

## **Purpose**

The Billings Family YMCA (YMCA) seeks to create a safe, nurturing environment in which its mission of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility can be accomplished. We depend on our staff and volunteers to create and maintain this environment.

## **Child Abuse Prevention Code of Conduct**

The code of conduct is designed to ensure that all participants experience the learning and development in our programs in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner to be consistent with the mission of the YMCA. In this document consumers refer to individuals under the age of 18 years of age.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in dismissal. This includes:

- *Physical abuse*- striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, and so on.
- *Verbal abuse*-humiliating, degrading, threatening, and so on.
- *Sexual abuse*-touching or speaking inappropriately.
- *Mental abuse*-shaming, withholding kindness, being cruel, and so on
- *Neglect*-withholding food, water, or basic care.

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

- At no time during a Y program may a staff person or volunteer be alone with a single consumer or another staff or volunteer under the age of 18 where they cannot be observed by others. Staff and volunteers should position themselves in such a way that other staff can see them.
- A consumer under the age of 12 may never be left unsupervised.
- Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing consumers to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway of the restroom while consumers are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the consumer and protection for the staff (not being alone with a consumer). If staff are assisting younger consumers, doors to the facility must remain open. No consumer, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip or at another off-site location.
- When moving consumers from one location to another always send consumers in groups of three (known as the rule of three), and always with a staff.
- Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs—diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, and so on. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
- Staff and volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance. This includes redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement, rather than competition, comparison, and criticism.

- Staff and volunteers will have appropriate age expectations to set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in predetermined situations (when necessary to protect the consumer or other consumers from harm), administered only in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.
- Staff and volunteers will conduct a visual health check of each consumer's appearance upon their arrival each time the program meets. This includes documenting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or consumer in a non-threatening way. Staff and volunteers will document any questionable marks or responses.
- Staff and volunteers will respond to consumers with respect, consideration and treat all consumers equally, regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, religion, disability or handicap, sex or gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, or economic level of the family.
- Staff and volunteers will respect consumer's rights not to be touched or looked at in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, along with their right to say no. Other than diapering, consumers are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- Staff and volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection in the presence of others.
- Staff and volunteers are not to transport consumers or other staff and volunteers under the age of 18 in their own vehicles or allow consumers participants to transport younger consumers in the program.
- Staff and volunteers must appear clean, neat, and in appropriate staff and volunteer dress code guidelines.
- The use, sale, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs by staff and volunteers is prohibited.
- Smoking or use of tobacco or nicotine products is prohibited by staff and volunteers while on YMCA property, and while performing YMCA business.
- Possession or use of any type of weapon or explosive device is prohibited.
- Using YMCA computers to access pornographic sites, send correspondence with sexual overtones or otherwise inappropriate messages, or develop online relationships is not allowed.
- Staff and Volunteers are not to be on cell phones, unless they have been given prior permission from management for activities such as, group x music, or silent disco.

- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of consumers, parents, volunteers, or other staff is prohibited.
- Staff are not to be alone with a consumer, nor can they be the only adult with a consumer, adult being defined as someone 18 years of age or older. This includes babysitting, sleepovers and inviting children to their homes. Any exceptions require the approval by the CEO or AED. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- Staff and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect consumer's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
- Staff and volunteers will portray a positive role model for consumers by maintaining an attitude of loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
- Staff and volunteers should not give excessive gifts (e.g., TV, video games, jewelry) to consumers. Staff and Volunteers must follow the Gift Giving and Acceptance Policy.
- Staff and volunteers who are over the age of 18 may not date program participants or other staff and volunteers who are under the age of 18.
- Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers release consumers to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA).
- Staff and volunteers will adhere to the YMCA's code of conduct and character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility when posting on personal web pages, social media or other existing and emerging technology platforms. All private communication between staff or volunteers with consumers, including but not limited to the use of social networking websites or applications, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Messenger, texting, etc. - is prohibited. All communication between staff and volunteers and consumers must be transparent. Taking or using photos, video, or images of the Y and its programs, members, or participants without permission is also prohibited. Press inquiries must be directed to the Marketing and Communications Director.
- Staff and volunteers are to report to a supervisor or any other staff or volunteer who violates any of the policies listed in this Code of Conduct. The Y prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a report.
- Staff and volunteers are required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend training on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.
- Staff and volunteers will act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner consistent with the mission of the YMCA.

- No type of abuse will be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal.
- By law, everyone in Montana is considered a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Staff and volunteers are legally and ethically responsible for reporting suspected child abuse to the authorities. To report suspected abuse, notify CPS at 1-866-820-5437. In the event of an emergency, call 911.
- The YMCA has additional specific operational practices for consumers' protection, which are outlined in more detail in operations manuals. These practices describe the behaviors and procedures to be followed to ensure that the code of conduct applies to situations that more commonly occur.