



Child Abuse Prevention - Code of Conduct

- To protect YMCA staff, volunteers, and program members, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where he or she cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in such a way that other staff can see them.
- Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.
- Rest-room supervision: Staff will make sure the rest room is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway of the rest room while children are using the rest room. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If staff 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 at other off-site location. Always send children in threes (known as the rule of three), and whenever possible, with staff.
- Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs—diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, and so on. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
- Staff shall not abuse children in any way, including
 - physical abuse—striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, and so on;
 - verbal abuse—humiliating, degrading, threatening, and so on;
 - sexual abuse—touching or speaking inappropriately;
 - mental abuse—shaming, withholding kindness, being cruel, and so on;
 - neglect—withholding food, water, or basic care.No type of abuse will be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.
- Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism. Staff will have age-appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in predetermined situations (when necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), administered only in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.
- Staff will conduct a health check of each child upon his or her arrival each time the program meets, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, and so on. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a nonthreatening way. Staff will document any questionable marks or responses.
- Staff will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally, regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, economic level of the family, or disability.
- Staff will respect children's rights not to be touched or looked at 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.
- Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward others in the presence of children, parents, and staff.
- Staff are not to transport children in their own vehicles or allow youth participants old enough to drive to transport younger children in the program.
- Staff must appear clean, neat, and appropriately attired.
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
- Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
- Possession or use of any type of weapon or explosive device is prohibited.
- Using YMCA computers to access pornographic sites, send e-mails with sexual overtones or otherwise inappropriate messages, or develop online relationships is not allowed.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, volunteers, or other staff is prohibited.
- Staff may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting children to their homes. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to prior administrator approval.
- Staff must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
- Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
- Staff should not give excessive gifts (e.g., TV, video games, jewelry) to youth.
- Staff may not date program participants who are under the age of 18.
- Under no circumstances should staff 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).
- Staff are to report to a supervisor any other staff or volunteer who violates any of the policies listed in this Code of Conduct.
- Staff are required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.
- Staff will act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner consistent with the mission of the YMCA.

I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.

Employee or volunteer signature _____

Date _____