

Family YMCA of Black Hawk County

Code of Conduct with Youth

The following policies are intended to assist staff and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with youths. For clarification of any guidelines, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your supervisor.

Family YMCA of Black Hawk County and Grundy Family YMCA ("YMCA") provide youth with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse or mistreatment of youth will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from the YMCA. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. The YMCA will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Conduct with Youth outlines specific expectations of the staff and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Youth will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Youth will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.
3. Staff and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by the YMCA.
4. Staff and volunteers will avoid affection with youth that cannot be observed by others.
5. Staff and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by the YMCA.
6. Staff and volunteers will not stare at or comment on youths' bodies.
7. Staff and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth.
8. Staff and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth.
9. Staff and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on the YMCA's property.
10. Staff and volunteers will not have secrets with youth and will only give gifts with prior permission.
11. Staff and volunteers will comply with YMCA's policies regarding interactions with youth outside of our programs.
12. Staff and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth.
13. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth in a private setting. Staff and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth.
14. Staff and volunteers will not abuse youth in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse:** hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
 - Verbal abuse:** degrading, threatening, cursing
 - Sexual abuse:** inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
 - Mental abuse:** shaming, humiliation, cruelty
 - Neglect:** withholding food, water, shelter
15. The YMCA will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. In addition, the YMCA will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

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:

- a. **Physical bullying** – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- b. **Verbal bullying** – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling others hurtful names.
- c. **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.
- d. **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:
 - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
 - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
 - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
 - 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.
 - Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposure of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth, staff and volunteers.

16. All staff and volunteers must follow state specific mandatory reporting requirements. Staff should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. Staff will:
 - a. Be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse.
 - b. Know and follow organization policies and procedures that protect youth against abuse.
 - c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by state mandated reporter laws.
 - d. Follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
17. Staff and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other staff, volunteers, adults, or youth to your supervisor or Praesidium's Anonymous Helpline at 855-347-0751.
18. The YMCA cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any staff or volunteer shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.
19. Staff and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth abuse, indecency with a youth, or injury to a youth.

I have read and understand this Code of Conduct with Youth, and will abide by it.

Printed Name

Signature

Date