

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD ABUSE

1. In order to protect the YMCA staff, volunteers and program participants, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff/volunteer person be alone with a single child. In those situations, where on-on-one interactions are approved, staff/volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:
 - a. When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
 - b. Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulders, high-fives and handshakes.
 - c. If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
 - d. Inform other staff and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in.
 - e. Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.
2. Staff/volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom Supervision: Staff/volunteers will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff/volunteers will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows for privacy for the children and protection for the staff/volunteers. If staff/volunteers 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. Always send children in pairs, and whenever possible, with staff/volunteers.
4. Staff/volunteers should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs- diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff/volunteers should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff/volunteers shall not abuse children including:
 - a. Physical Abuse- strike, spank, shake, slap
 - b. Verbal Abuse- humiliate, degrade, threaten
 - c. Sexual Abuse- inappropriate touch or verbal exchange
 - d. Mental Abuse- shaming, withholding love, cruelty
 - e. Neglect- withholding food, water, basic care, etc.

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

6. Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Contact- our organization promotes a positive, nurturing environment, while protecting youth, staff and volunteers. Our organization encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff/ volunteers toward youth in the organization's programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Below is a sample (not an all-inclusive list) that outlines behavior that is acceptable and not acceptable in relation to child abuse prevention.

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
Side Hugs	Full frontal hugs
Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs	Kisses
Pats on the shoulder or back	Showing affection in isolated area
Handshakes	Lap Sitting
High-fives and hand slapping	Wrestling
Verbal praise	Piggyback rides
Pats on the head when culturally appropriate	Tickling
Touching hands, shoulders and arms	Allowing a child to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg
Arms around shoulders	Any type of massage given by or to a youth
Holding hands (with younger children in escorting situations)	Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or staff/volunteer
	Compliments relating to physique or body development
	Touching bottom, chest or genital areas, unless diapering.

7. Staff/volunteers will conduct a check of each child, each day, as they enter the program, noting fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.
8. Staff/volunteers respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture.
9. Staff/volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff/volunteers.
10. While the YMCA doesn't discriminate against an individual's lifestyles, it does require that in the performance of their job they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the Y.
11. Staff/volunteers must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.
12. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
13. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
14. Staff/volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youth in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating. Staff/volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth. Staff/volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with you. Below is a sample (not an all-inclusive list) that outlines behavior that is acceptable and not acceptable in relation to child abuse prevention.

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
Positive Reinforcement	Name-calling
Appropriate jokes	Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers
Encouragement	Secrets
Praise	Cursing
	Off-color or sexual jokes
	Shaming
	Belittling
	Derogatory remarks
	Harsh Language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth
	Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family

15. Staff/volunteers 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.
16. Staff/Volunteers will portray a positive role for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.
17. Staff/volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in the YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes baby-sitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrative approval.
18. Staff/Volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles.
19. Staff/volunteers may not date program participants under the age of 18 years of age.
20. Under no circumstance should staff/volunteers 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)
21. Staff/volunteers 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.

This is to acknowledge that I have received and read the Darien YMCA Code of Conduct for Child Abuse Policy. I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in my termination as a staff member or volunteer.

Employee or Volunteer Signature

Supervisor Signature

Date