

Child Abuse Prevention

Policy and Procedures

Approved by the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges Board of Directors on December 2, 1999

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GENERAL POLICY

An integral part of the mission and programs of the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges is a focus on youth; therefore, the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges will maintain zero tolerance toward child abuse.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing incidence of reported child abuse continues to be a national concern. Because of the YMCA's role as an advocate for children, and its responsibility for enhancing the personal growth and development of both children and adults, it is deeply committed to addressing this issue as it relates to program participants and staff.

The Association's role as an institution regarding child abuse prevention is two fold.

- 1) Protecting children from any staff or program volunteer (hereafter referred to as "volunteer") whose conduct may be inappropriate; and
- 2) Observing children who come to programs that may appear to have been abused and/or neglected by other adults, either at home or in another location, and reporting them to the appropriate authorities.

In addition, the YMCA is concerned about protecting itself, as an institution, from unwarranted and unfounded allegations of abuse.

In order to ensure that staff is properly apprised of their responsibilities, the YMCA has developed a series of procedures related to:

- 1) The hiring of staff/volunteers;
- 2) The identification of child abuse and neglect through staff/volunteer training;
- 3) The creation of a set of operating procedures that protect children from potentially risky situations; and
- 4) The creation of reporting procedures for all incidents that may be considered to be a threat to the welfare of children.

These policies and procedures apply throughout all Branches and programs.

Department Managers are required to provide a copy of this document to all staff/volunteers working at any location, either in a Branch or off-site, at the time of employment. Staff/volunteers are required to sign the Code of Conduct to confirm their receipt of the information. A mandatory review of this material is to be held with each staff/volunteer at least once per year to insure that the staff/volunteer are familiar with the contents and to reinforce its importance.

All new staff/volunteers shall receive an approved training in Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention within the first (30) days of employment.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

The following is the legal definition of Child Abuse. This definition of Child Abuse must be reviewed with all new staff/volunteers, by their immediate supervisor, at the time that they sign the Employee Code of Conduct.

Child Abuse is 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

TYPE OF CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
Physical Abuse	Unexplained Bruises and Welts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on face, lips, mouth - 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 Unexplained Burns: <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 Unexplained Fractures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to skull, nose facial structure - in various stages of healing - multiple or spiral fractures Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to mouth, lips, gums, eyes - to external genitalia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wary of Adult Contacts - Apprehensive when other children cry - Behavioral Extremes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aggressiveness ✓ 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) - Constant 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 or infantile behavior - Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge - Poor peer relationships - Delinquent or run away - Reports sexual assault by caregiver
Emotional Maltreatment	<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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Compliant, passive ✓ Aggressive, demanding - Overly Adoptive Behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inappropriately adult ✓ Inappropriately infant - Developmental lags (physical, mental, emotional) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Attempted Suicide

POLICIES

STAFF/VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Although warmth and affection are important feelings for staff/volunteers to communicate toward the children and youth participating in the programs, it is essential that staff/volunteers' actions do not in any way offend the participants, violate, or have the appearance of being in violation of current laws associated with child abuse.

- 1) Staff/volunteers are expected to be attentive to all signs and symptoms associated with child abuse and to report them to their immediate supervisor as soon as they are observed.
- 2) Staff/volunteers are to be alert to the physical and emotional state of all children each time they report for a program and indicate, in writing, any signs of injury or suspected child abuse. A logbook should be kept on a daily basis including information of unusual behavior, physical ailments or signs of bodily injury. All suspicions should be reported immediately.
- 3) At no time during a program may a staff/volunteer be alone with a single child, unobserved by other staff/volunteers.
- 4) Staff/volunteers are prohibited from relating to children who participate in programs outside of the "Y," such as babysitting or weekend trips.
- 5) Staff/volunteers, (irrespective of their age), are prohibited from socializing with program participants under the age of (18) outside of "Y" program activities unless these participants are members of their families. If there was a pre-existing relationship with a participant, the staff/volunteer is required to discuss this with his/her supervisor immediately and a plan will be agreed upon regarding the situation.
- 6) Staff/volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care such as food and shelter. In addition, punishment that relates to sports activities (i.e., push-ups, sit-ups, laps, etc.) in excess of normal physical conditioning shall not be used as punishment.
- 7) Staff/volunteers will not use abusive language, mimic or tease children in a way that insults or embarrasses them.

- 8) Branches will ensure that the required Child Abuse Prevention Trainings are made available to staff/volunteers by either offering the trainings at the Branch level, arranging for staff/volunteers to attend the trainings at other Branches or making other provisions for training as necessary.
- 9) Staff/volunteers will attend the required Child Abuse Prevention Trainings and staff/volunteers working directly with children and youth will receive continued training on child abuse prevention annually.
- 10) Branches will provide the following documentation annually, by December 1st, to the Corporate office:
 - ✓ The dates in which Child Abuse Prevention Trainings were held and confirmation that the Code of Conduct has been reviewed and signed by all staff/volunteers.
 - ✓ Confirmation of staff/volunteer attendance at the trainings must be documented annually.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

All staff/volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information and therefore, should only discuss an incident with the persons named in #1 below:

At any time that staff/volunteers observe an act of child abuse by a parent, co-worker or volunteer, or notices any of the indicators listed in the chart above, or learns of a violation of the policies described above, the following procedures must be followed:

- 1) At the first report or accusation that child abuse has occurred, the staff/volunteer to whom an inappropriate action between staff/volunteer and child has been reported will immediately *confirm* the reported facts and the condition of the child. He/she will then *notify* his/her immediate supervisor, who will notify the Executive Director. The Executive Director or his/her designee will notify the President/CEO.
- 2) In accordance with New Jersey State law, a report will be made by the Executive Director, or his/her designee, to:

New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services
Hot Line (24 hours per day) 1-800-792-8610
Local District Office is 1-800-215-6853

- 3) In the event the reported incident involves a staff/volunteer, the Executive Director will suspend the person, with pay, immediately. Regardless of where, or under what circumstances the alleged incident takes place, if a staff/volunteer is involved, it will be considered as job related.
- 4) The Executive Director or his/her designee, in consultation with the President/CEO will lead the investigation of the incident.
- 5) The parents or legal guardian of the child or children involved in any incident will be communicated to only by the Executive Director or his/her designee when a staff/volunteer is involved in the allegation.
- 6) Reinstatement of the staff/volunteer person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the persons named in #1 and the investigating agency.

- 7) Child abuse incidents, not involving staff/volunteers, shall be reported by staff to their immediate supervisor and the Executive Director. The Director receiving the report will advise the reporter on the additional steps to be taken, depending upon the circumstances. In general, the person receiving the information about the abuse or neglect should be the reporter to the authorities. The Executive Director should exercise extreme caution when handling these cases and should always take steps to protect a child's welfare.
- 8) When the person accused of abusing the child is not a staff/volunteer, the parent must also be notified by the end of the business day. The Executive Director will determine who should speak with the parent/guardian. This call should be made after the case has been reported to the appropriate agency.
- 9) When the abuse is thought to have been perpetrated by the parent or guardian, the case should be reported as in #1. At that time, a discussion should be held with the authorities to determine whether, and how, the phone call should be made to this individual. This must be done to protect the safety of the child when (s) he returns home. Whenever possible and safe, the parent/guardian should be advised that a call is being made to the child abuse authorities.
- 10) Before leaving work on the day of the incident, the staff/volunteer reporting the incident must document what (s) he observed. Updating of the incident report may occur as additional information is secured. The results of the investigation will be documented by the Executive Director within (5) business days after the incident and forwarded to the President/CEO.
- 11) All media inquiries are to be referred to the President/CEO or his designee.

NEW STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SCREENING

It is the policy of the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges to undertake a thorough screening process of prospective staff and volunteers. To that end, the following screening process will be in effect for all prospective staff and volunteers.

- 1) Reference checks, written and oral, must be documented and filed prior to employment of all prospective staff/volunteers.
- 2) A signed Disclosure Statement must be placed on file stating that the staff/volunteer has never been convicted of a crime. (Requirement of the N.J. Bureau of Licensing).
- 3) Photographs of all staff/volunteers must be taken and attached to personnel records.
- 4) All staff/volunteers must complete a Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) Consent Form which will be submitted to the Division of Youth and Family Services Bureau of Licensing. The Bureau will conduct an investigation to determine if the prospective staff/volunteer is the subject of a child abuse report.
- 5) All staff/volunteers must complete an Authorization and Release for the procurement of a criminal background and Social Security report.

TRAINING

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All new staff and volunteers must participate in a Child Abuse Prevention Training Program, conducted within the first (30) days of employment. The program includes the following content:

- (a) The Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges Code of Conduct;
- (b) Written materials explaining policies, procedures and regulations related to child abuse;
- (c) Legal requirements for reporting;
- (d) Child abuse and neglect – a discussion of signs and symptoms; and
- (e) Emergency and safety procedures.

Continued training will be provided annually to all staff/volunteers working directly with children.

Confirmation of training must be entered into the staff/volunteer's file.

PARENTS

- 1) Parents are informed about their child's program participation and general health and the name of the program administrator.
- 2) Parents are invited and encouraged to visit program sites at anytime and need not ask permission to do so.
- 3) Staff/volunteer will, under no circumstances, release children to anyone other than the authorized parent(s), guardian(s), or individual(s) authorized by parents, in writing, on the registration form. When picking up a child at a site, parents are to tell the staff person their child is leaving.
- 4) The "Y" will offer information and assistance to parents and children through workshops, counseling, and use of printed and audio-visual resources on child abuse. Resources will always be thoroughly reviewed prior to use.
- 5) A *Parent Handbook* will be issued to all parents in childcare programs indicating general procedures and policies, including the "DYFS Information to Parents" handout. A signed parent agreement should be on file at site.

- 6) A Sign-In/Sign-Out Log will be maintained on a daily basis for all programs serving pre-school aged children and kept on file at the program site.

CHILDREN

On occasion, experts on child abuse prevention and child safety will talk with the children in programs about how to handle threats to their personal safety (i.e., representatives from the local police precincts). Parents will be notified of these meetings and will be invited to attend.

SUPERVISION

Supervisory staff will review these materials with staff/volunteers at staff meetings, whenever possible, to emphasize the importance of child abuse prevention and identification. Administrative staff who supervise programs involving the care of children will conduct unannounced visits to each program site to assure that standards, policies, program quality and performance of staff/volunteers are being maintained. Written reports on these visits will be completed and kept on file at the branch. These files may be subject to periodic audit.