Education Code](#), and Third-Party Programs that contract with Texas Tech for the use of its campus or facilities. For the purposes of this policy, this definition does not include programs for Texas Tech students or employees under the age of 18, or programs where the custody, control, and care of a minor (under age 18) is not the responsibility of Texas Tech but instead held by external teachers, official chaperones, parents, or legal guardians (e.g., patrons of entertainment events).
  - (1) Tier 1 Youth Program – A Youth Program of eight (8) or less hours a day and not requiring overnight accommodations by Texas Tech.

- (2) Tier 2 Youth Program – A Youth Program of more than eight (8) hours a day and requiring overnight accommodations by Texas Tech.
- (3) Tier 3 Youth Program – A Youth Program of more than eight (8) hours a day and requiring both overnight and transportation accommodations by Texas Tech.
- d. Youth Protection Officer – The Texas Tech employee specifically responsible for the oversight of all Youth Programs.
- e. Youth Protection Subcommittee – A standing subcommittee established to advise on matters related to the safety of minors participating in programs at Texas Tech. The subcommittee is responsible for development of policies and procedures pertaining to minors and for evaluating program performance.
- f. Program Operator – The college, school, unit, department, or individual who owns, operates, or supervises a Youth Program, or who serves as a liaison for a Third-Party Program (as defined herein), and is charged with ensuring compliance with the Youth Program requirements.
- g. Third-Party Program – A Youth Program hosted on the Texas Tech campus but operated by an unaffiliated third party. These Third-Party Programs must, at a minimum, meet all of the requirements set forth in this OP. All Third-Party Programs must have a Texas Tech contact person to serve as the Program Operator for the purpose of complying with this OP, other Texas Tech policies, and applicable laws.
- h. Sexual Abuse and Child Molestation Awareness Training – Mandatory training in prevention techniques for and the recognition of symptoms of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and the responsibility and procedure of reporting suspected occurrences of sexual abuse and other maltreatment. The training must include:
  - (1) Techniques for reducing a child’s risk of sexual abuse or other maltreatment;
  - (2) Factors indicating a child is at risk for sexual abuse or other maltreatment;
  - (3) The warning signs and symptoms associated with sexual abuse or other maltreatment and recognition of those signs and symptoms; and
  - (4) The requirements and procedures for reporting suspected sexual abuse or other maltreatment.

### **3. Required Documentation**

Program Operators must provide all of the required documentation to the Youth Protection Officer with sufficient time to meet the requirements of this operating policy prior to the first day of the Youth Program, and preferably at least thirty (30) days prior to the start date of the Youth Program. For Youth Programs that are for extended periods or that repeat, each Youth Program must be registered at least annually.

Required compliance documentation will be retained by the Youth Protection Officer, according to Texas Tech’s document retention schedule.

a. Sexual Abuse and Child Molestation Awareness Certification

Designated Individuals must complete the state-approved training on warning signs of sexual abuse and child molestation and the corresponding examination every two (2) years, or if the Designated Individual is a new employee or volunteer, he or she must complete the training and corresponding examination prior to participating in the Youth Program. Upon successful completion of the training and examination, the Designated Individual will receive a certificate of completion, and the Designated Individual must provide the certificate to the Program Operator. The Youth Protection Officer is available to administer the training required by this OP and may require training and an examination for any visitors and students, as necessary. This training is required by law under [Texas Education Code, Section 51.976](#).

b. Background Check

Each Program Operator must ensure that all Designated Individuals undergo a criminal background check each year of the Youth Program. The background check must be completed and successfully cleared prior to the Designated Individual participating in the Youth Program. The Youth Protection Officer must be notified of any arrest, criminal charge, or conviction (other than minor traffic violations). Background checks are required under [Texas Administrative Code, Section 265.12](#).

c. Risk Management Plan

All Youth Programs must have an approved risk management plan prior to the first day of the Youth Program. Risk management plans can be submitted and completed when the camp is registered through the registration platform ([Ideal-Logic](#)).

As part of the Youth Program's risk management plan, Program Operators are encouraged to enroll in TechAlert to receive important notifications in the event of an on-campus emergency. Current Texas Tech faculty, staff, and students are already enrolled in TechAlert and should verify their contact information is correct by visiting the [TechAlert page](#) and clicking on Manage Notifications. Program Operators who are not current Texas Tech faculty, staff, or students should contact the Youth Protection Officer for instructions on how to enroll prior to the start of their Youth Program.

d. Insurance

All Youth Programs must carry accident and liability insurance. Third-Party Programs must provide a *Certificate of Insurance* outlining coverage that meets or exceeds the minimums outlined in [Exhibit B](#) of TTUS Regulation 07.17. For Youth Programs that are sponsored by the university of a component or department of the university, the Youth Program may be covered by existing protections or may need to purchase insurance through the vendor(s) provided by TTUS. The Program Operator should contact Risk Management with any questions related to what types of coverage will be required.

e. Individual Program Agreement

To participate in the Youth Program, each Youth Participant's parent or guardian must have completed and signed an [Individual Program Agreement](#) form (attached form is a template agreement).

f. Youth Camp Registration with the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS)

Youth Programs must copy the Youth Protection Officer on submission of a Youth Camp Program application to the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

g. Additional Requirement for Tier 2 or 3 Youth Programs

A supervision plan that specifies curfew, fire escape, or other emergency plans for housing areas, medication management plans, and visitor rules for Youth Participants is required.

#### 4. Supervision Ratios

- a. Each Youth Program must have the following minimum adult supervision ratio requirements consistent with the American Camp Association staff ratio standards:

Age of Youth Participants	Number of Designated Individuals	Number of Tier 2 or 3 Youth Participants	Number of Tier 1 Youth Participants
5 years or younger	1	5	6
6–8 years	1	6	8
9–14 years	1	8	10
15–18 years	1	10	12

- b. In the event a Youth Program has Youth Participants in a range of ages, the supervision ratios required shall be for the youngest Youth Participants. However, if the Youth Participants are divided into groups by age, each group can follow the ratios according to the youngest Youth Participants in the group (e.g., a group of two five-year-old Youth Participants and six six-year-old Youth Participants at a Tier 1 Youth Program will require two adults supervising). If a Youth Program fails to meet the required ratios at any time during the Youth Program due to an illness or absence of a Designated Individual who is supervising Youth Participants, the Program Operator must document daily the reason for the ratio disparity and the efforts made to mitigate the risk to Youth Participants and to correct the ratios. This documentation shall be provided to the Youth Protection Officer at the conclusion of the Youth Program.

#### 5. Review Procedure

The review and site visit process ensures that all Youth Programs will provide a safe, compliant, and fun environment for Youth Participants. Regular reviews promote adherence to TTU policies and procedures, identify areas for improvement, and support Program Operators in maintaining best practices for the supervision and care of Youth Participants.

a. Notice

- (1) Institutional Compliance will provide Program Operators with a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice prior to a scheduled site visit. A courtesy reminder will also be issued one day before the visit.
- (2) The designated Program Operator will serve as the primary point of contact for the site visit.

- (3) New Youth Programs will have an initial baseline site visit during their first year of operation. Subsequent site visits will depend on the assessment received after the site visit. See subsection c.

b. Site Visits

Site visits will typically last one hour, consisting of:

- (1) Observation (30–45 minutes): Evaluation of Youth Program environment and operations; and
- (2) Discussion (10–15 minutes): A meeting with the Program Operator to discuss observations, address concerns, and answer questions.

c. Assessment

- (1) During the site visit, Institutional Compliance will assess:
  - (a) The safety of the Youth Program, including identification of potentially hazardous situations;
  - (b) Supervision ratios;
  - (c) Use of head counts and roster checks during transitions between locations;
  - (d) Drop-off and pick-up procedures;
  - (e) Supervision during restroom breaks;
  - (f) Appropriateness of interactions between Designated Individuals and Youth Participants;
  - (g) How Youth Programs handle conflict resolution; and
  - (h) Any other areas of concern.
- (2) Youth Programs will receive one of the following assessments after the site visit:
  - (a) Satisfactory

Youth Programs that receive a Satisfactory assessment will not be contacted for another site visit for two (2) years.
  - (b) Unsatisfactory
    - i. Youth Programs that receive an Unsatisfactory assessment may be subject to an unannounced follow-up site visit.

- ii. Two (2) consecutive Unsatisfactory assessments will result in the Youth Program being referred to the Youth Protection Subcommittee for review and consideration for future participation.
- iii. The subcommittee will determine, by majority vote, whether or not the Youth Program should be allowed to continue operating at Texas Tech. The subcommittee's recommendation and rationale will be provided in writing to the sponsoring department. The subcommittee's decision will only be considered a recommendation, and any additional action will be at the discretion of the sponsoring department.

## **6. Prohibited Conduct of Designated Individuals**

Designated Individuals must not engage in any behavior that could cause harm or be misinterpreted as possibly causing harm to Youth Participants. Prohibited conduct for Designated Individuals includes, but is not limited to:

- a. No one-on-one contact with Youth Participants is permitted outside the presence of another Designated Individual.
- b. Do not meet with Youth Participants outside of established times for Youth Program activities.
- c. Do not touch Youth Participants in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate.
- d. Do not engage in any abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a Youth Participant, including but not limited to verbal abuse, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining.
- e. Do not shower, bathe, or undress with or in the presence of Youth Participants.
- f. Do not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working with a Youth Program.
- g. Do not be alone in a vehicle with a Youth Participant at any time. A best practice is to have two adults in a vehicle with Youth Participant(s).
- h. Do not have direct electronic contact with Youth Participants unless specifically permitted by the Youth Program, and then only in compliance with the Youth Program communications policies and protocols. A best practice is to include another Designated Individual in communications with Youth Participants.
- i. Do not post or send photos of Youth Participants on personal social media accounts or messaging applications unless specifically authorized to do so as part of the Youth Program.
- j. Do not make sexual materials in any form available to Youth Participants participating in Youth Programs or assist them in any way in gaining access to such materials.

## 7. Investigation Procedure

All Youth Programs and Designated Individuals must comply with federal and state law and Texas Tech policies concerning youth protection, including mandatory reporting, training, and program registration compliance. Alleged violations of these policies may be investigated by Institutional Compliance or other appropriate university offices, in accordance with this procedure. Importantly, criminal allegations will be investigated by the appropriate law enforcement authorities, and Title IX allegations will be investigated according to the procedure outlined in [TTUS Regulation 07.06](#).

### a. Reporting

- (1) Reports of child abuse or neglect must be made to the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services \(DFPS\)](#). Failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect is a criminal offense.
- (2) University officials, also known as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs), are required by the Jeanne Clery Act to report suspected crimes that occur on or near campus or on non-campus property owned or controlled by TTU.
- (3) Allegations of a violation of policy (including child abuse or neglect) may also be reported to or via the following resources:
  - (a) The Ideal-Logic [Youth Incident Reporting Form](#);
  - (b) Institutional Compliance (Youth Protection Officer);
  - (c) The Program Operator of the Youth Program where the alleged policy violation occurred; or
  - (d) The Fraud and Misconduct Hotline – [EthicsPoint](#).

### b. Investigation

The individual in charge of conducting the investigation shall:

- (1) Undertake an investigation when:
  - (a) The allegation, if determined to be true, would constitute a violation;
  - (b) The allegation is accompanied by information specific enough to be investigated; or
  - (c) The allegation has, or directly points to, corroborating evidence capable of being pursued.
- (2) Prior to beginning the investigation, document the rationale for the investigation and notify appropriate TTU administrators over the area being investigated or other TTU personnel who can assist with the investigation;

- (3) Conduct the investigation in an independent, unbiased, and confidential manner;
- (4) Allocate appropriate resources and expertise to conduct a timely and comprehensive investigation;
- (5) Inform individuals who are interviewed about the confidential nature of the investigation; and
- (6) Submit a final report with findings and recommendations to the appropriate TTU administrator(s). Findings of a violation must be based on credible evidence obtained during the investigation. All findings will be based on a preponderance of the evidence.

## **8. Authoritative References**

- a. [Texas Education Code, Section 51.976](#)
- b. [Texas Administrative Code, Section 265.12](#)
- c. [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)
- d. [Approved Training and Education Programs](#)

## **9. Right to Change Policy**

TTU reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind any policy, in whole or in part, at any time without the consent of workforce.