

# Child Protection Policy

At YMCA Buffalo Niagara the safety of the children in our buildings and our programs is our highest priority. YMCA Buffalo Niagara has developed the following policies to ensure every child is safe in our care. Child protection does not stop with our staff, we need your help to ensure the safety of all children. Please review these policies, ask if you have any questions, and if you see something please tell us. Together we can ensure the safety of all our children.

If you have any questions regarding these policies or would like to report something you see please contact the YMCA compliance officer at (716) 276-5988 or email [complianceofficer@ymcabn.org](mailto:complianceofficer@ymcabn.org). Thank you for your help keeping our children safe.

## Staff and Volunteer Screening and Hiring Practices

- Criminal record checks: New staff and volunteers must successfully complete the Y's background investigation before beginning work.
- Reference checks: A thorough reference checking process, which includes questions created by Praesidium, the Y's partner in child safety, policies and procedures. These questions are designed to help managers evaluate the applicant's ability to work with or around children.

## Staff and Volunteer Training and Education Procedures

- YMCA Child Abuse Prevention Policies: Staff and volunteers must review and sign the Y's Child Abuse Prevention Code of Conduct, and Policies and Procedures upon hire and annually thereafter.
- Child Abuse Prevention Training: Every YMCA staff and volunteer is required to complete the Child Abuse Prevention training before they begin work and annually thereafter. All childcare and camp staff members participate in additional trainings.

## Member Screening

- The Nationwide Sex Offender Database is used to screen members on a daily basis. If it is confirmed that a member appears listed on a sex offender registry they are immediately contacted, and their membership privileges are revoked.

## Program Supervision and Operation

- Program staff are identifiable by staff t-shirts or name tags. At no time is a child alone with a staff person where they cannot be observed by others.
- Staff supervise children using bathrooms by either
  - having the children go one at a time, clearing the bathroom first and supervising to ensure no one else enters the bathroom, or
  - when there are multiple stalls in one bathroom, staff stand in the doorway of the bathroom and ensure only one child enters a stall at a time.
- YMCA staff do not engage in diapering children. However, if a younger child requires assistance resulting from an accident, staff will not close doors to the bathroom or stall so the child can be observed.
- While physical contact is important in the emotional development of children, staff members are trained with regard to appropriate physical contact with children. For example, while side hugs are acceptable, frontal hugs are not.

### **Babysitting and Outside Contact**

- Staff and volunteers must refrain from interactions with YMCA program participants under 18 years of age when they are outside of YMCA program activities.
- Staff and volunteers may not babysit, provide care or instruction, or maintain relationships outside the YMCA with any children or families they meet through YMCA programs.
- Staff and volunteers may not transport children who are YMCA program participants in their own vehicles.
- Online contact: Staff and volunteers are not permitted to communicate with youth in YMCA programs via their personal social network sites and are not to respond to social network requests from youth in Y programs. Staff and volunteers are not to show personal photos to youth and are not permitted to take and post pictures of youth on social media sites.

### **Responding to an Allegation of Child Abuse**

- All staff and volunteers are considered mandated reporters and have been trained in reporting child abuse/neglect. This means that when a child comes to a staff member or volunteer with a report of abuse, or if a staff member or volunteer suspects that a child is the victim of abuse, Y staff must forward that information on to a supervisor, who if deemed necessary, will place a call to New York State Child Protective Services.
- If it is believed that a staff member or volunteer is abusive or neglectful, that person will be removed from working with children. Pending the outcome of an investigation, it will be decided whether to reinstate, suspend, or terminate the staff member.