Child Safety

The Missouri Botanical Garden takes child safety seriously as part of our overall mission to teach children about caring for plants and their environment. The Garden is committed to providing a safe environment for all children who visit or interact with Missouri Botanical Garden. Responsible adults understand that minors can be vulnerable to abuse from adults and other children, and that not just parents and guardians, but all adults with whom children come in contact must make a concerted effort to create and maintain a child-safe environment.

The Missouri Botanical Garden considers any person that meets the requirements of being a minor under state or local law as being a minor under this policy, and defines a minor as any person under the age of 18.

What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect of minors.

Physical abuse can include non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child.

Emotional abuse can include a pattern of behavior that impairs a child’s emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding care, support, or guidance.

Sexual abuse can include fondling a child, voyeurism, exposing minors to sexual acts or pornography, requests for or offers of sex to a minor, encouraging improper touching, solicitation of sex from minors, sexual exploitation of minors, lewdness or exposing private body parts to a minor, taking nude photographs of minors without proper consent or for illegal purposes, and other sexual acts to minors such as intercourse, penetration, rape, incest and sodomy.

Neglect can include the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs. Neglect may be:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Educational (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child’s emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)

Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual or neglectful, is a serious crime.

Sexual Relationships with Minors Prohibited

All staff members, volunteers, interns, and other workplace participants are prohibited from having any type of sexual relationship with a minor.
Any staff member, volunteer, intern, or other workplace participant discovered to have committed or who is reasonably suspected of committing child sexual abuse, or other child abuse, will be reported to the proper legal authorities and subject to termination.

Proper Interaction with Minors

The Missouri Botanical Garden requires that all staff, volunteers, interns, and any other workplace participants, when on Missouri Botanical Garden property or on Missouri Botanical Garden business, interact with minors in a safe and proper manner. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Not being alone with one or more minors without other adults being present, easily accessible or able to see and hear the adult’s interaction with the minor or minors;
- Not hosting an event for minors unless the event is an approved Missouri Botanical Garden sponsored function;
- Not inviting minors to their home unless such invitation is part of an approved Missouri Botanical Garden sponsored function and multiple adults are present;
- Not allowing minors in their home for an approved Missouri Botanical Garden sponsored function without receipt of written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian, and without other adults being present;
- Not entering a minor’s home with a minor unless the minor’s parent or guardian is present, and/or without receipt of written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian;
- Not giving a gift to minors without the approval of Missouri Botanical Garden and without receipt of written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian;
- Not providing drugs or alcohol to minors or purchasing drugs or alcohol for minors;
- Not going to an event with minors without approval of Missouri Botanical Garden and/or receipt of written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian, and without other adults being present;
- Not providing transportation to minors without approval of Missouri Botanical Garden and/or receipt of written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian, and without other adults being present;
- Not communicating to minors in an unprofessional or inappropriate manner; also, any communication via phone, letter, instant messaging, email, text or other forms of social media must be with proper Missouri Botanical Garden authorization, and/or with receipt of written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian;
- Not providing prescription or OTC medication to a minor without written consent of the minor’s parent or guardian.

The Garden’s Communications staff may photograph/video children on Garden grounds expressly for marketing purposes as specified on the admission ticket, though all other Garden staff are prohibited from taking photographs or capturing digital images of a minor without specific business justification and advance written approval by the Missouri Botanical Garden. Additionally all staff, volunteers, interns or other workplace participants working in Garden programs interacting with minors must wear and visibly display their Garden identification badge at all times. Minors enrolled in Garden programs must be supervised at all times.

While this addresses interactions by staff members, volunteers, interns, and other workplace participants, if an employee witnesses what they suspect may be abusive or inappropriate
behavior toward a minor by a visitor to the Garden, he/she should immediately contact Garden Security, or if the circumstances warrant, notify the police and then contact Garden Security.

**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

If the situation, whether suspected or actual, is of imminent threat, all efforts should be made, with Security involved as necessary, to remove the child from the situation and provide a temporary safe environment.

If you have reasonable suspicion that child abuse is occurring or that a minor is in danger, you must report the abuse to Missouri Department of Social Services - Child Abuse Hotline. The Supervisor/Manager and the reporting employee/volunteer will gather appropriate data by completing the *Child Safety Incident Report* as thoroughly as possible, and will call the Missouri Department of Social Services - Child Abuse Hotline, **1-800-392-3738** (573-751-3448 from outside of Missouri), to report the incident. The *Child Safety Incident Report* will immediately thereafter be filed with Human Resources.

At first suspicion of child abuse, the employee/volunteer suspecting the abuse must inform their direct Supervisor/Manager. The Supervisor/Manager will inform the division Vice President and either the Vice President or Senior Manager, Human Resources. The Vice President or Senior Manager, Human Resources will inform the Garden's President and Executive Vice President.

**Questions about This Policy**

If you have questions about this policy, please contact the Human Resources Division.