

Youth Consumer Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for Youth outlines specific expectations of youth.

Abuse or Mistreatment

The YMCA’s top priority is keeping youth safe. Any form of abuse or mistreatment of youth, employees, and volunteers is prohibited. Youth shall not abuse or mistreat employees, volunteers, or other youth in any way. Use of abusive, obscene or profane language, including racial, religious, gender, or sexual references directed at other people will not be tolerated.

Youth shall not engage in verbal or emotional abuse or mistreatment of other youth, employees, or volunteers.

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>
• Appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Praise	• Name-calling • Bullying • Ridicule or Humiliation • Discussing sexual behaviors • Cursing • Hazing • Sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate other youth • Derogatory remarks about another youth or their family • Comments relating to physique or body development • Inappropriate games like <i>Truth or Dare</i> and <i>Never Have I Ever</i>

Youth shall not engage in the physical abuse or mistreatment of other youth, employees, or volunteers.

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Youth</i>
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▪ Side hugs ▪ Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs ▪ Pats on the shoulder or back ▪ Handshakes ▪ High-fives and fist bumps ▪ Pats on the head when culturally appropriate ▪ Touching hands, shoulders, and arms ▪ Arms around shoulders	• Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated areas • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Exposing private parts of the body • Any type of massage given by or to a youth • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas • Hitting • Spanking • Shaking • Slapping • Unnecessary restraints • Viewing or showing others pornographic materials
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Personal Relationships

Appropriate personal relationships between youth are encouraged. However, the YMCA strongly discourages romantic relationships between youth while in programming. Youth are not permitted to hold hands, sit on others’ laps, use full-frontal hugs, or kiss other youth while in programming.

One-on-one Interactions

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth, or when a youth is alone with another youth. The YMCA aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the YMCA administration. If you observe one-on-one interactions between employees and youth, you should report this to the Director in charge of programming.

Electronic Communication

All communication between employees/volunteers and youth must be approved by a youth’s parents/guardians and must be in an open electronic environment. The “Rule of Three” must be observed in all electronic communications between youth and employees/volunteers. For example, there should be two employees/volunteers included on text messages and emails with youth. Direct, private messaging between youth and employees/volunteers is not allowed.

Youth will comply with the YMCA’s policies governing the use of cell phones.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

Possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) while at the YMCA or while engaged in the YMCA's programming is strictly prohibited. Youth will not be permitted to participate in any program while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or illicit substances. Possession of these substances will result in confiscation and/or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Weapons

We want the YMCA to be a safe place for employees, volunteers, and youth. Weapons and items that may be considered weapons are prohibited. This includes laser pointers. Possession of these items will result in confiscation and/or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians, and/or the authorities will be notified as appropriate.

Violence

The YMCA seeks to provide a safe environment for youth, employees, and volunteers in our community. Violence and threats of violence including but not limited to destruction of property, bullying, physical fighting, and assault, will not be tolerated at the YMCA, on our grounds, in organization facilities, in other facilities being utilized by the YMCA, or during YMCA sponsored activities and events. Employees are available to assist in the resolution of differences. Engaging in violence will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Disruptive Behavior

We take pride in the appearance of the YMCA, and we always want to ensure youth are safe. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior is not permitted in the YMCA. This includes, but is not limited to, graffiti, littering, spitting, or throwing objects that could intentionally or unintentionally harm others or cause disorder. Engaging in disruptive behavior will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Bullying

The YMCA will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms including:

1. *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
2. *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful name.
3. *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
4. *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
 1. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 2. Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
 3. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
 4. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
 5. Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
 6. Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, exposing private body parts, creating or sharing images or videos involving private body parts or

sexualized material (including artificially generated materials), and utilizing sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This applies to all youth, employees, and volunteers. Engaging or participating in bullying will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

Reporting

Because the YMCA is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone, including youth, actively participate in creating a safe environment. If any employee, volunteer, or youth observes suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations by an employee, volunteer, or other youth, that person must report their observations. Remember, at the YMCA, the policies apply to everyone. Reports will be taken seriously and investigated in the manner described in this policy.

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth

- Violation of this policy or any abuse prevention policies outlined by the YMCA
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youth(s)
- Privately communicating with youth(s) via electronic communication or social media
- Buying gifts for individual youth(s) or their parents
- Making suggestive comments to youth(s)
- Picking favorite youth

Youth are encouraged to report concerns or complaints about employees, volunteers, or other youth to a supervisor who can be reached at of the program they are involved in.