



Information for parents about Safeguarding Children & Young People

Our Commitment

At YMCA Ballarat we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, in particular, through our Safeguarding Children Commitment Statement.

Our Safeguarding Children Commitment Statement has been adopted by our Board of Directors. It underpins a set of policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children and young people which guide:

- the screening and recruitment of our personnel
- the behaviour of our personnel towards children and young people
- the induction and training of our personnel about safeguarding children and young people
- our open and effective communication with children and young people and their parents
- our responses to the abuse and neglect of children if it occurs and
- our maintenance of a safeguarding culture in the organisation.

Our personnel are required to:

- undergo an extensive screening process including a National Criminal Records Check and/or a Working with Children Check
- behave professionally and with care towards children and young people including not acting outside the boundaries of their duties or using their position with the organisation to solicit work with or initiate contact with children and young people who are clients/members of our organisation
- understand the important responsibility they have to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation either by our personnel or that occurs outside the scope of our operations and services; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture.

The full Commitment Statement can be found on our website www.ballarat.ymca.org.au.

We are dedicated to protecting the children and young people in our community and have undertaken training and policy development with the Australian Childhood Foundation Safeguarding Children and Young People Program.

Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations

We consider any form of child abuse including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, family violence, grooming or neglect as intolerable under any circumstances.

We have a legal, moral and mission driven responsibility to protect children and young people from harm and to ensure that any incident of suspected child abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with. Our personnel are required to report suspected child abuse to their direct supervisor/manager and the child protection authorities or the police. YMCA Ballarat will co-operate with the child protection authorities and police and other agencies as required by law.

YMCA Ballarat Practice & Behaviour Policy (Safeguarding Code of Conduct)

YMCA Ballarat our personnel and volunteers are required to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct towards children and young people. We have developed Practice & Behaviour Policy to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to the children and young people in our care. The following is a summary to this policy.

Transport

Children and young people are to be transported only with prior authorisation from a parent/guardian and a YMCA Ballarat Business Unit manager. Our personnel are NEVER to give children or young people casual lifts. To gain approval from a YMCA Ballarat Business Unit manager, our personnel are required to submit details about the proposed journey including the form of transport, the reason and details of who will be present.

Overnight Stays

Overnight stays are only to occur with the authorisation of a parent/guardian and YMCA Ballarat Business Unit Manager. Standards of our personnel conduct during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of our programs and services at other times. Standards of conduct that must be observed include:

- Providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing
- Not leaving children or young people under the supervision or protection of an unauthorised person such as hotel our personnel
- The right of children or young people to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay

Physical Contact with Children and Young People

Any physical contact with children and young people must be appropriate to the delivery of the programs and services and based on the needs of the child or young person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed young person) rather than on the needs of our personnel.

Positive Guidance

We aim to make children and young people aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour. There are times when our personnel may be required to use appropriate behaviour management strategies to ensure an effective and positive environment and the safety and/or wellbeing of children, young people or personnel participating on our programs and services.

Any behaviour management strategy used must be fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved.

The child or young person is to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive way. Under no circumstances are our personnel to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.



Uniform

Our personnel are to wear their YMCA Ballarat uniforms only while involved in delivering service, representing YMCA Ballarat at events, or when travelling to and from work.

Professional role boundaries

Our personnel are not to act outside the confines of their duties, as specified in their position description, when helping to deliver our programs and services. YMCA Ballarat actively discourages program/service our personnel and volunteers to engage with children who participate in YMCA Ballarat programs, in activities such as baby-sitting and weekend trips.

Photographs of children and young people

Children and young people are to be photographed by our personnel while involved in our programs and services only if:

- Prior written parental/guardian authorisation is obtained (with the exception of special events such as concerts, fairs, performances, open days and competitions)
- The Context is directly related to participation in our programs and services
- The child is appropriately dressed and posed

Use of electronic communication

Wherever possible, email and text messages sent to a child or young person is to be copied to their parent or guardian. Any communication is to be restricted to issues directly associated with delivering our programs and services, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled. Communication with young people on social networking sites is only allowed through official YMCA Ballarat sites and by designated YMCA Ballarat Social Media Administrators.