

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CODE OF CONDUCT – Staff and Volunteers



COMMITMENT STATEMENT:

The Ballarat YMCA is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing its programs and services. YMCA support the rights of the child and will strive to deliver a child safe environment at all times. YMCA also supports the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a safe environment for children. Staff must maintain the highest standards of professional conduct in their attitude and behaviour toward clients, colleagues and members of the community. In particular, staff recognise the power imbalance inherent in a staff /client relationship and will never act in a manner which exploits or could be seen to exploit that power imbalance.

PROCEDURES:

- Program/service staff and volunteers must remain alert to the risk indicators of child abuse and promptly report suspected incidents to their Manager/Supervisor and, where required by law, to the relevant authorities.
- Program/service staff and volunteers engaged in the direct delivery of children's programs and services are required to regularly access training in child protection and related matters and will be supported by Ballarat YMCA to do so.
- Program/service staff and volunteers are to avoid placing themselves in potentially compromising situations with children and ensure that, in all circumstances, government and YMCA prescribed staff:child ratios are adhered to.
- Program/service staff and volunteers are to ensure they are never alone with a child where they cannot be observed by other YMCA staff members, volunteers or other adults.
- When preparing rosters for children's programs, an appropriate mix of male and female staff/volunteers is to be achieved wherever possible.
- Young children under the age of ten (10) in YMCA programs/services must be appropriately supervised in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms or be required to accompany one another in pairs at such times.
- Preschool children need to be supervised and accompanied by an adult at all times while in a YMCA Centre or program. Parents may need to be available to take their own children to the toilet in this instance.
- Program/service staff and volunteers are to ensure that parent/guardian permission is obtained in writing prior to any child being taken on a YMCA excursion or camp or in relation to any photos of children being taken.
- Parents/guardians are to be informed of travel and sleeping arrangements prior to the commencement of any excursion or camp.
- Parents, children and young people are to be appropriately informed of YMCA's safeguarding policies and procedures and relevant safeguarding options available to them
- Program/service staff and volunteers are not to travel, or be accommodated alone with a child participant before, during or after a YMCA program, excursion or camp.
- Program/service staff and volunteers are not to discipline children through the use of physical punishment or the withdrawal of the necessities of care (including food, shelter and emotional warmth).
- Program/service staff and volunteers are not to verbally or emotionally abuse or punish children in their care.

- Program/service staff and volunteers are not, under any circumstances, to release a child from a YMCA facility, program or service to anyone other than the authorised parent(s), guardian(s), or to an individual authorised by parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing, including relatives of children.
- Sign-in and sign-out logs, showing arrival and departure times, along with parent(s)/guardian(s) signatures are to be maintained on a daily basis and kept on file at program/service sites. Program/service staff and volunteers are required to be vigilant in witnessing the departure of individual children.
- Staff/volunteers employed in licensed or otherwise regulated Child Care and Children's Services are specifically required to have knowledge of, and at all times to adhere to, all Regulations.
- Program/service staff and volunteers providing direct care to children must be identified by a YMCA name badge and, where practicable, a branded uniform that is familiar to the children and is the same as that of their co-workers.
- Program/service staff and volunteers who have developed friendships with families and/or children who participate in YMCA programs prior to them being employed by the YMCA must so advise their Manager or Supervisor.
- Under no circumstances can personal work be solicited by a YMCA staff/volunteer while at the YMCA or can a YMCA uniform be worn to this personal work. If YMCA staff engage in private services (e.g. babysitting) they are to advise the parents that it is not affiliated in any way with the YMCA.
- Program/ Service staff working at a '*low patronage*' outdoor pool must ensure that the '*Active Supervision Policy*' is enforced at all times. No child under the age of 10 to be permitted entry to the facility unless in the company of a person 16 years or older.

Staff/Volunteers are to:

- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model to children, and as a representative of the YMCA.
- Read, understand and formally agree to abide by YMCA policies and guidelines around the safety of children as outlined in YMCA SC&YP Policy and supporting policies, a copy of which will be given to them during induction which will be signed as read and understood.
- Raise all concerns, issues, and problems with their supervisor as soon as possible.
- Follow all other procedures relating to children's safety as stipulated in the area manual.

Staff/Volunteer Conduct Considered Unacceptable subject to disciplinary procedures and possible dismissal:

- Engage in rough physical games.
- Cuddle, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive manner.
- Make negative, violent or sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke;
- Undertake a task of a personal nature that a child can do for itself, for example changing clothes, grooming, feeding, and toileting.
- Take a child to your home, or encourage meetings outside the program activity.
- Discipline children by use of; emotional abuse, favoritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, reference to cultural/ethnic differences, swearing.
- Transport of an individual child or a group of children to or from YMCA programs in private vehicles without the written consent of the Centre Manager. This is only an option when all other avenues of transport have been excluded. A code of conduct for travelling in cars needs to be adhered to at all time.
- Share accommodation with a child without other staff members or children present.

- Mobile phone texting or emailing information directly to a child or young persons mobile or email address. All communication made should be directed to the parents/guardians.
- Use social media platforms such as facebook or twitter etc, to contact or converse with children. Any contact should be directed to parent/guardians only.

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