



Code of Conduct

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YMCA METRO CHICAGO STAFF and VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

The three foundational pillars of the YMCA Metro Chicago ("Y") are youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. The most important of these is youth development. Providing the highest quality of services in the safest possible environment is the standard which must be achieved by all Y employees and volunteers.

The YMCA Metro Chicago Code of Conduct must be followed at all times. Any abuse or neglect will not be tolerated and will be considered grounds for termination.

1. Staff will treat all persons with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times.
2. Staff will care for and treat all persons fairly and equally regardless of race, sex, age, religion, culture, disability, or socio-economic status. Staff shall not participate in practices that discriminate against any person by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their sex, race, national origin, immigration status, preferred home language, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, marital status/family structure, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or other affiliations.

Programming

3. Staff shall never be alone with a single child during a program where he or she cannot be observed by others. Staff shall use common areas when working with individual children and ensure they can be seen by other staff at all times.
4. Staff shall never leave a child participating in a structured program unsupervised.
5. When children are required to sign into and out of a program, staff shall not release a child to anyone other than the child's parent, guardian, or other adult authorized in writing by the parent or guardian. Written parent authorization shall be kept on file at the Y site.

6. Staff will conduct a visual check of each child or elder under their care, each day, as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Any such conditions or other concerns shall be brought to the immediate attention of a supervisor immediately. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented in an Incident Report. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent, guardian, or person under care in a nonthreatening way.
7. Staff shall follow the procedures for bathroom supervision of children at their respective site, which will include the following guidelines:
 - Staff will take groups of children in child care programs on periodic bathroom breaks. When a child needs to use the bathroom at a time other than a group break, a staff member shall accompany a group of at least two children to the bathroom. When accompanying a small group of children to the bathroom will result in noncompliance with adult/child ratios, a group of three children may take a bathroom break without a staff member.
 - Staff shall make sure restrooms are not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities.
 - Staff shall stand in the restroom doorway while children are using the restroom.
 - If staff is assisting children, doors to the restroom must remain open.
 - No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip or at another off-site location.
8. Staff shall follow the procedures for locker room supervision of children at their respective site, which will include the following guidelines:
 - Staff shall supervise groups of children while they are using locker rooms on- and off-site, ensuring that they use stalls or other designated spaces to change clothes. Whenever possible, groups of children should use locker rooms when adult members are not present.
 - Staff shall periodically monitor locker rooms to ensure that family locker rooms are used appropriately, and that when family locker rooms are not available, steps are taken to eliminate the possibility of opposite-gender adult/child proximity.
9. Staff shall conduct or supervise private activities in pairs – diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff shall be positioned so they are visible to others. Staff is only permitted to diaper children when working in licensed childcare programs.

Discipline

10. Staff shall not abuse any person. Abuse includes, but is not limited to: physical injury (strike, spank, shake, slap); verbal abuse (yell, humiliate, degrade, threaten); sexual abuse (inappropriate touching or verbal exchange); unjustifiable punishment (shaming, cruelty); neglect (withholding food, water, basic care, etc.)

Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and will be cause for immediate dismissal.

11. Staff shall use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff shall have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for adult intervention. Physical restraint is only to be used in pre- determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from injury), and is only to be administered in a prescribed manner and must be documented in writing.

Inappropriate Conduct

12. Staff shall respect a child's right to not be touched in any way that is uncomfortable for the child. Other than diapering, children are not to be intentionally touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
13. Staff shall refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others at any time. For examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior refer to the Abuse Prevention Policy and Appendices.
14. Staff shall not bring, discuss, or view inappropriate or unauthorized material (i.e., pornographic or sexually-oriented material) at work.
15. Staff shall not engage in electronic communication with children, except as outlined in **RISK 024 – Electronic Communication Between Staff and Youth**.
16. Staff shall not discuss their sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involve children in their personal problems or issues.
17. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment is prohibited.
18. Staff shall not have secrets with children.
19. Staff shall not stare or comment on children's bodies.

Appearance and Demeanor

20. Staff shall appear clean, neat and appropriately attired as required by the current YMCA Dress and Appearance Standards.
21. Possession of any type of weapon or explosive device during working hours is strictly prohibited.
22. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
23. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
24. Staff shall portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Restrictions

25. Staff shall not be with children under the age of 18 outside the Y who are involved or enrolled in Y programs. This includes: babysitting, sleepovers, riding or driving in cars, and inviting children to a private home. Any exceptions require prior written approval from the Executive Director.
26. Staff shall not transport children in personal vehicles.
27. Staff shall not date or become romantically involved with any participants under the age of 18 years.
28. YMCA staff will not give personal gifts of any kind to program participants.
29. Staff shall not participate in any sports activity while on duty or during a break from duty unless previously approved by the Executive Director. Coaching, demonstrating or supervising a sports activity is allowed.

Reporting Requirements

30. All Y staff are considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. Staff is required by law to report known or suspected instances where a child, youth, vulnerable adult, or developmentally disabled person has been abused or neglected; noncompliance is a Class A misdemeanor.
31. Staff shall immediately report to a supervisor or branch executive at the first reasonable cause to believe that an employee or volunteer has engaged in unacceptable Y interactions or has abused or neglected a participant, even if the behavior did not occur during working hours. If the supervisor or branch executive is not available, Staff must contact the next-level supervisor. Inability to consult with a supervisor or branch executive should not delay a call to authorities.

32. Staff must document information regarding abuse or potential abuse or neglect in writing; completing an Incident Report to Risk Management and following the "Reporting Child Abuse Policy". Reports of Elder Abuse must be made to the Department of Aging, 800- 252-8966 or 800-279-0400. An incident report must also be completed.
33. Staff shall not disclose confidential information and shall respect every person's right to privacy. However, when Staff has reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have a legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest. Staff shall discuss matters pertaining to abuse or suspected abuse only with those listed above and/or with the Executive Director and/or a corporate officer.
34. Staff is required to fully cooperate with any DCFS or police investigation of alleged abuse.

General Provisions

35. Staff shall follow all program policies. If staff do not agree with program policies, they shall inform their immediate supervisor immediately. Staff shall not speak or act on behalf of the Y unless authorized by a supervisor to do so. Staff shall take care to acknowledge when they are speaking for the Y and when they are expressing a personal judgment.
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37. Staff is required to read, sign, and abide by all policies related to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject as instructed.
38. Staff is required to immediately report any observed, potentially suspicious, inappropriate, unethical, or incompetent behavior—including any policy violations—by another staff member to a direct supervisor.

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

_____	_____	_____
Print staff ¹ name	Staff signature	
_____	_____	_____
	Date	Print supervisor's name
	Supervisor signature	
_____	Date	

¹ For purposes of this document, the word STAFF found throughout the document applies and refers to paid YMCA staff and volunteers.