



# **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## **YMCA of the Fox Cities**

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# **I. General Definitions**

## **A. Types of abuse**

1. Physical abuse is injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a youth.
2. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
3. 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.
4. 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**

A foundational commitment of the Y is to provide a healthy atmosphere for the growth and development of children. Thus, child abuse in any form is a primary concern to the Y. Child abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of a child resulting in injury or harm. In order to help prevent child abuse within Y programs, it is critical that all staff and volunteers understand the information provided, be on the lookout for suspicious behavior and abide by the following policies.

## **SUPERVISION:**

1. In order to protect YMCA of the Fox Cities staff, volunteers and program participants at no time during a program may a staff member be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in a way others can see them.
2. Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: 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 policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child). If a staff is 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 groups of three and whenever possible, with staff/volunteers. Follow the "rule of 3," striving to have two adults whenever possible.
4. Staff should conduct or supervise private activities with another YMCA staff or approved volunteer, 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.

5. Staff should not release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian.

### **INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN:**

1. Staff shall not abuse children including, but not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** – hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
- **Verbal abuse** – degrading, threatening, cursing
- **Sexual abuse** – inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
- **Mental abuse** – shaming, humiliation, cruelty
- **Neglect** – withholding food, water, basic care, etc.

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

2. Staff must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in situations necessary to protect the child or other children from harm and must be documented in writing.

3. Staff must respond to children with respect and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion and/or culture. Staff must portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.

4. Staff may not be alone with children they meet in Y programs outside of the Y. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children in your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrator approval.

5. Staffs are not to transport children in their own vehicles.

6. Staff may not date program participants under the age of 18 years of age.

7. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, intimate displays of affection toward other staff/volunteers, and sharing intimate details of one's personal life in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.

8. Staff may not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth.

9. Staff may not have secrets with youth and will only give gifts with prior permission from YMCA staff.

10. Staff will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable and allow children the right to say no. Children are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

| Appropriate Physical/Verbal Interactions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Inappropriate Physical/Verbal Interactions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs,</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Pats on the head, when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated areas</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a youth to cling to a staff member'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 staff member</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development,</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas.</li> </ul> |

### **YMCA EXPECTATIONS:**

1. It is a staff person's legal and ethical duty to report suspected abuse or suspicious behavior. Staff will cooperate fully with any investigation. Contact your supervisor or other YMCA staff member in any situation of suspected abuse.
2. Staff must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.
3. While the Y does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle, it does require that in the performance of their task, staff will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA of the Fox Cities.
4. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during work hours is prohibited.
5. Smoking or use of tobacco or vaping products in the presence of children or parents during work hours is prohibited.

### **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:

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

As a YMCA staff or volunteer, 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 youths 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 the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. Because offenders often violate policies to gain access to youths, 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.

#### **A. Physical Contact**

Our organization's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youths and staff. Our organization encourages appropriate physical contact with youths and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff towards youths 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 (i.e. rather than sitting on staff person's lap, have them sit right next to them or from full-frontal hug to shoulder-to-shoulder hug).

The organization's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

| <b><i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b><i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• *Side hugs</li> <li>• *Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs</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> </ul> <p>*Age appropriate (not appropriate for older youth)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</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</li> </ul> |

## B. Verbal Interaction

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youths 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 sexually oriented conversations with youths. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youths.

Our organization's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

| <b><i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i></b>                                                                                                 | <b><i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers</li><li>• Secrets</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming</li><li>• Belittling</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths</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. In order to protect the YMCA of the Fox Cities 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 unless approved in advance by the organization administration. 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:

- a. Staff and volunteers must have supervisor approval for any tutoring or private instruction sessions.
- b. Tutoring and private instruction sessions with our organization's youths may not occur outside of the organization.
- c. Supervisors must keep a schedule of tutoring and private instruction sessions, which should include times, youths 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 youths 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:

| <i><b>Appropriate Outside Contact</b></i>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i><b>Inappropriate Outside Contact</b></i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <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:

1. Supervisors should identify for staff and volunteers what types of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate.
2. 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**

This policy is in place to protect both minors and YMCA staff members, and to ensure transparency and accountability.

### **Communication between Adults and Minors**

1. **Supervisor communication** with staff (adult and minor) must be done ONLY in a professional manner. This applies across all platforms including but not limited to:
  - ✓ Social Media
  - ✓ Email
  - ✓ Text messaging
  - ✓ APPS
2. **Adult Staff to Minor Staff (Peer to Peer Communication):** The YMCA of the Fox Cities strongly advises against communication outside of work between adult staff and minor staff. This includes:
  - ✓ Messaging on social media
  - ✓ Texts or emails
  - ✓ Personal phone calls

Such communication significantly increases the risk of abuse, misunderstandings, inappropriate boundaries, or false allegations of abuse.
3. **Minor Participant Communication:**
  - ✓ If any staff member is communicating with a minor participant, a second adult **must** be included; either a parent and/or YMCA supervisor.
  - ✓ Staff personal contact information, including but not limited to phone number, e-mail address, social media shall not be given to minor participants.

## **Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy**

1. Staff are not permitted to use Cell Phones/Electronic Devices for personal use while working with youth, as it prevents quality supervision.
2. YMCA Cell Phones/Electronic Devices may only be used as a tool to perform job responsibilities.
3. When a YMCA device is provided, the YMCA device **must** be used.
4. When a YMCA device **is not** provided staff may use personal cell phones/electronic devices in case of emergencies or in situations where contacting a supervisor/fellow staff member is necessary.
5. Software platforms used by the YMCA containing participant personal information shall not be on personal devices, unless you are an approved administrator. This includes but not limited to Lillio and Daxko.
6. When a YMCA device is provided, staff are not permitted to take pictures of participants on personal devices.
7. When a YMCA device is not provided, pictures taken must be uploaded and deleted daily with other staff as witness of completion.
8. Staff are not permitted to communicate with parents regarding children in their care on personal devices, through phone calls, personal e-mail/text, or social media.

## **F. Gift Giving**

Molesters routinely groom youths by giving gifts, thereby endearing themselves to the youth. They might instruct the youth to keep the gifts a secret, which then starts teaching the youth to keep secrets from parents. For this reason, staff and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youths, and only under the following circumstances:

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift.
2. Parents must be notified.

**Violations of any work rules, including those stated above, 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.**

## **IV. Monitoring and Supervision**

When staff are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they face detection. When youths are adequately supervised, they too are less likely to engage in inappropriate interactions with others. Similarly, the physical plant 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.

### **A. Facility Monitoring**

Building architecture can increase or mitigate the risk of an incident or accident. Because 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 all of the locations are properly and consistently monitored. Best practice is for the Building Supervisor/Manager on Duty to be moving through the facility and completing a branch specific facility checklist at least once per shift.

### **B. Checking Members into a Facility:**

1. When anyone (members, guests, residents, construction workers, maintenance, cleaning crews, etc.) enters the facility during operational hours, they must check in with the front desk.
2. When possible, create a single point of entry and exit in the facility.
3. 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:

1. **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.
2. **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 youths with special needs. Refer to local licensing requirements and general best practice guidelines for establishing adult-to-youth ratios.

In order to protect the YMCA of the Fox Cities 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 unless approved in advance

by the organization administration. When staff or volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff, volunteers or other participants can see them.

3. **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 youths 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 Fox Cities allows youth 6 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, youths 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. Youths should know that they will be supervised by 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 youths that enter the facility; to direct youths to the structured activities or authorized areas; and, to redirect youths 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). This staff should document the scheduled and periodic sweeps of high risk locations.

Ultimately, all kids must be supervised at all times, regardless of age. The key to remember is that they can be supervised directly in structured activities and indirectly when they are in authorized areas.

## **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 youths to enter.

- a. For “Group Bathroom Breaks”:
  - Require staff to take groups of two or more youths to the bathroom – following the “rule of three” or more.
  - If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
  - If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youths as there are stalls.
  - Minimize youths of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
  - Require staff to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
- b. For single use restrooms:
  - Require youths to ask permission to use the bathroom.
  - Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.
- c. Prohibit staff from using the bathroom at the same time as youths when supervising youth in a program.
- d. If assisting young youths in the stalls, the staff should keep the door to the stall open.

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

The locker room procedures include:

- a. Requiring staff to stand within earshot of the locker room when in use by youths.
- b. Requiring staff to intermittently and briefly check inside the locker room so users know the locker room is monitored.
- c. Discouraging the use of locker rooms by youths of different ages at the same time.
- d. Prohibiting the use of locker room horseplay such as towel snapping.
- e. When possible, arrange lockers to minimize unnecessary privacy.

### **3. Shower Activities**

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

- a. While the youths shower, at least one staff member should stand in the bathroom doorway and within earshot of the youths. 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 youths 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 youths to supervise. To decrease the risk of incidents, implement the following best practices:

- a. Require youths to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
- b. Specify the staff-to-youth ratio.
- c. Specify narrow geographic boundaries in the program areas.
- d. Ensure that all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise ("zone monitoring").
- e. Include bathroom procedures.
- f. Require periodic roll calls for each age group.
- g. Require supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of the entire activity area.

### **5. Playground Activities**

The playground procedures require:

- a. Youths to remain in line-of-site of staff at all times.
- b. Definition of specific and narrow geographic boundaries around the playground area.
- c. Specific instructions on how to monitor barriers of supervision (such as storage sheds, playhouses, tunnels, and shrubs).
- d. That all staff are assigned specific areas to supervise ("zone monitoring").
- e. Specific bathroom procedures.
- f. Staff to conduct periodic roll calls for each age group.
- g. Supervisors to conduct periodic check-ins and assessments of the activity period and of the entire activity area.

## 6. Transportation Activities

Transporting youths 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 youths. In addition, transportation activities may provide a time for unsupervised youths to engage in youth-to-youth sexual activity.

The transportation guidelines for contracted or YMCA owned transportation:

- a. Require written parent permission from all youths 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 youths 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 youths are seated by themselves or with a staff member.
- f. Prohibit drivers from making unauthorized stops.
- g. Require documentation of any unusual occurrences.

**Staff are not allowed to transport minors in their personal vehicles. If an emergency situation arises and this is necessary, staff must obtain permission from an administrator.**

In situations where staff transport youths in non-organization vehicles:

- a. Administrators must be notified of all transportation activities.
- b. Use the "rule of three" when transporting youths: At least two adults must transport a single youth, or at least two youths must be present if transported by a single adult.
- c. Youths must never be transported without written permission from a parent.
- d. Youths must be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops may be made.
- e. A staff member must document beginning and ending times and mileage, the names of youths, and other staff and volunteers who are involved in transportation, purpose of the transportation, and destination.
- f. Staff must avoid unnecessary physical contact with youths while in vehicles.
- g. When possible, staff should avoid engaging in sensitive conversations with youths.

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

The off-site procedures include:

- a. Requiring supervisor approval for all off-site activities.
- b. Requiring parental approval.
- c. Specifying staff-to-youth ratios for the activity.
- d. Requiring staff and youths to be easily identifiable.
- e. Including specific bathroom and locker room procedures as applicable to outing.
- f. Including transportation procedures.
- g. Including instructions for a supervisor to observe the off-site activities at scheduled times and random intervals.
- h. Considering specific recommendations based on the location and type of activity (for example, Amusement parks, Water Parks, Arcades, etc.).

## **8. Overnight Activities**

Overnight stays present unique risks to youths 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.

Supervision Guidelines:

- a. All overnight activities must be documented and approved in writing by the Program Director.
- b. Administrators 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 youths to attend the overnight.
- e. Determine the appropriate staff-to-youth ratios before the event and schedule staff accordingly.
- f. Meetings with the group should be hosted in open and observable areas; meetings should not be hosted in staff or youth rooms.

Overnights at the Facility:

- a. Physical boundaries within the organization must be clearly defined and explained to the youths.
- b. Assign each staff to a specific group of youths to supervise. Each staff should then maintain a role sheet that lists all of the youths in his or

- her 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, such as the bathrooms, entrances and exits, hallways, etc. 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, separate the male and female youths into separate rooms and post staff at the entrances and exits to these rooms. If this is not feasible, separate males and females by as much space as possible.
  - e. When performing room checks, staff should always go in pairs.
  - f. At least one staff must stay awake overnight.

#### 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 youths.
- c. Assign each staff to a specific group of youths to supervise. Each staff should then maintain a role sheet that lists all of the youths 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 youths sneaking out (such as by the door).
- e. In hotel rooms, assign youths to rooms based on sex and age. Staff should have their own rooms. If staff must share rooms with youths, they must have their own beds and never change in front of youths.
- f. All staff are to be on duty in the halls or cabins at night until an hour after lights out and all rooms are quiet.

## **F. Supervisors and Administrators Monitoring On-Site and Off-Site Programs**

**Keep a record.** Document your supervision visits. Include information like your arrival and departure times, which youths and parents were present, and a summary of the information collected. Provide staff with feedback about visits.

**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.

**Arrive before staff.** Check punctuality and the routine that staff follow to prepare for the youths to arrive.

**Survey the physical environment.** Is this a suitable location for the activity (e.g. size of area for number of youths, ability to supervise all areas used by youths, landscaping that may inhibit supervision)?

**Watch activities.** Are they planned and organized? Are the staff actively involved? Ask to see the schedule of activities and compare with what is actually going on at a given time.

**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.

**Observe Interactions.**

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

## V. 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 youths. In the event that 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 youths
- Buying gifts for individual youths
- Making suggestive comments to youths
- Picking favorites

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths 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:

In the event that 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:

- a. Increase monitoring or supervision of the staff, volunteer, or program.
- b. If policy violations with youths 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 Fox Cities Employee Handbook.
- c. If more information is needed, interview and/or survey other staff and volunteers or youths.

### 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 or 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 or anonymously. 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.*

In addition to reporting to state authorities, staff and volunteers are required to report any suspected or known abuse of youths 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:

- a. Immediate supervisor
- b. Directors
- c. Administrators

#### ***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 to 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.

## 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:

| <i><b>Prohibited Youth-to-Youth Interactions</b></i>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hazing</li><li>• Bullying</li><li>• Derogatory name-calling</li><li>• Games of Truth or Dare</li><li>• Singling out one child for different treatment</li><li>• Ridicule or humiliation</li></ul> |

In order to adequately respond to and track incidents within the organization, all sexual activity between youths and sexualized behaviors of youths 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 youths, you should immediately separate them.
- Calmly explain that such interactions are not permitted and separate the youths.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Complete the necessary paperwork including what you observed and how you responded.
- Follow your supervisor's instructions regarding notifying the authorities and informing the parents of the youth involved.
- In some cases, if the problem is recurring discipline may be required including not allowing one or both youths 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 youths 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 youths 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:

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

#### **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:

| <i><b>Guidelines for Organizational Response</b></i>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the need for additional supervision.</li><li>• Review the need for revised policies or procedures.</li><li>• Review the need for additional training.</li><li>• Alert others in the organization.</li></ul> |