



# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CODE OF CONDUCT AND MANDATED REPORTING INFORMATION

## YMCA OF THE FOX CITIES

### Youth Sports Volunteers

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.

#### TYPES OF ABUSE:

Child abuse can occur in a child's home, or in organizations, schools, or communities where the child interacts. The four types of abuse and neglect and their definitions are:

- **Physical abuse** – Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means.
- **Sexual abuse** – Sexual intercourse or sexual touching of a child, sexual exploitation, forced viewing of sexual activity, or permitting, allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution.
- **Psychological/Emotional abuse** – Harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning which is exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or aggression. May be demonstrated by substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response or learning which are incompatible with the child's age or stage of development.
- **Neglect** – negligent treatment, lack of treatment, or the maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare.

#### SIGNS OF ABUSE:

Following are the major signs of physical, sexual and psychological/emotional abuse and neglect. One of these, or even several in combination, may not indicate that abuse has occurred. They may indicate accidents or that medical conditions, emotional illness or other problems exist. If a number of these signs occur together or if they reoccur frequently, child abuse and neglect may be suspected.

- **Physical abuse** – Bruise, welts on face, neck, chest, back; injuries in shape of object (belt, cord); unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back; fractures that do not fit the story of how an injury occurred; afraid to go home; frightened of parents; fearful of other adults.
- **Sexual abuse** – Pain, swelling or itching in genital area; bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area; difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain; unusual interest in sex for age; regressive or childlike behavior.
- **Psychological/Emotional abuse** – Low self-esteem; self-denigration; severe depression; aggression; withdrawal; severe anxiety.
- **Neglect** – Poor hygiene, odor; inappropriately dressed for weather; needs medical or dental care; left alone, unsupervised for long periods; constant hunger, begs or steals for food; extreme willingness to please; arrives early and stays late at school or play areas or other people's homes.

#### UNDERSTANDING ABUSERS/GROOMING TECHNIQUES:

The two most common types of adult abusers are preferential and opportunistic. Preferential offenders usually take time getting to know and interact with their victims. Once we know what to look for, we can interrupt them before they harm a child. Opportunistic offenders take advantage of an opportunity. This can occur when a child is out of sight of others, when in a crowd of others or in a private area such as restroom or locker room.

Child abusers need three things to operate: Access, Privacy and Control. These are usually specific red flags displayed when an adult is trying to gain access, privacy and control. Here are brief characteristics of the abuser's grooming process:

- **Access:** They gain access as a volunteer or staff person through a program serving children within an age and gender of preference. They may befriend single parents and spend a lot of time with kids. Will break rules to be around kids. Grooms parent and community into permitting increased access to children.
- **Privacy:** Looks for opportunities to be alone with children, such as taking them to the bathroom; offering private lessons, rides, or tutoring; meeting in private spaces out of sight of others; or staying late on job or premises where there are children. Ignores policies and breaks rules regarding privacy with children. Discourages other adults from participating in or monitoring his or her activities with children.

Communicates privately with children via e-mail messages, instant messages, texting, or social networking.

- **Control:** Becomes overly physical or becomes progressively more physically inappropriate. Spends too much time with a child or is overly involved in the child's private life. Encourages children to break or "stretch" the rules. Gives special gifts, especially without permission. Treats children as if they were peers (uses inappropriate language or swears, tells off-color jokes, talks to kids about personal topics). Wants to keep secrets with children. Threatens or intimates a child to get them not to tell others.

### **UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES:**

Child molesters will try to violate children's boundaries. There are three types of boundaries:

- **Physical boundaries** determine who can touch you, how much they can touch you, and where they can touch you.
- **Emotional boundaries** determine how close you feel to someone, how much time you spend with them, and what information you share with them.
- **Behavioral boundaries** determine the rules you follow, the things you will do, and the things you won't do.

Some behaviors are not suspected child abuse, but they just don't seem right. Examples include:

- Paying too much attention to a particular athlete.
- Repeatedly publicly humiliating an athlete.
- Imposing extreme physical consequences.
- Sending romantic text messages or gifts
- Having an athlete babysit
- Giving athletes massages

If you notice behaviors like these, it is important to **interrupt the behavior and report it to YMCA Staff.**

The following policies/procedures have been set to protect children, staff and volunteers in our YMCA programs.

### **SUPERVISION:**

1. In order to protect YMCA of the Fox Cities staff, volunteers and program participants at no time during a program may a volunteer be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that staff can see them.
2. Volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: Volunteers will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Volunteers will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the volunteer (not being alone with a child). If a volunteer 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 pairs and whenever possible, with staff/volunteers. Follow the "rule of 3," striving to have two adults whenever possible.
4. Volunteers 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. Volunteers shall not abuse children including, but not limited to:
  - **Physical abuse** – strike, spank, shake, slap
  - **Verbal (Psychological/Emotional) abuse** – name calling, shaming, belittling, derogatory remarks, secret keeping, harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth, derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family
  - **Sexual abuse** – inappropriate touch or verbal exchange
  - **Mental abuse** – shaming, withholding love, cruelty
  - **Neglect** – withholding food, water, basic care, etc.

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

2. Volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Volunteers 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. Volunteers must respond to children with respect and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion and/or culture. Volunteers must portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.

4. Volunteers 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 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 volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development,</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas.</li> </ul>

5. Volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in Y programs outside of the Y.

6. Volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles.

7. Volunteers may not date program participants under the age of 18 years of age.

8. 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.

9. Volunteers may not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth.

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

**YMCA EXPECTATIONS:**

1. It is a volunteer’s legal and ethical duty to report suspected abuse or suspicious behavior. Volunteers will cooperate fully with any investigation. Contact your supervisor or other YMCA staff member in any situation of suspected abuse.

2. Volunteers 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, volunteers 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 volunteer hours is prohibited.

5. Smoking or use of tobacco or vaping products in the presence of children or parents during volunteer hours is prohibited.

6. Volunteers must be free of physical or psychological conditions that might adversely affect children’s physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.

**MANDATED REPORTER REQUIREMENTS:**

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

**How to Respond When an Athlete Discloses Abuse:**

- **Step 1: Listen** – Do your best to stay calm and let him/her talk. Don’t pry, but you can ask a few questions that will help you understand what happened. “Can you tell me more about that?” “What happened next?”
- **Step 2: Reassure** – Your athlete may be scared, angry, confused and crying. You can assure them with a few simple comments like: “I know how hard this is to talk about.” “Don’t worry, you are doing the right thing by letting someone know.” “This isn’t your fault. You’ve done nothing wrong.”
- **Step 3: Protect** – Make sure your athlete is safe. Do not let the accused person have any further contact with him/her and tell the athlete you will do everything you can to keep them safe. Let the athlete know you must share what he/she had told you with others who can help.

- **Step 4: Report** – Write down as quickly as you can everything the athlete shared with you in as much detail as possible, using the athlete’s actual words, not your interpretation.

Staff and volunteer sports coaches will:

- Be familiar with the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
- Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youths 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 or as a YMCA Volunteer Coach, 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.

- Calumet County Dept. of Human Services
  - Office Hours: 920-849-1400
  - Office Hours Crisis: 920-849-9317
  - After Hours Crisis Lines: 920-849-9317 or 920-832-4646
- Outagamie County Dept. of Human Services
  - Office Hours: 920-832-5161
  - After Hours: 920-832-4646
- Winnebago County Dept. of Human Services
  - Office Hours: 920-236-4615
  - After Hours: 920-233-7707

We ask that you also communicate with your supervisor, Sports & Recreation Coordinator or Director 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.

**I agree to abide by the Child Abuse Code of Conduct and understand my responsibilities as a YMCA Volunteer Coach and Mandated Reporter:**

**Volunteer Name** (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_