

**POLICY FOR THE PENN STATE UNIVERSITY
PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC RE: CONTACT WITH MINORS**

I. PURPOSE

Penn State University Policy AD39 (Policy AD39) addresses University-sponsored programs that involve contact with minors. Due to the unique nature of the therapist-client relationship, the Psychological Clinic, which serves both adult and child clients, is exempt from the requirements of Policy AD39. The purpose of the policy laid out below is to protect children and preserve the therapist-client confidentiality relationship while acknowledging the type of clinical work done in the Psychological Clinic. The Psychological Clinic's involvement with minors is subject to ongoing training, reporting and clearance requirements described below.

II. DEFINITIONS

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC:

Includes the Penn State Psychological Clinic and all activities conducted under its license with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

INDIVIDUAL:

Includes but is not be limited to: faculty, staff, and student members participating in activities of the Psychological Clinic, students from other Penn State academic units and students visiting from other universities participating in clinic activities; and volunteers participating in Clinic activities.

MINOR:

A person under the age of 18 years.

III. POLICY

A. BACKGROUND CHECKS:

All Individuals participating in the Psychological Clinic complete a Pennsylvania Criminal History Record, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse Report, and Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history report. When the Individual receives the results of the background checks, he or she must immediately provide the results to the director of the Clinic and the Clinic's office manager.

Students enrolled in the clinical psychology program, which houses the Psychological Clinic, will complete background checks during their first semester in the program, and prior to initiating any contact with clients in the Clinic.

All other Individuals participating in the Clinic should complete the background checks prior to beginning their participation with Clinic activities.

If the background check process is not complete before the Individual begins his or her involvement with the Clinic, that Individual will have only limited and supervised contact with a Minor until the background check is approved. Supervision of the interaction between the Individual and Minor shall be done by a Penn State employee whose background check has been approved.

The clinic director shall review the results of the background checks.

The Clinic and Department of Psychology shall retain original documentation of the background checks. Copies of the checks shall be made available to the Individual and produced as necessary.

B. TRAINING

All Individuals in the Clinic shall receive annual training on Pennsylvania's Child Abuse Reporting Law. Training will be provided in compliance with [Policy AD72](#).

C. REPORTING ABUSE

When a situation of suspected child abuse is disclosed to an Individual, that Individual must immediately meet to discuss the disclosure with his/her supervisor. Together the Individual and the supervisor shall review the provisions of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa. C.S §6311. The legal and ethical authority governing the duty of Pennsylvania psychologists to protect confidential client communications contains specific exceptions that may relate to abuse situations.

If an allegation of inappropriate conduct is made against an Individual participating in Clinic activities, he or she shall discontinue any further direct contact with any Minor, until such allegation has been satisfactorily resolved.

Policy Date: June 1, 2013