

7.1 Employee Code of Conduct/Child Abuse Prevention

Some of the guidelines employees are expected to follow are:

1. In order to protect YMCA staff, volunteers and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff or volunteer person be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As staff or volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in such a way that other staff or volunteers can see them.
2. Staff and volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. **Restroom supervision:** Staff and volunteers will make sure suspicious or unknown individuals do not occupy the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff and volunteers will stand in the doorway of the restroom while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If staff or volunteers are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open. No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip or other off-site locations. Always send children with at least 3 children (known as the rule of three) and 1 staff together. If staff is unable to go in with children, send one child at a time into restroom by self.
4. Staff and volunteers should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs – diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers before swimming, etc. When this is not feasible, staff and volunteers should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff and volunteers shall not abuse children, including:
 - Physical abuse – to strike, spank, shake, slap, etc.
 - Verbal abuse – to humiliate, degrade, threaten, etc.
 - Sexual abuse – to inappropriately touch or speak, etc.
 - Emotional/Mental abuse – to shame, withhold kindness, be cruel, etc.
 - Neglect – to withhold food, water, basic care, etc.

No type of abuse will be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.

6. Staff and volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism. Staff and volunteers will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), is only administered in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.
7. Staff and volunteers will conduct a health check of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.
8. Staff and volunteers are to respond to children with respect and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, economic level of the family, and/or disability.

9. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
10. Staff and volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of members, guests, children, parents, staff, etc.
11. While the YMCA does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle, it does require that in the performance of their job, they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA.
12. Staff and volunteers must appear clean, neat, and appropriately attired. Staff must have name tags on during working hours.
13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco (including e-cigarettes or electronic cigarettes) on YMCA property or in the presence of members, children, parents, etc. during working hours is prohibited.
15. Possession or use of any type of weapon or explosion device is prohibited.
16. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment is prohibited.
17. Use of YMCA computers and/or cell phones to access pornographic sites, send emails with sexual overtones or otherwise inappropriate messages, or develop online relationships are prohibited.
18. Staff and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect someone's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
19. Staff and volunteers will portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
20. Staff and volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting children to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to CEO approval.
21. Staff and volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles or allow youth participants old enough to drive to transport younger children in the program.
22. Staff and volunteers may not date program participants, members, other staff in the same department and/or personnel that they relate to or work with on behalf of the YMCA and its programs. Staff may not be "friends" on Facebook or any other social media with program participants.
23. Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA).
24. Staff and volunteers are required to attend training related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse.

25. Staff and volunteers will act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner consistent with the Mission of the YMCA.
26. Staff and volunteers will not be working in (or in charge of) the same classroom as their own child is enrolled.
27. Staff and volunteers will not give gifts to program participants or accept gifts from program participants.
28. Theft is prohibited and is grounds for immediate termination.
29. Insubordination is a deliberate and inexcusable refusal to obey a reasonable order which relates to an employee's job function. The refusal may be openly stated or a silent withholding of services. Insubordination is considered a major offense and can be grounds for immediate dismissal depending on severity.
30. Staff and volunteers are to report to a supervisor any other staff or volunteer who violates any of these policies.
31. Staff and volunteers are required to inform their supervisor or CEO if they learn or suspect a fellow employee has a history of sexual abuse and/or neglect convictions.
32. Staff and volunteers will respect the privacy rights of all concerned. Staff and volunteers will use confidentiality with any information and will only give out that information on a need-to-know basis to the immediate supervisor and/or CEO.
33. All original documentation regarding incidents and/or accidents will be given to the CEO for review and then submitted to the HR Department to be kept on file. Any communication (electronic, printed, or otherwise) will be reviewed by the CEO as well as the Branch or Department Supervisor, if necessary.
34. Any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.

In situations where on-on-one interactions are approved, such as tutoring and private coaching sessions, staff and volunteers should exhibit behaviors to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse.

Bullying

We do not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

1. Physical bullying – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
2. Verbal bullying – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.

3. Nonverbal or relational bullying – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
4. Cyberbullying – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs).

Defining Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Contact

Appropriate Physical Interactions:

- Side hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives and hand slapping
- Verbal praise

Inappropriate Physical Interactions:

- Full-frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in isolated area
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling
- Piggyback/shoulder rides
- Tickling
- Allowing a youth to cling an employee's or volunteer's leg
- Any type of massage given by or to a youth
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer
- Compliments relating to physique or body development
- Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

Defining Appropriate and Inappropriate Verbal Interactions

1. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youth in a way that is, or could be, construed by any observer as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, harassing or humiliating.
2. Staff and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth, parents, staff or volunteers. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities, intimate details of one's personal life in the presence of children, parents, volunteers or staff.

Appropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
- Encouragement
- Praise

Inappropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Name-calling
- Inappropriate jokes
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers
- Secrets
- Cursing/profanity
- Off-color or sexual jokes
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth
- Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

Every staff member and volunteer has a legal and ethical duty to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse, molestation, neglect, or sexual misconduct. Suspicion means that it is understandable for a person to entertain such suspicion, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience to suspect abuse. The child protective agency will determine the accuracy of the report.

Types of abuse:

- Physical – An injury or patten of injuries that happens to a child that is not accidental. These may include burns, bruises, bites, welts, broken bones, strangulation or even death.
- Neglect – Neglect occurs when adults responsible for the well being of a child fail to provide for or protect the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing or shelter; failing to keep children clean; lack of supervision; and withholding medical care.
- Emotional – Any chronic and persistent act by an adult that endangers the mental health or emotional development of a child, including rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constant criticism, making mean remarks, insulting and giving little or no love, guidance or support.
- Sexual – Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period or a single incident. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, sodomy, fondling, exposing oneself, oral copulation, and penetration of genital

