



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Child Abuse Prevention Policies & Procedures

For the YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

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# I. General Definitions

## Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse** is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth.
- **Sexual Abuse** is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
- **Emotional abuse** is mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
- **Neglect** is the failure to provide for a youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a youth from harm.

# II. Code of Conduct with Youth

The following policies are intended to assist staff and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with youth. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your supervisor.

Our organization provides our youth with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from our organization. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. Our organization will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Conduct with Youth outlines specific expectations of the staff and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

## A. Staff and Volunteer Behavior

### Staff and Volunteers will:

- Treat youth with respect at all times.
- Treat youth fairly regardless of race, sex, age, religion or culture.
- Adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by our organization (See Page 6 – Physical Contact).
- Avoid affection with youth that cannot be observed by others.
- Adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by our organization (See Pages 6-7 about Physical Contact and Verbal Interactions).
- Staff will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

### Staff and Volunteers will NOT:

- Stare at or comment on youths' bodies.
- Date or become romantically involved with youth.
- Use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth.
- Smoke or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours.
- Have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our organization's property.
- Use profanity, tell inappropriate jokes, share intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.

- Show intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff.
- Have secrets with youth and will only give gifts with prior permission.
- Be alone with children they meet in Y programs, outside of the Y. This includes babysitting, sleepovers and inviting children to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrator approval.
- Transport children in their own vehicles. (Unless emergency and with prior approval from supervisor or Executive Director)
- Engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth. (See Page 8 – Electronic Communication)

## B. Supervision

### **Staff and volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.**

1. In order to protect YMCA of the Chippewa Valleys' staff, volunteers and program participants should never be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff can see them. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth in a private setting. Staff and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth.
2. Restroom supervision (Best Practice when supervising youth in programs): Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If staff is assisting younger children, doors to the bathroom must remain open. No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom on a field trip, without supervision. Rule of 3 at all times - similar age range preferred.
3. Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs, including but not limited to, diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
4. Staff will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
5. Staff and volunteers will not abuse youth in any way including (but not limited to) the following:
  - a. **Physical abuse:** hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
  - b. **Verbal abuse:** degrading, threatening, cursing
  - c. **Sexual abuse:** inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
  - d. **Mental abuse:** shaming, humiliation, cruelty
  - e. **Neglect:** withholding food, water, shelter, basic care
6. Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement. Staff will have age-appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations necessary to protect the child or other children from harm, is only administered in a prescribed manner and must be documented in writing.
7. Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. Our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified as bullying. We will take steps needed to eliminate disruptive behavior.

## C. Bullying

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

1. **Physical bullying** – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
2. **Verbal bullying** – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
3. **Nonverbal or relational bullying** – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship

to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

4. **Cyberbullying** – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, social media or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
  - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
  - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
  - Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate.
  - Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

*Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth, staff and volunteers.*

## **D. Mandated Reporter Requirements**

All staff must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. Staff should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse.

### **Staff will:**

- Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
- Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth against abuse.
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
- Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

As a YMCA staff person, we are all Mandated Reporters. If you are aware of, or suspect, any type of abuse of a youth, it is your obligation to call and make a report to Child Protective Services. We ask that you also communicate with your supervisor or Executive Director when contacting Child Protective Services.

Staff and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other staff, volunteers, adults, or youth to their supervisor, Executive Director or Human Resources Director. Praesidium’s Anonymous Helpline at 855-347-0751 may be called to discuss a potential child abuse issue.

Our organization cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any staff or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

## **III. Policies and Best Practices**

Policies define acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to youth, when staff know and understand policies, they can identify, interrupt, and report policy violations. Simply interrupting a policy violation can prevent a false allegation of abuse or put an offender on notice that no one works in private, the rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

We understand that sometimes we are not able to set firm policies. Best Practices help staff and volunteers provide recommended procedures.

Violations of any work rules included in this document are just cause for discipline actions, up to and including discharge. Discipline is necessary to preserve good working conditions and fairness for employees, members and guests.

## A. Physical Contact

Our organization’s physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth and staff. Our organization encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff towards youth in the organization’s programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Some inappropriate physical interactions listed below may be child-initiated. In these cases, staff should redirect child to a more appropriate behavior. The organization’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Frontal hugs when knelt to child height</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> <li>• Lap sitting (for ELC aged children, and for minimal amounts of time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs from a standing position</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting (School aged)</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a youth to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas, outside of diapering/toileting</li> </ul>

## B. Verbal Interaction

Staff and 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 and volunteers must not initiate relationships or sexually oriented conversations with youth. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own relationships or sexual activities with youth. Appropriate VS Inappropriate interactions are listed below:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Appropriate jokes</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Praise</li> <li>• Behavior Management</li> <li>• Positive Guidance</li> <li>• Redirection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name-calling</li> <li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Secrets</li> <li>• Cursing</li> <li>• Inappropriate or sexual jokes</li> <li>• Shaming</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li> </ul>

### C. One-on-One Interaction

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth. To protect the YMCA of the Chippewa Valley staff, volunteers and program participants at no time may a staff person or volunteer be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. When staff or volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff, volunteers or other participants can see them.

In those situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, staff and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

#### Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions

- When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Examples of appropriate affection may include: pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open, keep windows unobstructed, or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other staff and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in.
- 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.

#### Tutoring/Instruction:

One-on-one situations, such as tutoring and private instruction (Y one-on-one programs) sessions, introduce additional risks for false allegations. Staff and volunteers should be aware of our policies regarding tutoring and private coaching:

- Staff and volunteers must have supervisor approval for any tutoring or private instruction sessions.
- Tutoring and private instruction sessions with our organization’s youth may not occur outside of the organization.
- Supervisors must keep a schedule of tutoring and private instruction sessions, which should include times, youth involved, and location of sessions. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to add these to the facility building schedules. (i.e. dance/music lessons, tutoring)

### D. Off-site Contact

Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities (Not in YMCA program or facility). This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put staff, volunteers, and our organization at increased risk.

Our organization strongly recommends that staff do not have outside contact with youth from the organization. However, if off-site contacts are unavoidable, our organization has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

Appropriate Outside Contact	Inappropriate Outside Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taking groups of youth on an outing</li><li>• Attending outside activities with groups of youth (i.e. sports, dance events)</li><li>• Attending functions at a youth’s home, with parents present</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taking one youth on an outing</li><li>• Visiting one youth in the youth’s home, without a parent present</li><li>• Entertaining one or more youth in the home of staff or volunteers</li><li>• One or more youth spending the night with staff or volunteers</li></ul>

In addition, when outside contact is unavoidable, ensure that the following steps are followed:

- Supervisors should identify for staff and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
- Ensure that staff or volunteers have the parents' permission to engage in outside contact with the youth. Require the parents to sign the "Unsanctioned Off-Site Contact/Activity Waiver".

## E. Electronic Communication

Any private electronic communication between staff and youth, including the use of social networking websites like - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, texting, etc. - is prohibited. All communication between staff and youth must be transparent.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

Appropriate Electronic Communication	Inappropriate Electronic Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youth ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth's parent</li> <li>• Communicating through "organization group pages" on Facebook or other approved public forums.</li> <li>• "Private" profiles for staff and volunteers which youth cannot access.</li> <li>• Posting photos of organizational participants on official YMCA of the Chippewa Valley social media sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments.</li> <li>• Sexually oriented conversations.</li> <li>• Private messages between staff and volunteers with youth.</li> <li>• Posting pictures of organization participants on personal social media sites.</li> <li>• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</li> <li>• "Friending" participants on social networking sites.</li> </ul>

*For the protection of YMCA staff, volunteers, members and program participants, all photos of members and program participants must be taken for YMCA marketing purposes and internal use, not personal use. Images shall not be retained.*

### 1. Cell Phone Use:

While assigned to work with youth, staff are not permitted to use electronic communications devices for personal use except during approved breaks and emergency situations.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) organization members and/or program participants for personal and/or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### 2. Acceptable Use of Cell Phones during Program Hours:

There are occasions which staff will need to use personal or organization issued electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit direction from supervisors governing use. Situations which may require use of organization issued or personal electronic communication devices include:

- Field Trips
- Off-site Programs
- Emergencies

## F. Gift Giving

Staff and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youth, and only under the following circumstances:

- Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift.
- Parents must be aware.



## IV. Monitoring and Supervision

When staff are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When youth are adequately supervised, they are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. The whole facility must be monitored, particularly out-of-the-way locations or locations that might permit an offender undue access to or privacy with a youth. Effective supervision and monitoring require that a variety of methods be used frequently, at both scheduled and random times.

Specialized 1-on-1 care may be required for some children as designated by the Leadership Team. Such people are to assume full responsibility of the individual in care and be with them at all times in and outside of the facility. This includes, but is not limited to, field trips, transportation, and throughout the facility.

*If the child has a developmental or physical disability that will require more supervision/assistance than current staffing pattern can accommodate, the parents are responsible for providing that extra support. Aides are welcome in all programs as requested by parents/guardians. However, all aides (outside of school district/licensed services) will need to undergo a background check as well as child abuse prevention training.*

### A. Facility Monitoring

Most incidents of sexual behavior occur in private, the extent to which privacy is managed, risk is managed. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that locations are properly and consistently monitored. Best practice is for the Supervisor to be moving through the facility and completing regular visual checks.

### B. Checking into a Facility:

- Everyone entering the building must check in with Y personnel.
- When possible, create a single point of entry and exit in the facility.
- If there is more than one entrance or exit, ensure these other points of access are consistently monitored.

### C. General Supervision

General supervision best practices:

- **Administrative and Supervisory Visits to Youth Programs** - Youth supervisors and administrators should regularly visit all youth programs to ensure that all activities are well managed and that youth policies are observed by all in attendance.
- **Ratios** - Each program should follow the ratio requirements that are directly to the goals of the program and the design of the program area. The staff or volunteer-to-youth ratio should be adjusted for programs that serve youth with special needs. Refer to local licensing requirements and general best practice guidelines for establishing adult-to-youth ratios.
- **Mixed Age Groups** - In most incidents involving one youth abusing another youth, the youth are from different age groups. Each program is responsible for establishing specific guidelines for additional monitoring and supervision of activities that involve youth from different age groups. Staff and volunteers must be aware that close line of sight supervision is required when monitoring programs that mix age groups.

### D. Monitoring Youth in Facilities

The YMCA of the Chippewa Valley allows youth 11 years and older to enter and use the facilities without a parent or guardian. All YMCA members and program participants must check-in at the Member Services Area upon entry.

#### Monitoring Best Practices:

1. Require a parent or legal guardian to complete a membership application which includes identifying information, any legal indemnifications, the youth's date of birth, and emergency contact information.

2. While in the facility, youth can be supervised directly, indirectly, or with a combination of the two techniques.
  - a. For direct supervision, the program may offer structured, scheduled, activities like basketball tournaments, swimming activities, arts and crafts, etc. These activities should have one or more staff assigned to lead and supervise.
  - b. For indirect supervision, the program must designate certain building areas as authorized areas. Authorized areas could include a gymnasium, a game area, or a classroom for doing homework and so on. Authorized areas must be easily visible and routinely and systematically checked by staff. Youth should know that they will be supervised by a staff at all times, and all staff should know which areas are authorized and which are not.
3. All program staff should wear nametags or identifying clothing so that the youth can easily recognize them as staff.
4. Train all staff:
  - a. To greet youth that enter the facility; to direct youth to the structured activities or authorized areas; and, to redirect youth who are not in an authorized area or who are not participating in a structured activity.
  - b. To be aware of the risks involved with mixing age groups and how to monitor activities involving mixed age groups.
  - c. To routinely monitor high risk areas (such as bathrooms, locker rooms, and unused rooms).

## **E. Monitoring High Risk Activities in Programs – Best Practices**

### **1. Bathroom Activities**

Most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in the bathrooms. Therefore, the following supervision guidelines are recommended. When supervising restroom use, adult staff members should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youth to enter.

1. For "Group Bathroom Breaks":
  - a. Require staff to take groups of two or more youth to the bathroom – following the "rule of three" or more.
  - b. If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
  - c. If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youth as there are stalls.
  - d. Minimize youth of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
  - e. Require staff to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
2. For single use restrooms:
  - a. Require youth to ask permission to use the bathroom.
  - b. Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.
  - c. Prohibit staff from using the bathroom at the same time as youth when supervising youth in a program.
3. If assisting young youth in the stalls, the staff should keep the door to the stall open and ensure another staff is in sight.
4. When diapering or assisting in toileting needs, staff must use the changing tables or restrooms in the classrooms to ensure visibility to others. If using classroom bathroom, leave the top half of door open. All physical touch to child will be in the interest of cleanliness; a wipe and gloved hand should always be used.

### **2. Locker Room Activities**

The locker room procedures include:

1. Requiring staff to stand within earshot of the locker room when in use by youth.
2. Requiring staff to intermittently and briefly check inside the locker room so users know the locker room is monitored.

3. Discouraging the use of locker rooms by youth of different ages at the same time.
4. Prohibiting the use of locker room horseplay such as towel snapping.
5. When possible, arrange lockers to minimize unnecessary privacy.

### **3. Shower Activities**

Staff and youth must shower at different times. Create shower schedules that will permit supervision of the youth while staff shower.

While the youth shower, at least one staff member should stand in the bathroom doorway and within earshot of the youth. Ensure that only one youth is in each shower. Consider utilizing shower curtains that do not go all the way to the floor, so that staff can easily see how many youth are in each shower stall.

### **4. Transition Times and Free Times**

Transition times and free-choice times (or free times) pose a high risk for incidents because during these times, staff and volunteers may not be assigned a particular group of youth to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following best practices:

1. Require youth to always remain in line-of-sight of staff.
2. Specify the staff-to-youth ratio.
3. Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
4. Ensure that all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
5. Include bathroom procedures.
6. Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
7. Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

### **5. Playground Activities**

The playground procedures require:

1. Youth to always remain in line-of-sight of staff.
2. Definition of specific and narrow geographic boundaries around the playground area.
3. Specific instructions on how to monitor barriers of supervision (such as storage sheds, playhouses, tunnels, and shrubs).
4. That all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise (“zone monitoring”).
5. Specific bathroom procedures.
6. Staff to conduct periodic roll calls for each age group.
7. Supervisors conduct periodic check-ins and assessments of the activity period and of the entire activity area.

### **6. Transportation Activities**

Transporting youth may increase the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse because staff and volunteers may be alone with a youth or may make unauthorized stops with youth. In addition, transportation activities may provide a time for unsupervised youth to engage in youth-to-youth sexual activity.

1. The transportation guidelines for contracted or YMCA owned transportation:
  - a. Require written parent permission from all youth on the trip. Staff take these permission forms and medical releases with them on the trip.
  - b. Require staff to have a list of the youth on the trip. The staff take roll when boarding the bus, when leaving the bus, periodically throughout the trip, and then again when boarding the bus.
  - c. Specify staff-to-youth ratios. When possible, do not count the driver in the supervision ratio.
  - d. Require staff to sit in seats that permit maximum supervision.
  - e. Discourage mixed age groups from sitting together. When possible, high-risk youth are seated by themselves or with a staff member.

- f. Prohibit drivers from making unauthorized stops.
  - g. Require documentation of any unusual occurrences.
2. In situations where staff transport youth in non-organization vehicles:
    - a. Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
    - b. Use the 'rule of three' when transporting youth: at least two adults must transport a single youth, or at least two youth must be present if transported by a single adult.
    - c. Youth must never be transported without written permission.
    - d. Youth must be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops.
  3. In situations where staff transport youth in non-organization vehicles:
    - a. Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
    - b. Use the "rule of three" when transporting youth: At least two adults must transport a single youth, or at least two youth must be present if transported by a single adult.
    - c. Youth must never be transported without written permission from a parent.
    - d. Youth must be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops may be made.

## **7. Off-Site Activities**

The off-site procedures include:

1. Requiring supervisor approval for all off-site activities.
2. Requiring parental approval.
3. Specifying staff-to-youth ratios for the activity.
4. Requiring staff and youth to be easily identifiable.
5. Including specific bathroom and locker room procedures as applicable to outing.
6. Including transportation procedures.
7. Including instructions for a supervisor to observe the off-site activities at scheduled times and random intervals.

## **8. Aquatic Activities**

Aquatic activities include swimming lessons, childcare program swim, Swim Team, and swim events. SPECIAL NOTE: Parents are required to be onsite for swim lessons.

1. School-Age Childcare swim activities will follow ratio requirements in accordance with DCF State regulations.
2. Swim Lessons, Swim Team and Swim Events
3. Touch is always instruction driven.
4. Approved physical contact for support or manipulation includes: shoulders, arms/hands, ribs/stomach, back, legs/feet, hips.
5. Prohibited areas of touch are chest, buttocks, and groin

## **9. Youth Sports**

Youth sports include any program that the Y offers as group instruction or 1-on-1 training/coaching.

1. Parents are required to be onsite and available during programming.
2. Touch is always instruction driven and should be limited.
3. Spotting may be used for safety measures (i.e. Gymnastics)
  - a. Approved physical contact for support or manipulation includes: shoulders, arms/hands, ribs/stomach, back, legs/feet, hips.
  - b. Prohibited areas of touch are chest, buttocks, and groin.

## **10. Quiet Time**

During quiet time and/or nap time, a light must be left on for visibility. Staff are allowed to pat children on the back to assist with comfort but must get up and check on classroom every 10 minutes. Children should be two feet away from each other; one child per cot. Each child will have their own, labeled, blanket and mat for quiet time.

# V. Overnight Activities

Overnight stays present unique risks to youth and staff. They often involve changing clothes, groups of both genders and different ages in a more intimate atmosphere than usual, more unstructured activities, and increased supervision demands for staff.

## A. Supervision Guidelines:

- a. All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- b. Supervisors are expected to regularly and randomly observe overnight activities on a scheduled and periodic basis.
- c. The Director should appoint a lead staff to supervise the overnight. A meeting with all staff is conducted to discuss the unique risks of overnight trips, unique elements of the specific overnight trip and to review the specific policies and procedures.
- d. Provide parents with written information about the overnight activity. All parents must sign a permission slip for their youth to attend the overnight.
- e. Determine the appropriate staff-to-youth ratios before the event and schedule staff accordingly.

## B. Overnights at the Facility:

- a. Physical boundaries within the organization must be clearly defined and explained to the youth.
- b. Assign each staff to a specific group of youth to supervise. Each staff should then maintain a roster that lists all youth in their group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the evening.
- c. Assign staff to high-risk areas in your organization's facility. If it is not possible to assign specific staff to these areas, assign specific staff to conduct periodic facility "walk-throughs".
- d. With regards to sleeping arrangements, staff will take careful consideration when assigning groups.
- e. When performing room checks, staff should go in pairs.
- f. Specific to lock-ins: At least one staff must stay awake overnight.

## C. Overnights away from the Facility:

- a. Overnight stays at private homes are prohibited unless approved by the administration.
- b. Physical boundaries at the off-site location must be clearly defined and explained to the youth.
- c. Assign each staff to a specific group of youth to supervise. Each staff should then maintain a role sheet that lists all youth in his or her group. Head counts and roll checks should be conducted routinely throughout the event.
- d. If in a cabin type setting, the staff should be placed in bunks to maximize supervision around the cabin and in a way that decreases the chances of youth sneaking out (such as by the door).
- e. In hotel rooms, assign youth to rooms based on sex and age. Staff should have their own rooms.
- f. Staff are to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night.

## D. Supervisors and Administrators Monitoring On-Site and Off-Site Programs

- a. Keep a record. Document your supervision visits. Include information like your arrival and departure times, which youth and parents were present, and a summary of the information collected. Check punctuality and the routine that staff follow to prepare for the youth to arrive. Provide staff with feedback about visits.
- b. Vary your observation times. Do not develop a predictable pattern of observation. Drop in at different times each day. Occasionally leave and come back immediately.
- c. Survey the physical environment. Visual observation to ensure proper activity location (e.g. size of area for number of youth, ability to supervise all areas used by youth, landscaping that may inhibit supervision).
- d. Watch activities. Make sure they are planned and organized. Ensure staff are actively involved. Ask

- to see the schedule of activities and compare with what is going on at a given time.
- e. Observe bathroom and locker room activities. Observe bathroom and locker room activities to ensure that the staff are complying with the established policies and procedures.
- f. Observe Interactions.

*Please consult YMCA specific program policies for additional information on Camp Manitou, Licensed Childcare, School-Age and Day Camp Programs.*

## VI. Responding

How an organization responds to suspicious or inappropriate interactions, policy violations, and incidents or allegations of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individuals involved and the damage to the organization. Once a staff member, volunteer, youth, or parent has expressed a concern or made an allegation about the treatment of a youth, swift and determined action must be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth, to the accused staff member or volunteer, and to the organization. Organizations must establish precise, unequivocal requirements for reporting to the authorities and for adhering to a serious-incident response plan.

### A. Responding to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

Because our organization is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that every staff member actively participates in the protection of youth. If staff observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other staff or volunteers, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations. Remember, at our organization, the policies apply to everyone.

#### Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors between Staff/Volunteers and Youth

- Violation of the abuse prevention policies described above
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youth
- Buying gifts for individual youth
- Making suggestive comments to youth
- Picking favorites

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth will be taken seriously. Our procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected.

#### 1. Staff and Volunteer Response:

If staff witness suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from another staff or volunteer, the staff or volunteer is instructed to do the following:

#### Guidelines for Staff/Volunteers response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report the behavior to a supervisor, director, or other authority.
- If you are not comfortable making the report directly, make it anonymously.
- If the report is about a supervisor or administrator, contact the next level of management.
- Document the report but do not conduct an investigation.
- Keep reporting until the appropriate action is taken.

## 2. Supervisor and Administrator Response:

If a supervisor or an administrator receives a report of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or policy violations from a staff, member, or volunteer, the supervisor is instructed to do the following:

### **Guidelines for Supervisors and Administrators Response to Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors and/or Policy Violations**

- Report to the next level of administration and determine the appropriate administrator to respond to the concern.
- Determine the appropriate response based on the report.
- Speak with the staff or volunteer who has been reported.
- Review the file of the staff or volunteer to determine if similar complaints were reported.
- Document the report on the appropriate form.
- If at any point in gathering information about a report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises about possible abuse, contact the state authorities and file a report.
- If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians.
- Advise the person who reported the behavior that the report is being taken seriously.

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- Increase monitoring or supervision of the staff, volunteer, or program.
- If policy violations with youth are confirmed, the staff or volunteer must be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow the guidelines found in YMCA of the Chippewa Valley Employee Handbook.
- If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other staff and volunteers or youth.

## 3. Organizational Response:

### **Guidelines for Organizational Response**

- Review the need for increased supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.

## B. Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult

### 1. Staff of Volunteer Response to Abuse:

As required by mandated reporting laws, staff and volunteers must report any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth – whether on or off organization property or whether perpetrated by staff, volunteers, or others – to state authorities. Reports may be made confidentially. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice. *\*Refer to state specific mandated reporting requirements for definitions of abuse more specific reporting information.*

## **Additional Guidelines for Staff/Volunteer Response to Incidents or Allegations of Abuse**

- If you witness abuse, interrupt the behavior immediately.
- If abuse is disclosed to you, assure the individual disclosing that he or she was correct to tell you.
- Protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution, or further abuse.
- Immediately report the allegation or incident to the proper organization authorities (based on mandatory reporting requirements) and the designated authority.
- Be sure to document the incident, disclosure, or any circumstances causing your suspicion of abuse. State only the facts.
- It is not your job to investigate the incident, but it **IS** your job to report the incident to your supervisor in a timely manner.
- Check back to make sure appropriate steps were taken. If not, report again to your supervisor or the designated organization authority.

In addition to reporting to state authorities, staff and volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse of youth perpetrated by staff or volunteers directly to leadership so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and others who may be at risk. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made confidentially to the following:

- Immediate supervisor
- Directors
- Administration

## **2. Supervisors and Administrators Response to Abuse**

In addition to the above response procedures, supervisors and administrators should ensure the following:

### **Guidelines for Supervisor and Administrators Responding to Allegations or Incidents of Abuse**

- First, determine if the youth is still in danger and if so, take immediate steps to prevent any further harm.
- Gather as much information about the allegation as you can. For example, who made the report, who was allegedly abused, who was the alleged abuser, what was the nature of the alleged abuse, where and when did the alleged abuse occur, etc.
- Accurately record everything you learn in as much detail as you can. Remember your notes may be read by others. Stick to the facts.
- Contact the appropriate local authorities as indicated by your mandatory reporting procedures. Make sure you get a case number and the name and contact information of the person with whom you speak at the reporting agency.
- If the alleged abuse involves a staff member or volunteer, notify your crisis management team and follow your crisis management plan.
- Suspend the accused staff or volunteer until the investigation is completed.

## **C. Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Abuse and Sexualized Behaviors**

The thought that one youth may sexually abuse another youth does not occur to many people. Unfortunately, abuse between peers has increased 300% in the past few years. Youth-to-Youth sexual activity and sexualized behaviors often remain unreported in organizations because staff and volunteers are not comfortable documenting these situations or may not know how.



### **1. Youth-To-Youth Interactions:**

Most serious incidents of youth-to-youth abuse are preceded by more subtle incidents such as name-calling, taunting, or roughhousing. Interrupting these interactions early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can keep the program environment safe. Our organization recognizes that the following interactions are high risk and should be prohibited:

- Ridicule or humiliation
- Hazing
- Bullying
- Derogatory name-calling
- Games of Truth or Dare
- Singling another child out

To adequately respond to and track incidents within the organization, all sexual activity between youth and sexualized behaviors of youth must be consistently documented.

### **2. Staff and Volunteer Response**

Youth-to-youth sexual behaviors can include inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, using sexualized language, making threats of sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity, and similar types of interactions. If staff witness youth-to-youth sexual behaviors, they are instructed to follow these guidelines:

#### **Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers Responding to Youth-to- Youth Sexual Activity**

- If you observe sexual activity between youth, you should immediately separate them.
- Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted and separate the youth.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Complete the necessary paperwork (incident report/CPS report form) including what you observed and how you responded.
- Follow your supervisor’s instructions regarding notifying the authorities.
- In some cases, if the problem is recurring, discipline may be required including not allowing one or both youth to return to the program.

### **3. Supervisors and Administrators Response**

In the event that a supervisor or administrator receives a report of a youth’s sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the supervisor should do the following:

#### **Guidelines for Supervisors and Administrators Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexual Activity**

- Meet with the staff who reported the sexual activity to gather information.
- Confirm that the youth involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
- Review the steps taken by the staff on duty.
- Review the incident report to confirm it is accurately and thoroughly completed.
- Meet with parents of the youth involved.
- Determine what actions should be taken to make sure there is no recurrence, including assessing the suitability of the program for the children involved.
- Notify the proper authorities.
- Develop a written corrective action or follow-up plan in response to the incident

Based on the information gathered, the following may be required:

- Review the need for additional supervision
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures
- Alert others in Org.
- Review need for additional training

#### **4. Organizational Response**

After the internal review of the sexualized behavior or youth-to-youth sexual activity, the organization will determine what can be done to prevent a reoccurrence, such as:

- Review the need for additional supervision.
- Review the need for revised policies or procedures.
- Review the need for additional training.
- Alert others in the organization.

### **D. Victim Response Plan**

Understand the dynamics of disclosure and why survivors sometimes take time to come forward, and certain aspects of survivor's recollection of events may be fuzzy. This does not mean they are not credible. As part of our response plan, in the event a victim comes forward, the Executive Director of Program Quality will act as our 'victim assistance coordinator'. They will reach out and offer to meet the victim and ask how we as the Y can support them.

#### **1. Response to a victim**

- When a victim comes forward to make a report, document all details provided.
- Thank the individual for reporting. "Thank you for telling me".
- Inform the reporter that the information will be passed to the designated point person (ED of Program Quality) who will follow up with additional support.
- Listen to all the information and be compassionate.
- Let the survivor know they were right to come forward.
- Avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Assure the survivor the abuse was not their fault.
- Do not ask questions that will make the survivor feel responsible (i.e Why did you take so long to report it?)

## **VII. Reporting Procedures**

All YMCA employees are mandated reporters. Any staff member who suspects abuse must report it. Employee should start with filling out an incident report and notifying direct supervisor. Reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) should be made within 24 hours of suspecting abuse. In preparation to make a call, please fill out the form below. If multiple staff suspect the abuse, each staff member must report individually. This information is confidential, so do not share with anyone other than co-workers directly involved and immediate supervisors. Have your supervisor or another member of management present when you have a report. However, the responsibility to report lies with the staff member who suspects the abuse. After completing the call, turn the incident report and CPS form into your supervisor.

### **A. Procedures**

If you suspect abuse and the child is old enough to speak, ask the child non-leading questions to gain more information about your concerns.

- Fill out the Child Protective Services (CPS) Mandated Reporting form as completely as possible. Most demographic information can be found in Daxko. If there is information you cannot find, leave it blank. When describing the incident, be objective, use facts and direct quotes.
- If you feel the child is in immediate danger call 911.
- If the child is not in immediate danger, call the appropriate county (numbers are listed on form).
- If CPS answers your call:
  - Tell them your name and that you are calling from the YMCA as a mandated reporter.
  - Record name of CPS staff person as well as date/time on form.
  - Answer all questions asked of you regarding the incident.
  - At the end of the call, ask CPS any question you have. For example, should you contact the parent and let them know you made the call?
  - Verify all the information and ensure the form is filled out as completely as possible. Turn form into supervisor.
- If CPS does not answer your call:
  - Leave a message with your name, that you are from the YMCA, a phone number they can reach you at, and a good time to call back. Keep form with you until you have received a return call and made the report.
  - After report is made CPS will send a letter to the appropriate YMCA explaining the follow up that was taken. This letter is given to the staff who reported. The Y does not need to retain a copy.
  - All mandated reports are confidential.

## **B. 'Truthful Trust'**

Children should feel safe in our care, and it is our job to help them feel protected. Truthful trust means that we are a safe space for children to share their feelings, but it must also be clear that when their safety is in jeopardy, we are required to report to the appropriate authority. Staff shall offer full care and support to help the child feel safe and comfortable. However, there are no secrets when it comes to the child's well-being. The YMCA of the Chippewa Valley is not able to diagnose or treat victim-centered trauma but suggests the following resources:

- River resource family center (Chippewa): 715-720-1841
- Children emergency mental health services – contact northwest connections crisis line: 888-552-6642
- Comprehensive Community Service for Children: 715-726-7907
- Chippewa Valley Child Advocacy Center 715-835-5915

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the content in this handbook, please reach out to the Executive Director of Program Quality. If you are looking for more details for a specific program, please see their program handbook. If you or somebody you know needs to report behavior they have witness at the Y, please use the Confidential Hotline Form on our website. [Confidential Hotline \(yotform.com\)](https://www.yotform.com)

# Child Protective Services (CPS) Mandatory Reporting Form

Program/Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff or Volunteer (circle one)

Please complete this form to the best of your ability. Report and document what you know or suspect. Leave blank if unknown.

Youth Name:	
Date of Birth	
Ethnicity/Race	
Gender	
Address	
School and Grade Level	
Parent(s)/Guardian(s)	
Phone Number(s)	
Other members in household (and age)	
Date and Location of Incident	
Other individuals involved, if applicable.	

- Any prior concerns/observations?
- Does this youth have a known IEP or Special Needs?
- Known stressors for the family?
- Please describe the incident (clearly, objectively, with as many details and direct quotes as possible):

## Do you have concerns for the youth's immediate safety?

If 'Yes' please call 911. If 'No' please call one of the following:

Number contacted – Circle One:

- 9-1-1
- Chippewa County CPS: 715-726-7788
- Eau Claire County CPS: 715-839-7118 (8 :00-4 :30 M-F)
- Eau Claire Police Department 715-839-4972
- Dunn County CPS: 715-232-1116

State your name, that you are calling from the YMCA of the Chippewa Valley, and that you are a Mandated Reporter.

Date and Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person with whom you spoke: \_\_\_\_\_

**If CPS does not answer, leave the following message:** *'My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am calling as a mandatory reporter. Please call me back at (your number) as soon as possible.'*

Any additional notes/information: