

# Guiding Principles and Standards Pertaining to the Protection of Minors

*National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, revised January 2023*

At a time in the fortunes of humanity when, in the words of the Guardian, “The perversion of human nature, the degradation of human conduct, the corruption and dissolution of human institutions, reveal themselves ... in their worst and most revolting aspects,” and when “the voice of human conscience is stilled,” when “the sense of decency and shame is obscured,” the Bahá'í institutions must be uncompromising and vigilant in their commitment to the protection of the children entrusted to their care, and must not allow either threats or appeals to expediency to divert them from their duty.

*Letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated January 24, 1993 [To an individual]*

When working with minors, certain principles and standards should serve as a guide. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Every individual who will be regularly working with minors has the responsibility to seek clearance from the regional training institute.
- Regional training institutes have the responsibility to conduct clearances for all individuals who will work with minors, except for those serving at the national schools, which is the responsibility of the national Office of Education and Schools.
- Institutions and agencies have the responsibility to stay apprised of all individuals within their sphere of operation who are regularly working with minors in order to ensure those individuals are cleared for such work in a transparent manner.
- 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.
- Sponsoring institutions or agencies must ensure that those who work with minors have obtained parental or guardian consent when their minors attend sponsored activities or are transported to and from such activities.
- 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.
- Sponsoring institutions and agencies must ensure that all activities with minors are conducted in a safe environment and that the means of transporting minors are safe.
- Sponsoring institutions and agencies must ensure that all individuals who will be regularly working with minors review and understand the principles and standards above.
- Sponsoring institutions must ensure that all individuals who will be regularly serving with minors are trained according to applicable local and state laws.