



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Child Abuse Prevention Policy and Practices for All Staff and Volunteers

GENERAL STATEMENT

At the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges ("YMCA"), protecting children and preventing child abuse is our priority. The YMCA understands that child abuse and inappropriate contact with children is a pervasive problem throughout the United States that must be managed proactively. The safety and protection of the children in our care remain our number one priority. The YMCA's management and Board of Directors have enacted the following plan to manage and monitor our programs to minimize the potential for abuse to occur. Should any allegation or suspicion of abuse come to our attention, the YMCA will promptly and proactively work with the authorities and all parties involved to respond in a prompt, thorough, and empathetic manner.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

The YMCA maintains zero tolerance toward child abuse and child endangerment.

STAFF & VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Background Checks: All staff and volunteers are required to go through background checks prior to employment or volunteer assignment and again upon any material change in assignments. Staff and volunteers are required to go through new checks in the following cases:

- Transferring into a licensed program
- Returning back to the Y after a 90-day break
- On a biannual basis.

There are federal and state laws concerning the use of Background Checks that require the YMCA to provide contact information for the background reporting company; you have the right to request a copy of the report within 60 days of any adverse employment action taken in reliance with the information in the report.

Code of Conduct: Staff and Volunteers will sign and date the Code of Conduct (or a similar document adopted by the Association) prior to performing any duties and annually thereafter. The YMCA will review all such policies annually or more frequently as needed. You will be advised of any such changes contemporaneously with adoption.

Electronic Communications: The YMCA holds the quality of personal character in the highest regard and we will not hesitate to take action to preserve the core values of the institution. If deemed necessary, the YMCA may terminate staff or volunteers for engaging in improper electronic communications contrary to the YMCA's mission and its commitment to the protection of children or other YMCA community members. Staff and volunteers may be held personally liable for bad faith actions and commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, or libelous.

Child Abuse Prevention Training: All staff and volunteers will complete the introductory child abuse prevention training within the first pay period of employment for staff and for volunteers within the first two weeks after approval for volunteer assignments. Staff and regularly assigned volunteers will then be required to participate in more comprehensive child abuse prevention training within 30 days of their start date. Failure to comply will result in suspension and possible termination. All staff and volunteers must undergo a review of their Child Abuse Prevention Training on an annual basis. Upon hire, camp staff will go through Child Abuse Prevention Training prior to the start of camp or their first day of employment if camp is already in session.

Violations of Code of Conduct or questionable behavior: Keeping children safe from abuse is everyone’s responsibility. YMCA staff and/or volunteers are to report to their supervisor any questionable behavior or violations of the Code of Conduct that they observe. Staff and volunteers are to report any indications of or warning signs concerning abuse involving a child. (More information is listed below under Mandated Reporter).

Child Supervision: At no time should YMCA staff or volunteers be in a situation where they are alone with a child and cannot be observed by others. The YMCA will make every attempt to design and structure its programs to eliminate the potential for a staff member or volunteer to be in a one-on-one situation. YMCA staff members or volunteers are not to have children enter closets or storage areas to retrieve equipment.

Physical Contact: Our organization’s physical contact policy seeks to promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting participants, employees, and volunteers. Our organization expects appropriate physical contact with participants and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards participants in the organization’s programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer assignment. The organization’s guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions include but are not limited to:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<p>Contact initiated by the participant such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes • High-fives and hand-slapping • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) • The staff member and/or volunteer should get down to the child’s physical level when possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Allowing a participant to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg • Allowing participants, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer’s lap • Any type of massage given by or to a participant outside of accepted and documented medical treatment • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the participant or the employee or volunteer • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that are outside authorized and documented personal care assistance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members or volunteers should not pick up school-aged children (to reduce potential for both abuse allegations and physical injury) and should not allow children to sit on their laps.
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Verbal Interactions: Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to participants in a way that is or could be construed to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Employees and volunteers must never engage in sexually-oriented conversations with participants. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with participants. Our organization’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions include but are not limited to:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise • Strength-based conversations • Self-disclosure as a supervised therapeutic tool by licensed clinicians, medical professionals, and pastoral counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving participants in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming, belittling • Oversharing personal history • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate participants • Derogatory remarks about the participant or his/her family • Compliments relating to physique or body development

Babysitting and outside contact: YMCA staff or volunteers shall not provide care (babysit) or instruction or develop/maintain relationships with any children or other members of their families that they meet through YMCA programs. If the staff member or volunteer has a pre-existing relationship with a child coming into a program, this must be first fully disclosed in writing to the Executive Director immediately. YMCA staff or volunteers may not have contact, beyond the unplanned and incidental, with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes but is not limited to:

- Extra practices, coaching, or tutoring
- Transportation in a non-YMCA vehicle
- Private special events such as movies, sporting events, or any other similar excursions
- Visits to any residence

Diapering policy: When diapering a child, staff or volunteers will have another staff/volunteer member in the room and be in a visible area of the room. When assisting a young child with bathroom duties, staff/volunteer members will not close doors to the bathroom or stall so they can be observed.

Supervision standards: All children who are registered into programs will be supervised by YMCA

staff/volunteers at all times without exception. This includes bathrooms, locker rooms and changing areas during day camp or after school. At no time should one staff/volunteer member have direct care of a single child. If a staff/volunteer member becomes alone with a child, s/he should promptly move to a location where s/he can be observed by other YMCA staff/volunteer members.

Bathroom/locker room policy: Children who are participating in YMCA programs are not to be sent to bathrooms/locker rooms without a YMCA staff/volunteer member present. The buddy system or three children together without a staff member present are not acceptable practices and are not permitted at the YMCA. For single-stall bathrooms, the YMCA staff/volunteer will be positioned outside of the bathroom to make sure no one else enters the restroom. At a minimum, when multiple children are in the bathroom or locker room, YMCA staff/volunteer members must be positioned to be standing in the doorway so they can have at least auditory supervision of the children. Staff/Volunteer members can and are encouraged to be inside the facilities so they can be easily seen by the children and so they are able to immediately stop any inappropriate activity. This is best done with multiple staff/volunteer members so individual staff/volunteers are not subjected to the risk of unwarranted allegations. Additional protocols that address the variety of unusual circumstances possible during outdoor or off-site activities shall be established and made part of that program/activity's operating guidelines.

Child ratio expectations: The YMCA has enacted to meet or exceed all State of New Jersey Child Care ratios. The YMCA has established ratios as minimums and not as goals to achieve. Certain programs and activities may require more stringent ratios. Ratios alone do not equate to effective supervision, but if established ratios cannot be maintained, the activity will be changed until additional staff/volunteer members may be added.

Transportation: YMCA ratios and supervision standards apply at all times including during transportation. Staff/volunteers will spread themselves out in the vehicle and maintain their focus on the children while transportation is occurring. If the children being transported are of multiple age groups, they should be seated by age group, with older children positioned to the rear of the vehicle. Boys and girls generally should not be seated together; children with known relational challenges should also not be placed together. If larger capacity buses are used, staff/volunteers should monitor behavior by walking through the aisle on a frequent but irregular basis, and only when it is safe to do so.

Off-site activities: The risks to children change when they are off-site. In order to protect them from predators who may be at field trip locations the following standards will be enacted:

- The ratio of students to staff/volunteers will be strengthened when programs go off-site. The appropriate ratio will be determined in advance based upon the age of the children and the field trip activity and location.
- Staff/volunteers will check all bathrooms immediately prior to use by the children and will be in the restroom (if not single stall) when being used by a child.
- Children's changing of clothes should take place prior to leaving the YMCA facility and if possible should wait until the group has returned to minimize the use of changing facilities in public locations.
- Picking up of children while on field trips should only be allowed if prearranged and the recipient should be required to show proof of ID and sign a receipt for the child.

Member expectations around children: Staff/Volunteers should be aware that members are expected to use appropriate language and act in a positive manner. Members, who talk in a sexual manner, perform sexual gestures, sexual acts, or attempt inappropriate contact with a child will have their membership suspended or terminated depending on the degree of the offense. The police may be contacted if such is deemed to be warranted. No use of cameras or cell phones is allowed by members in the locker room areas.

Parent/child education: Parents and children participating in camp, after school, teen programs, and childcare are to be informed of the policies staff/volunteers have agreed to follow regarding physical contact, gift-giving, and outside contact.

Policy Prohibiting the Abuse or Mistreatment of One Youth by Another Youth: The Metropolitan YMCA is committed to providing all youth with a safe environment. Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth, including any behavior that is classified as physical, sexual or psychological abuse. In addition, we will not tolerate any behavior classified under the definition of bullying. 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 person
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). Cyberbullying can involve:
 - a. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images;
 - b. Posting sensitive, private information about another person;
 - c. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and
 - d. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group
 - e. Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate
5. Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, exposure of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying involving one or multiple youths bullying another, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth, staff, and volunteers. We will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behaviors listed above. Consequences of these types of behaviors may result in suspension or expulsion from the program. Employees or volunteers who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION

Reporting suspicious behavior to a supervisor: All staff/volunteer members have received specific training concerning the requirement to report violations of YMCA policies immediately to their supervisor. If the supervisor does not effectively respond, the staff/volunteer members have been trained and are expected to notify the next-level supervisor. All YMCA staff/volunteers are also expected to observe other staff and/or volunteer members’ behaviors, including that of supervisors, and to report any suspicions to an appropriate supervisor.

Mandated reporter: All YMCA staff and volunteer members are mandated reporters with regard to child

abuse. This means that there is no option to not report, and any evidence of potential child abuse or observation of inappropriate contact by a parent, staff or volunteer member or other child will be reported by the YMCA to the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services at 1-800-792-8610 or 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873).

Suspension of staff, volunteer, or youthful offender: Any YMCA staff or volunteer member who is alleged to have abused a child will be suspended pending further determination by the YMCA. Staff suspension pending the investigation will be with pay. If the allegation is substantiated, the staff or volunteer member will be immediately terminated. If the allegations are against a program participant, s/he will be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. Depending on the severity of the incident the participant may be terminated from the program.

Incident investigation: The YMCA will promptly perform an investigation following any allegation of child abuse by a staff member, volunteer, participant, or member.

Record retention: Following an allegation against a staff member, their personnel file will be sealed and locked in the Human Resources office. The file will have no items removed or added, and it will only be moved from the locked location at the direction of the CEO.

Working with the media: The YMCA has a media/communication plan, which is managed through the President/CEO or assigned designee. All media inquiries should be forwarded to the President/CEO, who will determine the media statement to be given.

YMCA of the USA: As soon as is practical, or no later than immediately after the initial investigation, the President/CEO will contact YMCA of the USA to apprise them of the situation and next steps in the investigation.

Counseling: The YMCA will engage the consulting services of the Y's Employee Assistance Provider for staff and/or affected children should an event occur.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any time a YMCA staff member or volunteer observes an act of child abuse, he/she is mandated to report such acts to the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services at 1-800-792-8610 or 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873).

In the event that employees or volunteers observe red-flag or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations by other employees or volunteers, it is their professional and personal responsibility to immediately report their observations in accordance with the organization's reporting procedures. This applies to all staff and volunteers.

The following are examples of red-flag or inappropriate behaviors that all employees and volunteers are required to report:

- Any violation of the organization's abuse prevention policies
- Seeking unauthorized private time or one-on-one time with participants
- Seeing or visiting with a participant outside of scheduled programming
- Buying gifts for individual participants
- Sending unauthorized electronic communications through text messaging, social media, online gaming, etc. in violation of the organization's electronic communication policy

- Making suggestive comments to participants
- Showing favoritism towards a participant or type of participant
- Participants disclosing that an employee or volunteer makes them feel uncomfortable

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with participants will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

If a YMCA staff member or volunteer notices any indicators (as listed above or in the chart below) or learns of a violation of the YMCA's policies the following procedures must be followed:

Responsibilities of the Staff Member or Volunteer when reporting suspected abuse:

1. Immediately following the observation or accusation, assess the child's current condition and assure safety.
2. Report all information to the supervisor immediately. If the supervisor is not available, contact the Executive Director.
3. The appropriate action will be taken based upon the information disclosed. Should the nature of the disclosure be abuse against a child, staff and/or volunteers are considered mandated reporters in NJ and are legally required to report such acts.
4. The staff/volunteer member and a member of management will file a report to the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services Hot Line (24 hours per day) at 1-800-792-8610 or 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873).
5. The staff and/or volunteer will need to provide a written statement of all facts.
6. Professionalism and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor:

1. The Supervisor should immediately inform the Executive Director.
2. If the accused is a co-worker or volunteer, immediately inform Human Resources. The Supervisor and Executive Director with consultation from Human Resources will suspend the accused employee, with pay, immediately. An accused volunteer will also be suspended immediately.
3. The Supervisor will assist in getting all facts appropriately documented for the Executive Director.
4. Professionalism and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities of the Executive Director:

1. Inform the Sr. VP of Operations/COO of the observation or allegation.
2. The Executive Director will lead the investigation in consultation with the Sr. VP of Operations/COO, unless it is related to an employee or volunteer at which time Human Resources will be involved.
3. The Executive Director will ensure that all appropriate agencies such as DYFS, the Police, etc. are notified.
4. The Executive Director or designee will communicate the situation to the parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved.
5. The Executive Director will collect all written statements from all parties involved by the close of the day the incident was reported.
6. All media inquiries are to be referred to the President/CEO or designee.
7. Professionalism and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Responsibilities of the Sr. VP of Operations:

1. Inform the President/CEO of the allegation and keep abreast of any changes.
2. Ensure that the Executive Director is in consultation with all appropriate parties and agencies.
3. Provide guidance throughout the investigation.
4. Collect the written report for Y files.

5. Be the assigned designee for media inquiries when President/CEO is not available.
6. Professionalism and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Follow-up with staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and participants who report concerns, complaints, and grievances: When employees, volunteers, parents/guardians, and participants report concerns, complaints, or grievances, the organization leadership and administrators must follow up with the reporter, even if to thank them for reporting their concern or communicating that the organization is taking steps to respond to the concern. Following up with individuals who report ensures they feel their report was taken seriously and they are correct for reporting to the organization.

Anonymous Report: Employees and volunteers wanting to make an anonymous internal report regarding child abuse concerns may do so by submitting the Anonymous Internal Report Form. This form will be responded to accordingly by Metro YMCA leadership.

Media Requests: All staff and/or volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information and therefore, should only discuss an incident with the persons involved. Any media inquiries are to be reported to the President/CEO at the Association Services Office at 973-758-9622.

Definition of Child Abuse (The following is the legal definition of Child Abuse.):

Child Abuse is physical and/or psychological damage to a child for which there is no "reasonable" explanation. Child Abuse includes non-accidental physical injury, neglect, sexual molestation, and emotional abuse.

PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

TYPES OF ABUSE	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
Physical Abuse	<p>Unexplained Bruises and Welts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anywhere on the body, head or face • on torso, back, buttocks, thighs • in various stages of healing • clustered, forming regular patterns • reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) • on several different surface areas • regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation <p>Unexplained Burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks • immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) • patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. • rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso <p>Unexplained Fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to skull, nose facial structure • in various stages of healing • multiple of spiral fractures <p>Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to mouth, lips, gums and eyes • to external genitalia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wary of adult contacts • Apprehensive when other children cry • Behavioral Extremes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggressiveness 2. Withdrawal • Frightened of parents • Afraid to go home • Reports injury by parents
Physical Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress, consistent lack of supervision (especially in dangerous activities or for long periods) • Consistent fatigue or listlessness • Unattended physical problems or medical needs • Abandonment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begging, stealing food • Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure) • Constantly falling asleep in class • Alcohol or drug abuse • Delinquency (e.g. thefts) • States there is no caregiver
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing • Pain or itching in genital area • Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas • Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens • Pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE • Withdrawal, fantasy of infantile behavior • Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge • Poor peer relationships • Delinquent or run away • Reports sexual assault by caregiver
Emotional Maltreatment or Mental Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.) • Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.) • Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech disorders, inhibition of play) • Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Extremes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compliant, passive 2. Aggressive, demanding • Overly adoptive behavior: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inappropriately adult 2. Inappropriately infant • Developmental lags (physical, mental, emotional) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attempted suicide