



YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

# Child Safety and Protection Information

## What is Child Safety and Protection?

It is the commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children accessing YMCA programs and services, and is a shared responsibility to protect them from harm. The YMCA recognizes its responsibility to promote safe environments and practices, and to protect children from abuse and exploitation.

We have policies and procedures, training, employee and volunteer screening practices, a code of conduct, and audits of our practices to ensure this happens.

## What we do to keep everyone safe:

1. We have a Child Safety and Protection Policy. The policy outlines the roles and responsibilities for the board of directors, senior leaders, managers, and all Y employees and volunteers, which includes implementation, and review.
2. We comply with YMCA Canada National Child Safety and Protection standards. This is reviewed on an annual basis, including a peer review.
3. We have several policies and procedures for the recruitment of employees and volunteers that include a criminal record check, reference checks, and qualification standards.
4. We have sign in and out procedures and ask for photo id for pickup of children.

## Training we provide:

All employees and volunteers who work with children receive mandatory training on safety and protection, including topics such as:

- YMCA's code of conduct and expectations
- Recognizing the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect
- Responding to disclosures and allegations of abuse or harm
- Preventing and addressing bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Creating a positive and inclusive environment

- Reporting any concerns or incidents to the appropriate authorities

Training is delivered through a combination of online modules, in-person sessions, and ongoing coaching and feedback. Employees and volunteers are required to complete a refresher training every year and update their criminal record check every three years.

## Child Safety and Protection reporting, and what happens when an occurrence is reported:

- Employees and volunteers have a 'Duty to Report' and will immediately report any suspicion of abuse to the appropriate protection agency
- Our Behaviour Management policy will be followed, and guardians will be informed of any behaviours demonstrated by their children
- Depending on the severity of the occurrence, children may be removed from program to keep them safe, keep other children safe, and keep employees safe

## What is included in our Child Safety and Protection Policy?

- The Y is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children who participate in our programs
- The Y has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or harm, and we will report any suspicions or allegations to the relevant authorities
- We expect all employees, volunteers, and visitors to behave appropriately and respectfully towards children and always follow our code of conduct
- We will ensure that our employees and volunteers have the necessary qualifications, training, and screening
- We will listen to and empower children to have a voice in our programs and to raise any concerns they may have
- We will protect the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families, unless there is a risk of harm or a legal obligation to disclose information
- We will regularly review and update our policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and standards.

## Summary of The Code of Conduct:

This document specifies processes and procedures that all Y employees and volunteers are expected to follow when interacting with children. The code of conduct describes good practices, and practices to be avoided. The code of conduct also includes acceptable and unacceptable forms of digital communication with minors. The document states that any breaches of the code of conduct are taken seriously and will be dealt with by management.