FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

The YMCA is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and ethical environment for all participants, especially children and vulnerable populations. The following Code of Conduct outlines expectations for all employees and volunteers and is designed to prevent abuse, promote respect, and uphold our values of **Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility**.

Core Expectations

- Employees and volunteers will exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity.
- All individuals must maintain a professional environment free from physical, psychological, verbal, or written intimidation or harassment.
- Abuse of any kind—physical, sexual, emotional, or neglectful—will not be tolerated and may result in immediate dismissal and reporting to appropriate authorities.
- All employees and volunteers share a personal responsibility to protect children and participants from all forms of abuse.
- Concerns about inappropriate behavior, boundary violations, or suspected abuse must be immediately reported to a supervisor or administrator, and when appropriate, to state authorities per mandated reporting laws.

Code of Conduct with Participants

To create a safe, empowering environment, YMCA employees and volunteers will:

- Treat all participants with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of race, gender, age, religion, ability, or orientation.
- Avoid one-on-one interactions that are not observable or interruptible by others. Staff should position themselves to remain visible and avoid being alone with a child whenever possible.
- Refrain from physical affection or verbal interaction that could be misinterpreted or that violates organizational standards.
- Follow YMCA policies on appropriate and inappropriate verbal, physical, and digital interactions with youth and families.
- Never:
    - Stare at or comment on a participant's body.
    - Date or become romantically involved with participants.
    - Use, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during work hours.
    - Have sexually explicit materials or inappropriate digital content on YMCA property or devices.
    - Share secrets, socialize privately, or transport children in personal vehicles.

Supervision & Safety Practices

- **Restroom Use:** Staff will ensure facilities are safe and supervise appropriately, remaining in doorways or in pairs when assisting young children. No child should enter a bathroom alone on field trips.
- **Private Activities:** Diapering, changing, or similar tasks should be performed by two staff when possible, or with visibility to others.
- **Discipline:** Only positive behavior guidance is permitted—such as redirection, clear expectations, and encouragement. Physical punishment is strictly prohibited.
- **Daily Health Checks:** Staff will observe children for visible signs of injury or illness and speak with parents in a respectful, non-threatening manner. Any concerns will be documented.

Prohibited Conduct
Staff shall not engage in:

- **Physical abuse** (hitting, slapping, shaking)
- **Verbal abuse** (degrading, threatening, name-calling)
- **Sexual abuse** (inappropriate touching or comments)
- **Mental abuse** (shaming, withholding kindness)
- **Neglect** (withholding food, care, supervision)

Bullying & Peer Abuse
The YMCA has zero tolerance for abuse, bullying or mistreatment between participants. Staff will intervene in cases of:

- Physical, verbal, sexual, or mental abuse.
- Bullying, Cyberbullying or exclusion via technology.
- Hazing or sexualized bullying Encouraging or ignoring bullying behavior is also considered a violation.

Professional Conduct

- Staff will demonstrate respect, maturity, courtesy, and professionalism at all times.
- Personal lifestyle choices must not interfere with the YMCA's values or participant safety.
- Staff must dress appropriately and maintain a clean, neat appearance.
- Inappropriate jokes, profanity, and sharing personal or intimate details in the presence of youth are prohibited.
- Employees and Volunteers are expected to treat all consumers equally. Staff and volunteers are not allowed to accept tips/gratuity or gifts nor give induvial consumers gifts. Exceptions must be approved by immediate supervisor.

Off-Duty Boundaries

- Staff may not engage **in babysitting, sleepovers, or private social activities** with program participants unless written approval is given by the CEO in advance.
- Preexisting relationships between staff and participants must be communicated in writing to your immediate supervisor.
- Staff may not transport children in personal vehicles.

Mandatory Reporting & Compliance

- All staff are required to read, sign, and follow policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting suspected child abuse.
- Staff must attend mandated trainings as assigned by a supervisor.
- Annual background checks are conducted, and full clearances are renewed every five (5) years in compliance with PA state law.

Acknowledgment
All employees and volunteers must sign this Code of Conduct upon hiring and annually thereafter, affirming their understanding and agreement to uphold these standards and those contained in the Child Protection Policy as a condition of employment or volunteer service.

_____ _____
Printed Name Date

_____
Signature

_____
Parent or Guardian Signature (if under 18)