

YMCA OF EASTERN ONTARIO SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY



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YMCA SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. POLICY STATEMENT.....	3
3. TERMINOLOGY	3
4. GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE.....	6
4.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT	6
4.2 MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS.....	6
4.3 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS	7
5. PEOPLE AND PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE	7
5.1 RECRUITING AND SCREENING.....	7
5.2 STRATEGIES TO ENAHNCE YMCA COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN.....	9
5.3 ONGOING RELEVANCY	9
6. RESPONDING.....	9
6.1 PROCEDURE FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.....	9
6.2 PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE INVLOVING YMCA STAFF/VOLUNTEER.....	10
6.3 MANAGING A CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT INVOLVING MORE THAN ONE CHILD.....	10
6.4 INFORMATION MANANGEMENT.....	11
6.5 CONTACTS AND RESOURCES.....	12
7. PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT.....	12
7.1 ACCESS.....	12
7.2 MONITORING.....	13
7.3 E SAFTEY.....	13
APPENDIX A: CHILD PROTECTION AGENCIES CONTACT INFORMATION.....	15
APPENDIX B: DUTY TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE PROCEDURE.....	16
APPENDIX C: YMCA SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT FORM – SAMPLE.....	19
APPENDIX D: RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE AGAINST THE YMCA	21
APPENDIX E: YMCA POLICY AND PROCEDURES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	22
APPENDIX F: YMCA EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM.....	23
APPENDIX G: YMCA VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM.....	25
APPENDIX H: YMCA ACCIDENT/INCIDENT FORM.....	27
APPENDIX I: YMCA STAFF AND VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT.....	30

YMCA SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1 INTRODUCTION

The YMCA of Eastern Ontario is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children and young people participating in all aspects of the programs we deliver. The National Child Safety and Protection Initiative is the YMCA's coordinated effort for improving safety standards in our programs through on-going policy, training, supervision requirements, reporting protocols and facility controls. At the YMCA, safeguarding children and young people is our highest priority. We want children and young people to feel safe and be safe, at the YMCA, in their families and in their community. Our facilities and programs are designed to be inclusive, and endeavor to be community hubs that thrive with participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, 2SLGBTQ2+, socioeconomic positions, gender expressions, religious affiliations as well as various levels of physical, social and cognitive development. The YMCA is committed to ensuring that all participants are protected from discrimination.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of the policy is to:

- **Establish a Safe Environment:** Implementing appropriate safety measures, risk assessments, and physical safeguards including ensuring proper supervision, secure facilities and effective safety protocols.
- **Raising Awareness and Education:** Increasing awareness and educating staff, volunteers and participants about child safety and protection, including the identification of potential risks, signs of abuse and appropriate responses.
- **Ensuring Legal Compliance:** Aligning with relevant laws, regulations and policies related to child protection allows the YMCA to meet legal requirements and demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding children.
- **Establishing Clear Policies and Procedures:** Establish clear and comprehensive policies and procedures that define expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff, volunteers and stakeholders involved in the care and supervision of children.
- **Reporting and Response Mechanisms:** Clear Guidelines are established for reporting and responding to suspected cases of child abuse or neglect as well as protocols for reporting incidents, conducting investigations and providing support to affected individuals.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Promoting on-going evaluation and improvement of child safety and protection practices, including policy review, conducting regular training and remaining up to date on best practices.

3. TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are used in this policy:

YMCA refers to the YMCA of Eastern Ontario.

Child under provincial child protection legislation, is someone who is or appears to be under 18 years of age.

Child Abuse can be of a physical, emotional or sexual nature, or neglect. It may consist of just one incident, or it may happen repeatedly. A child can be subjected to more than one form of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** could result from a parent or person in charge causing physical injury to a child, or failing to adequately supervise a child or from a pattern of neglect of the child.

Examples of physical abuse include beating, slapping, hitting, pushing, throwing, shaking, burning. **A child who is physically abused** may have burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object; not want to go home; be afraid of adults; wear inappropriate clothing (e.g. long sleeves on a very hot day).

- **Sexual abuse** happens when a parent or other person in charge sexually molests or uses a child for sexual purposes or knowingly fails to protect a child from sexual abuse.

Examples of sexual abuse include any sexual act between an adult and a child, including intercourse; fondling; exposing a child to adult sexual activity; sexual exploitation through child prostitution or child pornography. **A child who is sexually abused** may have an inappropriate knowledge of sexual acts; be very compliant or extremely aggressive; be afraid of a certain person or a family member; have difficulty walking or sitting.

- **Emotional abuse** occurs when a parent or other person in charge harms a child's sense of self. It includes acts or omissions that result in, or place a child at risk of serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental health problems.

Examples of emotional abuse include yelling at, screaming at, threatening, frightening, or bullying a child; humiliating the child, name-calling, making negative comparisons to others; showing little to no physical affection (such as hugs) or words of affection or praise; saying that everything is the child's fault; withdrawing attention, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'; confining a child in a closet or a dark room, or tying the child to a chair for long periods of time; or exposing a child to domestic violence, allowing the child to be present during violent behaviour of others, including the physical abuse of others. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse. **A child who is emotionally abused** may show signs of serious anxiety, depression or withdrawal; show self-destructive or aggressive behavior; show delays in physical, emotional or mental development.

- **Neglect** happens when a child's parent or other person in charge fails to provide for basic needs.

Examples of neglect include failing to provide proper food, clothing suitable for the weather, supervision, a home that is clean and safe, medical care as needed; failing to provide emotional support, love and affection. **A child who is neglected** may not wear clothing that's suitable for the weather; be dirty or unbathed; be very hungry; or not be properly supervised.

Any of the above signs of child abuse noticed by a staff or volunteer must be reported

*immediately to a child protection authority. See **Appendix A** for child protection authority contact information.*

Duty of Care is a legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants.

Duty to Report is defined under Child and Family Services Act that sets out what must be reported to a child protection authority or agency. A report must be made immediately if a child is or appears to be suffering from abuse or is at *risk of harm*. **Duty to report** applies to the public, and includes special reporting responsibilities for professionals whose work involves children.

- **Child in need of protection** is defined under Child, Youth & Family Services Act of 2017 as a *child who is or who appears to be suffering from abuse, neglect or risk of harm*. Anyone who has *reasonable grounds* to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion to a child protection authority (e.g. Children's Aid Society - CAS). Refer to Section 6 for Duty to Report procedures.
- **Risk of harm** is the risk that a child is likely to be physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected.
- **Reasonable grounds** refers to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgment, would need in order to decide to report. It is not the person's responsibility to prove or have proof of abuse; investigation is the role of child protection authorities.

Refer to section 6 for more information on 'duty to report' suspected child abuse.

Police/criminal records check (CRC) is a search of the records held in the information database of a police agency. It may include a check of national or local and regional police records. All positions at the Association require a Police/Criminal Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC).

Position of Trust or authority is created when an individual's relationship with someone else has any of the following characteristics: decision-making power; unsupervised access; closeness inherent in the relationship; personal nature of the activity itself.

Staff means salaried, regular, hourly, seasonal, and supply staff.

Volunteers include program volunteers, policy (Board/Board Committees/Regional Council) volunteers, philanthropy/fundraising volunteers and student placements and are not left alone with children. Special event volunteers are defined as volunteers who provide assistance for an event which occurs within one day and who have limited interaction and are not left alone with children. Fund raising volunteers provide support to the Association and do not have access to participants.

Human Resources Policies and Procedures is a document which outlines the YMCA of Eastern Ontario's guidelines pertaining to full, part-time, contract/term employees and volunteers.

4. GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

The YMCA of Eastern Ontario is committed to promoting safe practices to protect children from harm or abuse. We have a legal obligation to promptly report any suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection. Section 125 of Ontario's Child, Youth & Family Services Act (CYFSA) states that the public, including professionals who work with children, must promptly report any suspicions that a child is or may be in need of protection to a child protection agency (CAS). The Act recognizes that people working closely with children have a special awareness of the signs of child abuse and neglect, and a particular responsibility to report their suspicions. All YMCA staff and volunteers who come into contact with children have a duty to help protect them from abuse or risk of abuse.

The responsibility for managing this policy lies with YMCA management. The YMCA shall appoint a designated person(s) who will have responsibility for the implementation of the child protection policy and procedures in their association. The CEO will ensure the designated person(s) has necessary resources and support within their official responsibilities to carry out their responsibility for child protection.

4.1 YMCA Board of Directors and Management team is responsible for protecting children and vulnerable persons by:

- Providing oversight of a Safeguarding framework that includes establishing policies and procedures, and monitoring;
- Establishing a reporting protocol that complies with provincial child protection legislation;
- Establishing recruitment and screening including police records check procedures;
- Ensuring systems are in place for regular review, reporting and evaluation of effectiveness of child and vulnerable persons protection initiatives;
- Ensuring liability insurance, including coverage for child abuse and sexual abuse is current
- Appointing a member of YMCA management team; **Jill MacDonald(Senior Director Association and Child Care Services) Child Protection Lead, YMCA of Eastern Ontario** having special responsibility for advancing the objectives of this Policy and child protection legislation.

4.2 YMCA Managers and Supervisors have additional responsibilities for maintaining safe environments in all facilities and program areas by:

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers have read, understand and signed off on *the YMCA Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure Sign Off (Appendix E) and completed the level 1 module on the LMS prior to beginning their employment*
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers receive an orientation and on-going training as well as ensure re-fresher training in safeguarding children is provided annually;
- Ensuring recruitment, screening including police check/recheck procedures are implemented;
- Ensuring programs are developmentally appropriate and well planned in advance;
- Maintaining physical security and other safeguards to protect children accessing YMCA programs;
- Ensuring that if a staff person is under the age of 18 and does not have a CRC on file that they are working alongside a staff member who is over the age of 18 and has a CRC on file
- Responding promptly to any complaints, reports or allegations against staff or volunteers.

4.3 YMCA Staff and Volunteers are expected to abide by this Policy that includes:

- Following the Code of Conduct for the safeguarding of children;
- Participating in mandatory and re-fresher training in protecting children and duty to report;
- Producing acceptable police records/re-check clearance letters;
- Reporting immediately any suspicion of abuse to the appropriate protection agency;
- Notifying their supervisor or staff contact that a report has been made to a child protection authority;
- Helping to maintain a safe environment for the safeguarding of children
- Actively supervising children who are using the YMCA.
- Informing their supervisor of any criminal charges that could impact their ability to work with children (ie: no longer able to get a satisfactory CRC)

4.4 Safeguarding Children Lead

- Advance the objectives of the Safeguarding Children policy and child protection across the association.
- Maintain a committee to oversee safeguarding children advancement
- Maximize the use of resources and supports available to effectively deliver the Y's safeguarding strategy and advocate for the association.
- Ensure compliance with Y Canada Safeguarding standards and proactively inform changes based on wise practice
- Respond to safeguarding concerns,

5. PEOPLE AND PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

Staff and Volunteers as well as program participants are of the utmost importance to the YMCA. In the course of staff or volunteer work at the YMCA, even if not working directly with children, there are times when staff or volunteers will encounter and interact with children. The YMCA is committed to treating everyone with respect and dignity, and to helping children grow and develop to their full potential in a safe and caring environment.

Staff and volunteers are required to follow the Code of Conduct that describes good practices and includes practices to be avoided or prohibited. **Appendix I**

5.1 Recruiting, Screening and Training Staff/Volunteers

Proper screening of potential employees and volunteers is essential for matching people and YMCA roles or positions, for ensuring the quality of YMCA programs, for maintaining safe YMCA environments, and for reducing or eliminating the risk of harm to children.

The YMCA maintains comprehensive, clearly communicated recruitment and screening processes that are consistently applied across the Association. A documented recruitment and selection process is in keeping with regulatory requirements relevant to screening including Employment Standards and Eligibility to Work in Canada, Child Protection, Human Rights, Information and Privacy, Youth Criminal Justice, and other legislated requirements.

The following general procedures shall apply when recruiting and screening potential YMCA staff and volunteers. Refer also to YMCA Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual for more information.

- a) All forms of advertising used to recruit and select staff and volunteers will include a statement that YMCA offers of employment (or volunteer assignment) are contingent upon the successful completion of a police records check or Statutory Declaration for those under the age of 18 years.
- b) All applicants will be required to complete an application form (see Appendix F and G) or submit a signed cover letter and resume, to obtain relevant details for the position including prior work experience with children.
- c) Formal interviews in person or by telephone are conducted and will include questions designed to determine suitability for working with children or vulnerable persons for all positions of trust.
- d) A minimum of three (3) professional reference checks will be completed before a staff or volunteer position is offered. Reference checks are conducted to reveal more about the candidate's patterns of job performance, to predict success on the job or volunteer assignment, and to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the candidate through their application and interview responses. If a young candidate has little or no prior work experience, professional/personal references may include coaches, teachers, leadership facilitators, etc. References contacted should be asked to confirm the nature of their relationship to the candidate to indicate they meet the YMCA reference check requirement.
- e) Potential employees and volunteers will be offered positions conditional upon the production of a satisfactory criminal records check (**CRC and VSC**), and acceptance of YMCA employment obligations including adhering to YMCA policies that include child protection and duty to report requirements. Those under the age of 18 will sign the statutory declaration and are expected to obtain a CRC and VSC within 60 days of turning 18.
- f) An acceptable CRC is obtained for all staff and volunteers before starting training or first day of work. Where there are known delays in processing time to receive a CRC including vulnerable sector, the candidate will sign a statutory declaration that the check has been requested and provide confirmation of the request (ie. Email or receipt from granting body. Supervisors shall refer to any additional screening procedures established by the Association.
- g) Vulnerable sector screening (and where available, Child Abuse Registry Check) will be completed at a minimum for all staff and volunteers having regular contact with children.
- h) Supervisors and managers follow a documented process when addressing situations where a positive record has been identified. A positive CRC doesn't necessarily preclude employment however these cases must be reviewed by the CEO or designate. The CRC Approval in the Event of a Criminal Record form must be signed by the CEO or designate confirming the nature of the offence is not expected to impact their position.
- i) During orientation, new staff and volunteers will be made aware of policies regarding safeguarding children as well as their duty to report suspected abuse, and YMCA code of conduct/behavior expectations. All staff and volunteers shall complete a Policy sign-off form (see Appendix E).
- j) Supervisors shall ensure that mandatory training on Safeguarding Children is completed prior to employment or volunteer assignment. Re-fresher training must be completed annually.
- k) All employee and volunteer records (including training records) will be maintained in keeping with information and records management processes, which will include appropriate safeguards to protect highly sensitive, personal information such as police records checks and references.
- l) An ongoing police records re-check process for existing staff is implemented every 3 years and followed consistently across the Association. Supervisors and managers shall follow police records check screening and re-checking procedures established by the YMCA for all staff and volunteers.

For more information about recruitment, screening and training, please refer to the YMCA of Eastern Ontario, Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual as well as Volunteer Management Policies and Procedures.

5.4 STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE YMCA COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING CHILDREN

The YMCA is committed to an ongoing strategy for the safeguarding of children and maintaining safe environments, which includes:

- providing training and education that ensures staff and volunteers know their responsibilities (job description and code of conduct) and duty to report;
 - monitoring YMCA's effectiveness in its commitment to safeguarding children;
 - providing mechanisms for feedback and appropriate response to complaints or disclosures.
- **Training and education** increases knowledge and awareness of individual and organizational roles in safeguarding children, and ensures the effectiveness of this policy. Through education and training that includes new staff orientation, mandatory and annual re-fresher training with sign-off requirements, the YMCA fosters awareness among staff and volunteers of their responsibility.
 - **Monitoring:** The YMCA has implemented a formal monitoring system that includes self-assessments, peer and third party assessments of compliance with policies and procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable persons. Assessments are completed at least annually to identify where further enhancements may be needed to maintain the safety of YMCA program environments.

5.5 ONGOING RELEVANCY:

The YMCA, through its appointed child protection lead or designate shall review this policy annually to ensure effectiveness and ongoing relevancy given also changing laws and public expectations.

Maintaining safe environments is a team approach. Supervisors and staff can speak with their program or facility manager, their senior manager, or contact the Association lead for child protection for more information.

The YMCA of Eastern Ontario shall continue to instill a culture of shared accountability and responsibility across the Association for the safeguarding of children.

6. RESPONDING

6.1 Duty to Report Procedure for Suspected Child Abuse And Neglect

In the event that a child discloses or there are grounds to suspect child abuse, the YMCA will take prompt and immediate action. The YMCA is mandated by provincial law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

General Procedure:

- a) Staff and volunteers of the YMCA will take allegations of abuse seriously.
- b) The YMCA will ensure that staff and volunteers working with children are familiar with their duty to report and the procedure for reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a child.
- c) YMCA staff and volunteers shall follow duty to report suspected abuse procedures. Refer to **Appendix B** for an example of duty to report procedures from a YMCA.

- d) The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk by taking measures as advised by **Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington** or **Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville**. Refer to **Appendix A** for child protection agency contact information.
- e) In the event the reported incident involves an allegation against a staff or volunteer, the procedure for responding to an allegation against the YMCA will be followed. See section 9 below for more information. Refer also to **Appendix D** for an example of response to an allegation procedure from a YMCA.
- f) A report will be completed in accordance with relevant provincial child protection reporting requirements, and the Association will cooperate with any legal authority involved. Refer to **Appendix C** for a sample form to report suspected abuse.
- g) All information related to a disclosure or allegation of abuse will be treated confidentially. Documentation regarding a report to a child protection authority must not be circulated internally nor given to anyone, unless a warrant or subpoena is provided.
Appendix B.

6.2 MANAGING AN ALLEGATION, COMPLAINT OR CLAIM OF ABUSE AGAINST THE YMCA

In the event of an allegation, complaint or claim of abuse against a staff or volunteer of the YMCA, the following procedures shall apply.

- If a staff or volunteer suspects or receives an allegation or complaint of abuse about another YMCA staff, volunteer or student placement, he/she will follow the procedure for reporting an allegation or suspicion of abuse to the appropriate child protection authority. Refer to **Appendix D** for an example from a YMCA of procedures for responding to allegations of abuse against the YMCA.
- As soon as a call has been made to a child protection authority, the staff or volunteer will promptly notify their manager that a call has been made involving a suspicion of abuse against a YMCA staff or volunteer. The manager shall immediately notify the senior lead responsible for child protection who will inform appropriate management team members in keeping with the YMCA's escalation protocol. Management will ensure any additional child safety concerns, human resources, insurance (see 9.3 below), and other mandatory reporting requirements are addressed, and that the appropriate follow up steps are implemented once child protection authorities have completed their investigation, in keeping with established YMCA procedures.
- In the event of an allegation of abuse of a vulnerable person against a staff, volunteer or student placement, a manager shall be notified immediately by the staff or volunteer suspecting or receiving an allegation of abuse, and the senior manager shall immediately inform management for appropriate handling and response. If the vulnerable person's safety is at risk or in immediate danger, staff shall call the police as outlined in section 7 above.

6.3 Managing A Child Protection Incident Involving More Than One Child

- If a staff observes or becomes aware of an incident where more than one child is involved in what is considered a "serious incident" but not an allegation of abuse, staff are required to complete the YMCA Incident Form **Appendix H** ensuring they collect the necessary information.

Staff should inform their supervisor of the incident immediately who should then contact the Child Protection Lead or CEO. The parents/guardians of the individuals should be contacted by a senior leader.

- If a child or parent/guardian discloses abuse by another participant in the program, staff should follow the established reporting procedures and in the case of a parent or guardian disclosing, staff should encourage them to file a report as well, on their child's behalf with Children's Services. When reporting to children's services, staff should confirm that they will be having a supervisor/senior leader contact the parents/guardians of children involved. The staff should inform their supervisor who should inform the Child Protection Lead or CEO who will inform appropriate management team members in keeping with the YMCA's escalation protocol. Management will ensure any additional child safety concerns, human resources, insurance (see 9.3 below), and other mandatory reporting requirements are addressed, and that the appropriate follow up steps are implemented once child protection authorities have completed their investigation, in keeping with established YMCA procedures.

6.4 Information Management

- a) Staff and volunteers will follow the documentation and information handling procedures required under relevant child protection legislation.
- b) A report will be completed in accordance with relevant provincial child protection reporting requirements, and the YMCA will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved. Refer to **Appendix C** for a sample report form.
- c) All information related to disclosure, or an allegation of abuse will be treated confidentially. Documentation regarding a report to a child protection authority must not be circulated internally nor given to anyone, unless a warrant or subpoena is provided. See section 5 of **Appendix B** that captures documentation guidelines from a YMCA.
- d) All records related to the allegation or complaint will be retained indefinitely by the YMCA, or until such time as determined by the authorities.

- **Insurance**

- a) Any allegation or complaint of abuse involving a YMCA staff or volunteer must be reported promptly to the insurer upon becoming aware of the allegation or complaint, in keeping with notice requirements under insurance policies. Providing the insurer with prompt notice protects the YMCA's ability to trigger abuse coverage under their insurance policies, in the event a legal demand or claim arises in the future.
- b) Liability insurance policies should be kept indefinitely by the YMCA and stored in an accessible and secure location. Retention of insurance policies is important given the historical, long tail nature that characterizes abuse claims.

- **Crisis Communications**

The YMCA shall follow its escalation protocols as part of its proactive emergency response and crisis communication procedures that ensure the following:

- a) Senior managers responsible for responding to escalated or critical incidents understand their role in managing major or crisis events.
- b) Supervisors and staff have easy access to escalation and crisis management policies or protocols.
- c) Orientation includes review of protocols so that new staff and volunteers understand their role in an emergency or crisis situation.

- d) Associations promptly notify YMCA Canada of incidents involving serious injury or death or escalated situations with (potential) media attention.
- e) Organizational learning is incorporated following recovery from an escalated or crisis situation, facilitated by a designated senior lead who also reviews at least annually the effectiveness of the YMCA's escalation and crisis management protocols, for any needed enhancements.
- f) Refer also to YMCA of Eastern Ontario Crisis Communications Framework for more information about crisis escalation for prompt notification, effective decision-making and management support during a major or crisis event.

6.5 CONTACTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

For more information about this policy, staff may speak with their manager or the Association senior lead for child protection. The following sources also provide additional information about child protection:

- **YMCA Canada** - National Child Protection Standard Requirements, child protection training and audit tools;
- Resources available online through **Canadian Centre for Child Protection** at www.protectchildren.ca;
- Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington at www.facsfla.ca
- Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville at www.fcslg.ca
- To view Ontario's Child and Family Services Act, visit www.e-laws.gov.on.ca
- More information about child protection is available at www.ontario.ca/children
- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies at www.oacas.org

7. PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

7.1 ACCESS:

YMCA staff and volunteers have a responsibility to monitor access to program spaces. Individuals should enter and exit from central points of entry only. Every individual entering the YMCA including members, program participants, participant support workers, contractors or service people, and other unaccompanied visitors must be signed in at the front desk. Individuals can be signed in using their membership card or use a piece of government issued ID to confirm their identity. If the individual is not already in the registration system, the front desk staff will create a profile and log the visit. These records are extremely important in the event the YMCA needs to account for who was in the building at any given time.

There may be limited circumstances, such as purchasing a day pass, where an individual may not be able to produce government issued ID to confirm their identity (minor under the age of 16). In this case, a student card or picture of a timetable along with another item with the same name to verify their identity could be considered acceptable.

When picking up a child from a program if a person arrives without ID, they will be asked to get it. If they cannot produce valid identification, YMCA staff can verify by calling the participant's parent/guardian to confirm the pickup arrangement and verify the identity of the person picking up. Best practice would be to have the parent/guardian send an email to confirm prior to releasing the child and store that email with the child's record.

Staff and volunteers will have a membership card and MUST swipe in, where systems exist, whether coming for work or to participate in recreation. Without a membership card they will be asked to sign in with the front desk.

Facility access plans are available in each reporting kit. These plans provide additional information related to access.

7.2 MONITORING:

YMCA staff and volunteers are responsible for monitoring program spaces. Hourly facility sweeps are conducted in each program space. Staff must log sweeps they've conducted on the Facility Sweep log in SharePoint. These logs are retained indefinitely.

During a sweep, staff and volunteers should:

- Maintain a strong presence by greeting individuals and asking questions about the purpose of their visit.
- Ensure areas not in use such as closets, offices and program spaces are locked.
- Access to child care spaces and child minding is restricted

7.3 E Safety

YMCAs provide spaces and environments for children and teens to build healthy relationships, develop new skills, learn, and thrive. Now more than ever, safe spaces and relationships for children and teens are needed; however, moving programs online and having vulnerable teens reaching out to staff electronically poses new risks to child/teen safety and protection. Blurred boundaries, decreased supervision, unauthorized access and peer to peer abuse/cyberbullying are just a few of the examples of emerging risks to children/teens.

The safety and protection of children and teens remains a top priority at the YMCA and this commitment extends to all YMCA digital communications, including email, social media, and texts.

By setting these expectations, not only are we protecting children and teens in our care, we are also modelling good safety practices so they can protect themselves online. We can also protect ourselves from having our actions misinterpreted. Below are acceptable and unacceptable forms of digital communication with minors, defined as children and teens under the legal age of majority*.

Acceptable forms of digital communication

- Emails – Emails with minors can ONLY be exchanged from an official YMCA email address for work related matters. Best practice is to carbon copy (cc) the minor's parent/guardian or your supervisor.
- Text messages – as a general practice, texting is not a recommended form of communication with minors as there can be limited/no ability to maintain a record of the communication, especially once deleted. If you decide to use texting, texts must be clearly related to work (ie: Hi its Jill from the YMCA. Wondering if you could come in to cover a shift today at 3:30p rather than What are you up to after school?) Best practice is that you include a YMCA supervisor (that is currently employed by the YMCA) and send texts from an official YMCA phone number and not a personal number.
- Online groups & meetings – set up a private group (e.g. Facebook group, Zoom call) that meets the following conditions:
 - All online groups and virtual meetings must be organized under an official YMCA account.
 - All online group members must meet the minimum age required by the platform to hold an account (e.g. you need to be at least 13 to set up a Facebook account).
 - There must be at least two (2) staff members over the age of majority designated as administrators for the page, online group, or virtual meeting.

- You must follow the YMCA of Eastern Ontario's privacy policy.
- Online groups and virtual meetings should exist only for the duration of the program. When the program ends, the group or meeting should be closed/deleted.
- Do not publicly share virtual meeting invitation links or meeting recordings. Ensure entry into virtual meetings is password protected.

Unacceptable forms of digital communication

Connecting privately with minors on any online social media accounts or digital channels (other than online groups as indicated above), both personal and work-related, is strictly prohibited.

Other unacceptable forms of communication with minors include:

- Private messaging and emails
- Following or 'friending' children and teens
- Sharing details of your social media accounts and asking a minor to follow you
- Commenting on photos or any other content shared on a social media site, blog, etc.
- In-app communications that do not include a parent/guardian or another YMCA staff member
- Exchanging cell phone numbers, email addresses, or physical mailing addresses

Report communications, connections, or contact if you become aware of another staff member or volunteer communicating inappropriately or trying to initiate outside contact with a minor, immediately to your supervisor. Additional steps may be required regarding reporting to the local child protection authority.

If you already have an outside connection with a child or teen within the organization, or a child or teen tries to initiate an outside connection, report this to your supervisor immediately and discuss appropriate next steps (e.g. block the request, parent communication, or privatize account settings).

Should a child or teen initiate a request to communicate or connect, explain that there are policies that prohibit you from being able to do so.



**APPENDIX A:
CHILD PROTECTION AGENCIES CONTACT INFORMATION**

Child Protection Agency	Phone Number	Website
Family and Children’s Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville 438 Laurier Blvd BROCKVILLE, ON K6V 6C5	613-498-2100 Or 1-855-667-2726 Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	www.fcsllg.ca
Family and Children’s Services of Frontenac, Lennox, Addington 817 Division Street, Kingston, Ontario K7K 4C2	613-545-3227 or 1-855-445-3227 Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	www.facsfla.ca/

Police Services	Non-Emergency Phone Number
Brockville Police 2269 Parkedale Ave. Brockville, ON K6V 3G9	613-342-0127 EMERGENCY 911
Kingston Police Headquarters 705 Division St, Kingston ON K7K 4C2	(613) 549-4660 EMERGENCY 911

APPENDIX B DUTY TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE PROCEDURE

In the event that a child or someone discloses, or a staff, volunteer or placement student suspects child abuse, the procedures outlined below must be followed. Supervisors shall ensure that staff, program volunteers and student placements are aware of their duty to report suspected child abuse to a Child Protection Agency.

1. If you (supervisor, staff, volunteer, student placement) suspect child abuse:

You are required to make the call immediately to a child protection agency (**Brockville: Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville; Kingston: Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox, Addington**)

- You are not to ask anyone for help in making the decision; you must call.
- You may inform your supervisor or manager of the intention to call CAS, if you need their support to ensure that you have the privacy and staff coverage required to immediately make the call.
- If your supervisor or manager is not available, you must proceed with the report to CAS.
- Once you have made the call, notify your senior manager who will notify the senior YMCA lead for child protection that a call has been made to a child protection agency.

*** No staff, student, volunteer or member of the Board of Directors shall advise someone not to report suspicions of child abuse, nor try to stop the person from reporting or consulting with a CAS.*

2. Seeking Medical Attention:

If the child has sustained injuries, seek immediate medical attention.

If an injury is suspected to have been caused by child abuse or family violence, **do not** inform the parent of the intention to seek medical care for the child until you have spoken with a child protection worker and have been given clear direction to do so.

If you think the child is in immediate danger, **call the Police**. Immediately after calling the police, contact a child protection agency (CAS).

3. Avoid Discussing with a Parent or Guardian

A staff, volunteer or student placement who suspects abuse or family violence is **not** to disclose their suspicion or intention to call a CAS with the parent and/or guardian. Disclosing with the parent or guardian could jeopardize the child or contaminate the investigation. Therefore, **do not** talk with the parent or guardian unless you have been directed to do so by a child protection worker.

After consulting with a CAS and if given permission by CAS official to notify the parent and/or guardian, a supervisor or his/her designate will emphasize to the parent both the concern for the child and legal obligation to Report Suspicion of Abuse.

Remember: A CAS official will guide staff through this process if considered appropriate by CAS to speak with the parent or guardian. *Do not inform the parent or guardian on your own, without first consulting with CAS.*

4. Making the Call:

If reporting to CAS *after* regular business hours, you will likely be required to leave a message, your name and phone number with an answering service. Indicate your call is an emergency if calling to report. You will then need to wait to hear back from an after-hours protection worker.

***Leaving a message is not considered a report. You must speak directly to a child protection agency worker. If you think the child is in immediate danger, do not wait to be called back – Phone the police.*

When placing a call to a child protection agency:

Provide your Full name, your position, our Association name and a number where they can reach you, along with the full details to the best of your knowledge of your suspicion(s). Ask for the name and phone number of the caseworker or manager you spoke with at the child protection agency.

If any further suspicion of abuse or new information with respect to a child occurs, then you must make another report to the child protection agency, regardless of any previous reports.

- **Remember:** The child protection agency provides support. You can call to “consult” for guidance and agency staff will support you through the process. The goal of the YMCA and a child protection agency is to protect all children whose safety must be considered first.
- Additional reporting for staff delivering programs to children or vulnerable persons:
 - In addition, suspected or witnessed abuse at a child care centre is a Serious Occurrence reportable within 24 hours to the Ministry. YMCA child care staff shall refer to Child Care’s Serious Occurrence reporting procedures.

(Other provincial reporting requirements may apply. Staff shall speak with their manager or refer to additional reporting requirements established by the YMCA to meet any other government or funding requirements that apply to staff delivering programs to children or vulnerable persons.)

5. Documentation Guidelines

- a) Documentation must be legible and written by hand by the person who reported the suspected abuse - do not type on a computer. Write with a ballpoint pen, not a marker or felt tip that might smudge or leak.
- b) Be factual, based on your observations. Do not include or document your personal thoughts about how it might have happened. Include direct observations and indicators to support your statements. You may include what someone else has told you, as long as it is relevant, and you have recorded who told you the information.
- c) **Description Details** – Use the *Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Form* (Appendix C). The child abuse reporting form outlines what you need to include when documenting suspected child abuse and your call to a child protection authority.
***If a reporting form is unavailable or you are unable to access a child abuse reporting form at any time, it is very important that you still make a report by calling CAS immediately. Then document the report by hand, using a blank sheet of paper and place the report in a sealed envelope per e) and f) below.*
- d) Do not make a rough copy and then re-write ‘in good’. Your original document is required. If you make a mistake, don’t use whiteout. Simply cross it out with a single line.
- e) Make sure documentation is complete. Place the report in a Reporting Envelope.
- f) Give the sealed envelope to your manager who will ensure the envelope is promptly delivered to the Human Resource Department for safeguarding (secure storage) and retention indefinitely.

***Documentation with respect to suspected child abuse is not to be released to anyone unless there is a warrant, subpoena or court order to submit records or attend court. Any request to release of records is to be forwarded to the senior lead for child protection, who will determine appropriate action in consultation with legal counsel as needed.*

6. If a staff, student placement or volunteer is suspected of abuse

If a staff/student placement/volunteer suspects another staff/student/volunteer of abusing a child or children who participate in the program, he/she will inform their supervisor/manager of the intention to call a child protection agency.

If it is a parent who is making the allegation against a staff/student/volunteer, the staff taking the report from the parent shall inform the parent of his/her Duty to Report to also report suspected child abuse to the child protection agency. The person taking the report from the parent also has a duty to report

The supervisor will notify their senior manager that a call has been placed to a child protection agency. Involving a staff or volunteer. The manager will notify the child protection lead who will notify designated members of management of the allegation. Management will determine further action steps for appropriate handling and response. (See appendix D)

7. Confidentiality

All information related to disclosure, or an allegation of abuse will be treated confidentially to the extent possible.



YMCA of Eastern Ontario Safeguarding Children Reporting Form

(Forms to be completed by hand in pen by the staff or volunteer who suspected and reported. Completed forms to be forwarded to the attention of the Association Child Protection Lead in a Child Protection Report envelope.)

CONFIDENTIAL

Date Form Completed: _____

Name of YMCA Facility: _____

YMCA Program Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Age: _____

Birthdate (m/d/y): _____

Gender: Male Female Other

Child's Address (street, city, postal code): _____

Child's Phone Number: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian 1: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian 2: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Street Address: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Street Address: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 City, Postal Code: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 City, Postal Code: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Home Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Home Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Work Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Work Phone: _____

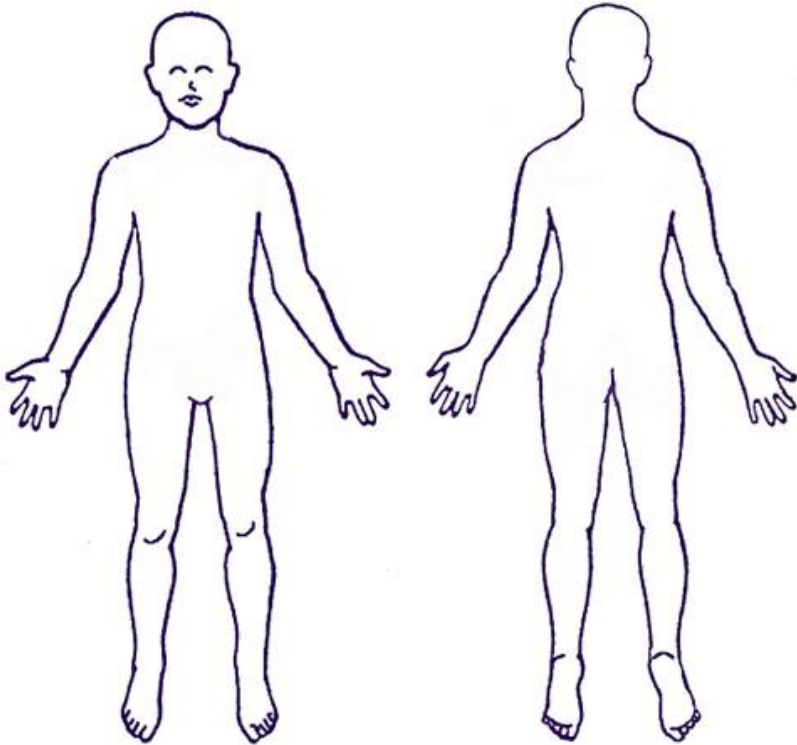
Reason for this report:

- Suspicion of abuse Child disclosure Allegation of abuse against a YMCA staff or volunteer

Describe incident, situation, statement or behavioural and/or physical indications of abuse:

If child's explanation was sought or offered, give details, including what was said and when:

Area(s) on child's body showing indicators of abuse (or complete body chart on reverse)



Reporting Information

Name of Child Protection Social Worker: _____

Date of Call: _____ Time of Call: _____

Name of Licensing Officer (if reporting a Serious Occurrence – Child Care Only): _____

Date of Call: _____ Time of Call: _____

Action the child protection social worker said will occur:

Follow up required: Other comments or observations

YMCA Internal Reporting – Notification of report being made, not sharing information.

Contacted	Name	Date	Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Director	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	_____	_____	_____

.....
Name of Staff or Volunteer Completing Report:

Position: _____

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D
RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OR COMPLAINT OF ABUSE AGAINST THE YMCA

In the event of an allegation, complaint or disclosure of abuse against a staff or volunteer of the YMCA, the following procedures shall apply.

Reporting an Allegation or Complaint of Abuse against a staff or volunteer

If a staff or volunteer or student suspects or receives an allegation or complaint of abuse against another YMCA staff, volunteer or student, he/she must follow the procedures for reporting an allegation or suspicion of child abuse to a child protection agency (see Appendix B).

Once the call has been made, the staff or volunteer or student shall immediately notify their Director that a call has been made to a child protection authority involving an allegation or suspicion of child abuse against a YMCA staff or volunteer.

The Director will immediately notify the C.E.O. who will escalate in keeping with the YMCA's escalation protocol. Senior management will ensure any additional child safety concerns, HR, insurance and other mandatory reporting requirements are addressed, and that the appropriate follow up steps are implemented once child protection authorities have completed their investigation, in keeping with established YMCA procedures.

In the event of an allegation of abuse of a vulnerable person against a staff, volunteer or student placement, report the allegation immediately to your Supervisor, who will notify senior management. If the vulnerable person's safety is at risk or in immediate danger, call the police or dial 911 immediately. The police have the ability to check on the person's wellbeing.

Any complaint or allegation of abuse made against the YMCA is taken seriously and shall be dealt with by management.

Information Management

All information related to an allegation or disclosure of abuse will be treated confidentially to the extent possible. Supervisors shall ensure that all records including investigation related to an allegation or complaint of abuse against a YMCA staff, student or volunteer shall be promptly delivered to the Human Resources Department for safeguarding (secure storage) and retention indefinitely.

APPENDIX E
Safeguarding Children and Youth Policy, Code of Conduct and Training Sign Off

I acknowledge that I have completed the following training regarding Safeguarding Children and Young people at the YMCA: (check all that apply)

Start of Employment/Volunteer position

- Read and reviewed the **Safeguarding Children and Youth Policy** which includes the **YMCA of Eastern Ontario Staff and Volunteer Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct** supplied in the new hire/welcome kit.
- Received an orientation to review the policy, procedures and reporting kits.
- Completed online **Safeguarding Children and Young People** module(s) and submitted certificate.

On Going Training

- Annual **Safeguarding Children and Young People** refresher training (in person/online module)
- Level 2 Refresher (online module) ***Team Lead/Supervisors ONLY**
- Annual **Code of Conduct** refresher training (in person)

DECLARATION

I have completed the YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People training identified above and understand and accept my role in ensuring the safety and protection of children and young people participating at the YMCA.

- YES
- NO

Your training is not considered complete until you can answer "yes".

Name: _____

Department: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Signed copy to be maintained in employee or volunteer file indefinitely)



Appendix F

Employment Application

YMCA of Eastern Ontario

Building healthy communities

Instructions

- Please complete all sections as thoroughly as possible, even if you are attaching a resume.
- A clear understanding of your background and work history will aid us in placing you in a position which best meets your qualifications.
- The offer of any position with the YMCA is conditional upon the presentation of a satisfactory Criminal Reference Check.

Office Use Only - Date Received

Personal Information							
Last Name	First Name	Telephone:					
Is your age at least 16 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Email:				
Eligible to work in Canada?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No					
Personal Information							
Type of position being applied for: <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Summer/Seasonal							
Facility location desired: <input type="checkbox"/> Brockville YMCA <input type="checkbox"/> Kingston YMCA <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____							
Area of employment desired:							
<input type="checkbox"/> Day Care		<input type="checkbox"/> Membership Services		<input type="checkbox"/> Aquatics			
<input type="checkbox"/> School-Age Care		<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness		<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning & Facilities			
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration		<input type="checkbox"/> Camps / School Break Programs		<input type="checkbox"/> Child & Youth			
Are you responding to an advertised position? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Job Title: _____							
Have you previously worked for a YMCA? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Location: _____							
Times Available to Work							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
From							
To							
Highest level of education received: _____							
If you expect to complete an educational program in the near future, please describe? _____							
Anticipated Completion Date: _____							
Language							
<input type="checkbox"/> English		<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken		<input type="checkbox"/> Written			
<input type="checkbox"/> French		<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken		<input type="checkbox"/> Written			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____				<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken		<input type="checkbox"/> Written	
Certifications & Training							
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard First Aid with CPR C		<input type="checkbox"/> National Lifeguard		<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Cross		<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Trainer <input type="checkbox"/> Swim Instructor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Conditioning		<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness Instructor		<input type="checkbox"/> Child & Youth Diploma		<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Educator	
Please list any other relevant certifications or designations: _____							



Employment Application YMCA of Eastern Ontario

*Building healthy
communities*

*Employment History		
Name of Current / Recent Employer		
Job Title	Type of Business	
Period of Employment	From:	To:
Duties and Responsibilities		
Name of Supervisor	Email	Telephone
Reason for Leaving		
Name of Current / Recent Employer		
Job Title	Type of Business	
Period of Employment	From:	To:
Duties and Responsibilities		
Name of Supervisor	Email	Telephone
Reason for Leaving		
Name of Current / Recent Employer		
Job Title	Type of Business	
Period of Employment	From:	To:
Duties and Responsibilities		
Name of Supervisor	Email	Telephone
Reason for Leaving		
References – *Please provide three professional references		
Name	Relationship	
Email	Phone	
Name	Relationship	
Email	Phone	
Name	Relationship	
Email	Phone	
<p>I hereby certify that the above information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if any information in this application or attachments/resume is found to be untrue or incomplete, my application may be rejected, or I may be dismissed in the event that I am employed by the YMCA of Eastern Ontario.</p> <p><i>*By providing names and contact information I am authorizing the YMCA permission to contact the person or organization listed to obtain reference information, including information contained in my personnel file(s) or medical or legal records where appropriate. The persons listed above are authorized to disclose such information to the YMCA, with the following exceptions or limitations _____</i></p> <p>_____</p>		
Signature	Date: month / day /year	



Volunteer Application
YMCA of Eastern Ontario
APPENDIX G

Building healthy communities

Thank you for your interest in the YMCA of Eastern Ontario. The YMCA is a community-centered Canadian Charity where members, volunteers and staff work together to foster development of spirit, mind and body of individuals and families. This is achieved by delivering programs that respond to the needs of the community in a secure, caring, convenient and affordable environment.

PLEASE NOTE: A criminal reference check, performed by the local police department is **REQUIRED** of all volunteers over the age of 18 prior to commencement of any volunteer duties. Criminal Reference Checks completed within the last 120 days for another organization are acceptable.

Personal Information							
Last Name		First Name		Telephone:			
				Email:			
Address							
Is your age at least 16 years?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Best time to contact you:			
How did you learn about volunteering at the YMCA? _____							
Facility location desired: <input type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/> Kingston <input type="checkbox"/> Brockville YMCA <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____							
Please check the areas/programs of interest to you:							
<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising		<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness		<input type="checkbox"/> Events		<input type="checkbox"/> Child and Youth programs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative		<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness Center		<input type="checkbox"/> Aquatics			
Times Available to Volunteer							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
From							
To							
Please check which description(s) fit your current status:							
<input type="checkbox"/> Employed Full-time		<input type="checkbox"/> Other					
<input type="checkbox"/> Employed Part-time		<input type="checkbox"/> Retired/Not Employed					
<input type="checkbox"/> Student							
Language							
<input type="checkbox"/> English		<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken <input type="checkbox"/> Written					
<input type="checkbox"/> French		<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken <input type="checkbox"/> Written					
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken <input type="checkbox"/> Written					



Current or Past Volunteer Experience (related or other)

Please share some of your personal reasons for becoming a volunteer and what you would like to get out of this experience:

**References – Please provide three professional references
By providing names and contact information, you are providing the YMCA permission to contact.**

Name	Relationship
Email	Phone
Name	Relationship
Email	Phone
Name	Relationship
Email	Phone

Certifications & Training

- Standard First Aid with CPR C
 National Lifeguard
 Bronze Cross
 Personal Trainer
 Swim Instructor
 Individual Conditioning
 Fitness Instructor
 Child & Youth Diploma
 Early Childhood Educator

Please list any other relevant certifications or designations: _____

I understand the YMCA will be collecting, creating, using and disclosing my personal information for the purpose of establishing and managing volunteer relationships. I consent to the YMCA doing so, and I also consent to the collection and use of my personal information to ensure the safety of YMCA participants, for statistical purposes, and to inform me about YMCA programs or services. I consent to the release of my name and address to the YMCA's Financial development Department to further the YMCA's philanthropic activities.

Signature

Date: month / day /year



Accident/Incident Report Form

Accident Incident

1. The staff member who took charge of the situation must fill this out within four hours of the accident or incident.
2. This form is used for bodily injury, illness, thefts, fire and other accidents or incidents (see section 5 below).
3. In the case of a staff member being injured, a copy of this report must be delivered to the Administration office within 24 hours."

1. Date: _____ 2. Time: _____ am _____ pm
(Year) (Month) (Day)

3. Facility: _____ Location in facility: _____

4. Name of person involved: _____
(Last) (First)

Phone: _____
(Home) (Business)

Address: _____

(City) (Province) (Postal code)

Male Female Age _____ (estimate, if not known)
 Y Member Staff Volunteer Guest

Emergency contact: _____
(Last) (First)

Relationship to person involved: _____ Phone: _____

5. Type of accident/incident:
 Injury Complaint Theft Lost item Missing person Vandalism Illness Other

6. Describe exactly what happened (use an extra piece of paper if necessary): _____

7. Description of injury (including area(s) of body affected):



Accident/Incident Report Form

8. Specify treatment and/or action taken, and by whom:

Was the person offered first aid? yes no

If first aid was refused, have person or guardian sign here: _____

If the person is unwilling to sign, note person's comments here: _____

9. Treatment and/or action taken by emergency services:

Ambulance Service requested: yes no Time requested: _____ Time arrived: _____
Police Service requested: yes no Time requested: _____ Time arrived: _____
Fire Service requested: yes no Time requested: _____ Time arrived: _____

Transported to hospital for treatment: yes _____ no

(Specify hospital)
Address

Witnesses (excluding staff)	Phone Number	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

First responder	Phone Number	Signature
_____	_____	_____

Staff Involved	Phone Number	Signature
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

CEO _____ Date _____

Department Manager _____ Date _____

Please attach all additional notes.



Safeguarding Children and Youth Practices

As a YMCA Staff / Volunteer, you must be aware of the YMCA's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behavior, and acceptable responses and reactions. This agreement outlines the safe behavior expectations for all Staff/Volunteers in alignment with the YMCA Safeguarding Children and Youth Policy.

All Staff/Volunteers are to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their job description as a positive role model to children/youth and as a representative of the YMCA.

These guidelines reflect the YMCA's commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for children/youth. By following these protocols, the organization can take proactive steps to safeguard their well-being and respond effectively to any issues or concerns that may arise.

This means as a YMCA Staff/Volunteer, you commit to:

1. Duty to Report to Child Protection Agency and/or Police

After notifying your supervisor or manager, promptly report concerns, issues, problems, suspected incidents, and any suspicious behavior to appropriate child protection agency or police as required. Utilize our procedures to handle any allegations involving Staff/Volunteers.

2. Internal Reporting

Promptly and without hesitation, notify your manager or supervisor of complaints from children/youth, or their families or caregivers, as well as any allegations or disclosures, suspicions of grooming, child abuse or neglect, concerns about child safety, and any breaches of the policy.

3. Duty of Care to Provide a Safe and Inclusive Environment

Act in accordance with your duty of care to ensure that all who access the YMCA's programs, services, and facilities are provided with a safe, inclusive environment, free of exploitation.

4. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

Report to your supervisor any suspicion, observation, or knowledge of inappropriate or discriminatory behavior that violates Y policies. This also includes any behaviour that is initiated by a child/youth that is sexual, violent, inappropriate or discriminatory in nature.

5. Seek Assistance with Confidentiality

Seek assistance in a timely manner and respect the utmost confidentiality of those involved whenever there is a need for clarification.

The following sections provide expectations about things to know and how to behave.

Interactions:

Use language and tone of voice that positively impacts the wellbeing of the children/youth, fostering a supportive and caring atmosphere. Use language that fosters a positive relationship with families and caregivers when talking about their children/youth.

Build and exemplify positive, nurturing relationships, creating an environment of security, confidence, and inclusivity. Foster healthy and social environments for children/youth to connect with their peers.

Use fair, respectful, and appropriate strategies when responding to the unique developmental needs of each child/youth.

Empower children/youth by giving them the freedom to make choices and express their opinions.

Respect the child's/youth's rights to contact their parents/guardians or others if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or distressed during their time at the program, while ensuring minimal disruption to the activities. In instances of separation anxiety or homesickness, it is advisable for staff to contact the parents first.

Physical Contact:

Staff/Volunteers must always seek the consent of a child/youth before initiating any physical contact and provide a **clear explanation** of what they are doing and why.

Unnecessary physical contact, such as holding, kissing, cuddling, or touching inappropriately, must be avoided at all times. Any action that could be misinterpreted as having a sexual connotation, like a school-aged child sitting on a staff member's lap, is considered inappropriate.

When children/youth are upset, staff/volunteer should provide comfort and attend to their needs in an appropriate manner.

During physical activities, staff/volunteers should be aware of the impact of their actions and exercise caution regarding the intensity of play, especially during sports or other activities involving playful behavior.

Safe Environments:

Programs and services for children/youth should be designed with careful consideration of the physical environment. This includes choosing suitable spaces that promote child/youth safety, such as locations with adequate exits, proximity to washrooms, windows, and clear lines of sight.

Staff/Volunteers should not be one-on one (alone) in private / secluded spaces with a child/youth unless it is part of a specific service/program. If necessary, the area must have visibility (e.g., clear windows, doors ajar) as a minimum precaution.

Staff should be able to recognize and address potential safety issues in program locations and respond appropriately to minimize risks to children/youth.

When undertaking activities with elements of risk, proper preparation, appropriate equipment, suitable clothing, and adequate supervision and safety measures must be in place to ensure a safe experience for the children/youth.

Establishing Boundaries

Staff/volunteers are required to maintain appropriate boundaries to ensure the safety and well-being of all children/youth involved in Y programs and services. The following guidelines must be strictly adhered to:

- **Limited Interactions:** Staff/volunteers must refrain from interacting with children/youth involved in YMCA programs/services **outside the scope** of the designated program or service. This includes activities such as birthday parties, social interactions, etc.
- **Private Arrangements:** Staff/volunteers should **not initiate**, seek, request, or accept private arrangements with parents/guardians of children/youth participating in YMCA programs/services while employed by the Y. This includes any arrangements outside of their work or voluntary roles, such as babysitting, sports coaching, or housesitting.
- **Contact Boundaries:** Staff/volunteers must **not engage** in 'direct/personal/private' contact with children/youth, such as 'friending,' 'following,' 'tagging,' 'direct messaging,' or communicating through mobile phone calls, texting, social media or email, outside of YMCA programming unless required by the specific program.
- **Gift-Giving:** Staff/Volunteers must not give personal gifts to children/youth participating at the YMCA unless it is approved as part of a specific program.
- **Confidentiality:** Personal information that is or may be deemed inappropriate must not be shared by Staff/Volunteers.
- **Prior Relationships Disclosure:** Staff/Volunteers must disclose any pre-existing relationships (e.g., friendships, relatives, work connections, etc.) that exist between them and families and/or children/youth who currently participate or have previously participated in YMCA programs. This disclosure should be made by advising the supervisor/manager for review and consideration. This ensures transparency and helps maintain a safe environment within the Y

Health & Safety

Supervision practices

All Staff/Volunteers must be clearly identifiable when working either by uniform, name tag or direct introduction to families, children/youth.

At all times staff must supervise children/youth based on age and program requirements and ensure they are accounted for.

Sign-in and sign-out procedures must be diligently followed. Staff/Volunteers must be vigilant in monitoring the arrival and departure of all children/youth.

Children should only be released from YMCA programs/services to authorized parents/guardians or approved individuals confirmed by government-issued ID.

Staff must maintain program ratio requirements when working with children to ensure appropriate supervision.

General supervision is provided to children/youth over the age of 12 who visit a YMCA facility without parent/guardian accompaniment.

Visitors, vendors, contractors and special guests must have their government issued ID and / or work identification verified and sign into a visitor log on site detailing the time they enter, the time they leave and reason for visiting.

Life-Threatening Allergies

Protecting children/youth who have life-threatening allergies is of utmost importance, and the YMCA's approach to minimize exposure to known allergens and gather detailed emergency response information from parents/guardians is critical. It is necessary to have clear communication and up-to-date information so that YMCA staff can provide a safe and supportive environment for all children/youth, including those with allergies.

YMCA Staff/Volunteers: Staff/volunteers who work directly with children/youth must be able to recognize the signs of allergic reactions and how to respond promptly and appropriately. This may involve calling for help, and / or administering medication, such as epinephrine in case of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).

Allergy-Safe Environment: Staff/Volunteers should take steps to maintain an allergy-safe environment for all children/youth. This will involve implementing policies and practices to reduce cross-contamination of allergens in food preparation areas and common spaces. This includes not permitting non-program provided food in our settings.

Overnight Supervision

Staff/Volunteers must not be alone while sleeping in the same room with children/youth. For programs that require overnight supervision (e.g. overnight camp) with multiple children/youth in one accommodation, at least two staff must be present for children under the age of 11 and one staff for twelve and up.

In hotel rooms, tents, or exchange programs, staff/volunteers must not be alone overnight with children/youth unless it is their own child.

Parents/guardians must be informed of sleeping arrangements before any overnight stay.

Children/youth should not be left under the supervision or protection of unauthorized persons such as hotel staff, Parks Canada staff or friends.

Washroom / Change room practices

Staff/volunteers have a duty of care to provide the appropriate level of supervision to children / youth when they use washroom/change room facilities. Extra vigilance is required in areas accessed by members of the public.

Staff/volunteers are obligated to uphold the privacy of children and youth in scenarios like changing clothes and showering. In cases where there's a potential risk of harm (e.g. situations like horseplay), intervention is required.

Staff/Volunteers must protect their own privacy in similar situations, including not exposing children / youth to adult nudity.

Staff/Volunteers should avoid one-to-one situations with a child / youth within a washroom/change room area.

Photography

Photos or videos for specific programs can be taken only using Y-approved equipment and with parent/guardian permission through a signed release form.

Photos shared with families should only contain images of their child and only be shared through YMCA issued devices or platforms. Staff/volunteers should only take photos of children/youth in the presence of other staff.

Children should be appropriately dressed in any photo.

Never upload or share photos/videos to personal or unofficial YMCA social media platforms.

Staff/volunteers must take reasonable steps to ensure that members of the public do not take photography/videography of children / youth at a Y service.

Staff/volunteers must take reasonable steps to ensure that parents/guardians take photos/videos only of their own children/youth.

Digital

Staff/volunteers are expected to:

Not engage with children/youth (current or former) outside the YMCA via social media platforms, voice or video call, text or email, directly to a child/youth unless for the express purpose of conducting YMCA business, and with manager knowledge and approval. This contact must be from a YMCA supplied device only.

Communication should be directed to the parents or guardian unless the program requires direct contact with a youth.

Reduce the risk of children/youth being exposed to inappropriate content or contact when using YMCA technology.

Travel and Use of Personal Vehicles:

Staff/volunteers are not permitted to transport children / youth in their personal vehicle unless in an immediate life-threatening situation and Emergency Medical Services are unavailable to attend.

Staff/volunteers should not travel alone in a YMCA vehicle with a single child/youth unless in unforeseen circumstances and there is no alternative. In such cases, the manager's approval is required and the child/youth's parent/guardian must be notified. The incident must be reported within 24 hours using an incident report submission to Risk.

STRICTLY PROHIBITED: Unacceptable Practices

A prohibited practice is any behavior by a staff/volunteer or placement student that puts children/youth at risk or that can inhibit a child's/youth's growth, self-esteem, or healthy development. The following practices are unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

Abuse and Neglect: Engaging in any form of abuse—physical, emotional, psychological, sexual—or neglecting a child/youth's basic necessities, such as food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, bedding, and emotional support. This also includes all types of discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

Derogatory Language: Making derogatory, culturally insensitive, violent, or sexually suggestive comments to or in the presence of a child/youth, causing humiliation, shame, fear, distress, or undermining their self-respect, dignity, or self-worth.

Disciplinary Actions: Disciplining children/youth through emotional abuse, favoritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, referencing cultural differences, swearing, physical punishment, or any other offensive/inappropriate action.

Harming or Exploitation: Harming or exploiting any child/youth under any circumstances.

Initiating Against Wishes: Initiating physical contact against the wishes of the child/youth.

Locking Exits: Locking exits to confine a child/youth or leaving them in an area or room without adult supervision, except during a behavioural crisis that puts them or others in danger and / or when it is necessary for the emergency response.

Personal Care Boundaries: Staff/volunteers should not perform personal care tasks for child/youth who do not require assistance, such as toileting, first aid, or medical assistance.

Physical Contact to Redirect: Use of physical contact to redirect a child or youth where risk is not present is not

permitted (e.g. arm grabbing, hair tugging, head tapping, grabbing a backpack or clothing, etc.)

Physical Punishment: Any form of punishment involving physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort, even if mild, including forcing children to eat or drink against their will.

Physical Restraint: Physically restraining a child/youth, such as holding them down, confining them to a space (e.g. closet, storage room) or any device (e.g. high chair, stroller, bus seat) for disciplinary purposes instead of supervision, unless the restraint is necessary to prevent immediate harm to the child/youth or others. Physical restraint should be the last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent, and must be reported to management promptly.

Sexual Behavior and Exposure: Engaging in any sexual behavior or conversations of a sexual nature with or in the presence of children/youth. Staff must not expose children/youth to pornographic material through discussions, movies, television, internet/social media, or magazines.

Unsupervised Children: Leaving children unsupervised in any situation.

Using Locked Rooms: Using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine a child/youth by separating them from other children.

These **practices are strictly prohibited**. Any violation will result in immediate action and appropriate consequences.

*By completing and signing the **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY AND PROCEDURE SIGN OFF**, the individual hereby acknowledge that they have received and read this agreement. They understand that as a staff or volunteer of the YMCA, it is their responsibility to comply with the principles and standards outlined in the Safeguarding Children Staff/Volunteer Code of Conduct.*

They understand that any violation of these practices may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and may result in a report to the Child Protection Agency or Police.