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CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

During staff or volunteer work at the YMCA, even if not working directly with children or vulnerable persons, there are times when staff and volunteers will encounter and interact with children or vulnerable persons. The YMCA is committed to treating everyone with respect and dignity, and to helping children grow and develop to their full potential in a safe and caring environment.

Staff and volunteers are required to follow the Code of Conduct that describes good practices and includes practices to be avoided or never sanctioned. The practices outlined below clarify what is and is not acceptable behavior, good practice can be promoted, and the potential for abuse or allegations of abuse minimized.

YMCA Code of Conduct in service to safeguarding children and youth

The YMCA is committed to support the YMCA mission where children and youth are safe, families are strong, and communities are supported. As members of the YMCA employee community, we each hold the morale and ethical responsibility to uphold YMCA policies and procedures, both formal and informal, in service to safeguard all children and youth attending YMCA programs and services.

Child Safeguarding in the YMCA

Child safeguarding refers to the standards upon which each YMCA employee and volunteer accepts the responsibility to proactively exercise measures to ensure that they do no harm to children, such that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the YMCA has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, result in a timely and appropriate actions that include, reporting to their local Child Protection agency.

Adherence to YMCA Child Safeguarding Policy will be demonstrated by:

- Respecting the dignity of all children and youth;
- Considering and respecting the cultural and socioeconomic differences that may give rise to concerns related to adherence of the YMCA policy;
- Every YMCA employee or volunteer, regardless of their position or level, should strive to learn, understand, and follow the rules of the YMCA Child Safety policy that applies to their specific job responsibilities;
- Seek assistance where clarity is needed, in a timely manner with the utmost respect for confidentiality of those involved.

The YMCA will seek to keep children and youth safe by:

- Valuing, listening and respecting them;
- Appointing a designated Child Protection Lead;

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- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practices through our policies, procedures, and code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- During the transition from one program area to another, staff are required to (if applicable) do head counts of the children when leaving the program area during transition and arrival to another program area. A list of the children in attendance must be in hand at the time of transition at all times. Roll call must be done throughout the transition period. One staff member should be at the front and back of lines during transition periods;
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures that include computer network safety practices on YMCA devices;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and code of conduct confidentially and competently using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and caregivers appropriately;
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations involving staff and volunteers appropriately;
- Building a safeguarding culture where we work in partnership with employees and volunteers, children, youth, and their families, and treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns; and
- Ensuring that YMCA programs and services geared to children and youth are designed with consideration of the environment and context, taking into account the potential impact on the children and youth it is engaged with. This includes selecting suitable spaces that support child safety, such as locations with adequate exits, proximity to washrooms, windows, and line of sight. Staff should be able to recognize and address potential safety issues in program locations and take appropriate measures to mitigate risks to children and youth.

This means that members of the YMCA employee and volunteer community commit to:

- Promptly and without hesitation, report complaints from children, youth, vulnerable persons or their families or caregivers, all allegations or disclosures of grooming, child abuse or neglect, concerns about child safety or vulnerable persons safety, and any breaches of the YMCA Child Safety Policy or YMCA Vulnerable Persons Policy;
- Have a duty of care to ensure that all whose access the YMCA's programs, services and facilities are provided with a safe, open and honest environment that protects children, youth and vulnerable persons and the YMCA employee and volunteer community who work with them;
- Not to harm or exploit any child or young person or vulnerable person, including but not limited to those who access YMCA programs and services;

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- Always supervise children and youth to ensure they engage positively with our programs, behave appropriately towards each other, and are in a safe environment protected from internal and external threats;
- For supervision of children using a restroom, always ensure: The restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Children are with an adult staff member and proceed in groups of three or more (e.g. 1 staff and 2 children, or 2 staff and 1 child) when using the bathroom. Either 'line of sight' or 'line of sound' supervision is maintained while children are using the facilities. Ensure no child, regardless of age, enters a bathroom alone on a field trip. If staff are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open;
- Always conduct or supervise private activities in pairs – diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others;
- Not to use inappropriate, discriminatory, racist, sexist, violent, profane, sexual, belittling or negative language in the presence of children and youth, for example, swearing, derogatory terms, sexual jokes or innuendos, threats, name-calling, etc.;
- Ensure that sign-in and sign-out procedures are followed for visitors to the site and, where applicable for children and youth attending program. YMCA employees and volunteers are required to be vigilant in witnessing the arrival and departure of all children and youth;
- Only take photos or videos of children and youth on YMCA issued devices. All photos require appropriate consent. This refers to consent granted by parent or caregivers using a current signed YMCA Photo Release Form;
- Ensure photos and videos of children and youth are only uploaded to official YMCA sites once appropriate consent from the parent or caregiver has been provided. Photos and videos must not be uploaded to any personal or unofficial YMCA social media platforms;
- Not to discipline children, youth and vulnerable persons using emotional abuse, physical, or corporal punishment, favouritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, reference to cultural or ethnic differences, swearing or the withdrawal of the necessities of care (including food, shelter and emotional warmth);
- Not engage in sexual behavior between, with or in the presence of children, youth and vulnerable persons, including but not limited to engaging in open discussion of a mature or adult nature;
- Not to engage in physical contact with children or youth unless for the express purpose of the program or activity, or as based on the needs of the child or youth rather than on the needs of the YMCA employee or volunteer (e.g., to assist or comfort a distressed child or youth);
- Not to have a child or youth sit on their knee, in their lap, piggyback them, cuddle, kiss, hug, tickle, or touch them in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive manner. This also includes rough physical games (e.g., tackling, wrestling);

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- Not to use physical restraint, unless as a last resort to prevent injury to a child or young person or vulnerable persons or others; in this instance the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others;
- Ensure that parents or caregivers be informed of travel and sleeping arrangements prior to the commencement of any excursion or camp and that a full documented risk assessment is completed, signed by the staff conducting the assessment and approved for the excursion or camp;
- Promptly report concerns, issues, problems, suspected incidents and suspicious behavior to their manager or supervisor (or most appropriate senior staff with authority) and to local child or adult protection authority;
- Report to their supervisor, any suspicion, observation or knowledge of inappropriate behavior by YMCA employees or volunteers that breaches YMCA Child Safety Policy standards and YMCA Vulnerable Persons Policy standards;
- Fully cooperate with the defined relevant local police that the child or young person can do for themselves (e.g., changing clothes, personal grooming, feeding, and toileting); and
- Not to give personal gifts to children, unless under the banner of a gift from the YMCA (e.g., gifts from the YMCA service to the child or youth in recognition of a designated holiday or celebration).

This means that YMCA employees and volunteers must:

- Ensure they are never alone with a child or young person where they cannot be observed by at least one other YMCA employee or volunteer, or other adult;
- Disclose to their supervisor where a friendship has developed prior to or during employment by the YMCA, between them and families and/or children or youth who currently participate or have previously participated in YMCA programs;
- Not to engage in unauthorized travel (.e., transport an individual child or youth or a group of children or young people to or from YMCA programs in a private vehicle, without the written consent of the senior YMCA staff with oversight for the program or branch area). All transport requires a minimum of two YMCA employees to be present at all material times;
- Not to engage in activities with current or previous YMCA children or youth outside of the YMCA, for example, visiting them home, babysitting, social engagements, etc., unless permission has been granted by a senior YMCA manager with oversight for the program or branch; and
- Not to engage with children or youth (current or former) outside of the YMCA, including via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) as well as voice or video call, text or email, directly to a child or young person unless for the express purpose of conducting YMCA business, counselling or training sessions and with



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manager knowledge and approval. This contact must be from a YMCA supplied device only. Where practicable all communication made should be directed to the parents or caregivers of the child or youth.

I, hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the Code of Conduct. I understand that as an employee or volunteer of the YMCA, it is my responsibility to comply with the principles and standards outlined in this code. I confirm that I have received a copy of the code of conduct and understand that as an ongoing condition of employment, I am required to participate in regular training, as determined by the YMCA, on the YMCA Child Safety Policy and YMCA Vulnerable Persons Policy requirements and practices. I understand that any violation of this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Name (printed)

Employee Signature

Employee Position

Date