

CODE OF CONDUCT

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

**STATEMENT
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The YMCA is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing its programs and services. YMCA support the rights of the child and will strive to deliver a child safe environment at all times. YMCA also supports the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a safe environment for children. Staff and volunteers must maintain the highest standards of professional conduct in their attitude and behaviour toward clients, colleagues and members of the community. In particular, staff recognise the power imbalance inherent in a staff/client relationship and will never act in a manner which exploits or could be seen to exploit that power imbalance.

1. Program/services staff and volunteers

MUST

- a) Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the position as a positive role model to children, and as a representative of the YMCA.
- b) Within the first five (5) working days, read, understand and formally agree to abide with the YMCA policies and guidelines around the safety of children as outlined in the YMCA's SCPP, a copy of which is given to staff during their induction process and which will be signed and read as understood.
- c) Have knowledge of, and at all times adhere to, all Law and Regulations when employed in approved or otherwise regulated Education and Care Services.
- d) Follow all workplace policies, procedures and signs in relation to the safety and protection of children and young people, including any government department's Laws and Regulations.
- e) Avoid placing themselves in potentially compromising situations with children.
- f) Ensure that, in all circumstances, government and YMCA prescribed staff/child ratios are adhered to.
- g) Ensure they are never alone with a child where they cannot be observed by at least one other YMCA staff member, volunteer or other adult.
- h) Remain alert to the risk indicators of child abuse and grooming and promptly report suspected incidents or suspicious behaviour to their Manager/Supervisor (or Child Safety Officer) and, where required by law, to the relevant departments.
- i) Raise all concerns, issues, and problems with their supervisor as soon as possible.
- j) Respect the cultural and religious practices of families, understand and respond to the special needs of all children and young people.
- k) Complete annual safeguarding children refresher training provided by the YMCA.
- l) Ensure an appropriate mix of male and female staff/volunteers is to be achieved wherever possible when preparing rosters for children's programs.
- m) Ensure young children in YMCA programs/services are appropriately supervised in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms or be required to accompany one another in pairs at such times. All children need to be supervised and accompanied by an adult at all times while in a YMCA centre or program. Any exceptions to this are to be covered by risk assessments and work instructions.
- n) Ensure that parent/caregiver permission is obtained prior to:
 - i. any photos or videos of children being taken.
 - ii. any child being taken on a YMCA excursion or camp.
- o) Ensure that parents/caregivers are informed of travel and sleeping arrangements prior to the commencement of any excursion or camp and that a full risk assessment is completed for the excursion/camp.
- p) Ensure that sign-in and sign-out logs, showing arrival and departure times, along with parent(s)/caregiver(s) signatures are to be maintained on a daily basis and kept on file at program/service sites. Program/service staff and volunteers are required to be vigilant in witnessing the arrival and departure of individual children.
- q) Be identified by a YMCA name badge and, where practicable, a branded uniform that is familiar to the children and is the same or similar as that of their co-workers.
- r) Advise their Manager or Supervisor where a friendship has developed with families and/or children who participate in YMCA programs prior to or during employment by the YMCA.
- s) Report to their Manager any knowledge of staff/volunteers who engage in non-YMCA activities such as baby-sitting of children who participate in YMCA programs.

2. Program/services staff and volunteers

MUST NOT

- a) Harm or exploit children who access YMCA programs and services.
- b) Discipline children through the use of emotional abuse, physical punishment or the withdrawal of the necessities of care (incl. food, shelter and emotional warmth), favouritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, reference to cultural/ethnic differences, swearing.
- c) Have a child sit in their lap, cuddle, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive manner.
- d) Make negative, violent or sexually suggestive comments to a child.
- e) Undertake a task of a personal nature that a child can do for itself, for example changing clothes, grooming, feeding, and toileting.
- f) Engage in rough physical games.
- g) Travel, or be accommodated, alone with a child participant before, during or after a YMCA program, excursion or camp.
- h) Transport an individual child or a group of children to or from YMCA programs in private vehicles, without the written consent of the YMCA CEO. A risk management plan for travelling in vehicles needs to be adhered to at all times.
- i) Take a child to their own home, or encourage meetings outside the program activity.
- j) Under any circumstances, release a child from a YMCA program or service to anyone other than the authorised parent(s), caregiver(s), or to an individual authorised by parent(s)/caregiver(s) in writing, including relatives of children.
- k) Be involved in child-minding or other after hours activities unless:
 - i. The child is directly related (refer baby-sitting Exemption (Family) form 241)
 - ii. The child is a participant in a different program to where the staff/volunteer is employed and they never have interaction or supervision during work hours (refer baby-sitting Exemption (Non-Family) Form 241a).

In both instances, staff/volunteers must declare their involvement with the child by completing the relevant form and obtaining parental/caregiver and CEO approval as indicated on the forms.
- l) Work for another organisation/company (second job) whilst working for the YMCA if the total hours worked per day is excessive (more than ten hours per day) and if the additional external hours will have a negative impact on YMCA duties.
- m) Wear YMCA uniforms to any external work (second job).
- n) Report to work under the influence of or in the possession of alcoholic beverages or controlled or illegal substances.
- o) Take unauthorised photos or videos of children on work or personal cameras or mobile phones/devices.
- p) Place on any personal social media platform, such as Facebook, photos of children in care. Photos may only be placed on official YMCA sites, once appropriate consent from the parent or guardian has been provided.
- q) Use personal social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter etc., to contact or converse with children enrolled in YMCA programs. Appropriate contact with children for the purpose of delivery of YMCA programs must be limited to official YMCA internal sites only. Any other contact should be directed to parents/caregivers only and in accordance with the YMCA's Social Media Policy.
- r) Text or email information directly to a child or young person's mobile or email address, unless for the express purpose of conducting YMCA business, counselling or training sessions. All communication made should be directed to the parents/caregivers and made only from YMCA devices.
- s) Give personal gifts to children unless under the banner of a gift from the YMCA (e.g. gifts from the YMCA service to each child at Christmas).

CONDUCT THAT IS CONSIDERED UNACCEPTABLE IS SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND POSSIBLE DISMISSAL

If a staff member or volunteer does not feel comfortable reporting to their direct Supervisor or Manager about any concerns for a child in care or inappropriate behaviour towards children by another staff member or volunteer, they should contact the Child Protection Officer at child.protection@ymcabrisbane.org or on 3253 1706 or 0439 724 171. Staff and volunteers are covered by the YMCA Whistleblower Policy.