



CODE OF CONDUCT WITH YOUTH

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

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh provides our youths with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youths that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from our organization. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. Our organization will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

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

1. Youths will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.
2. Volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.
3. Volunteers will not have affection with youths that cannot be observed by others.
4. Volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.
5. Volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youths.
6. Volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh's property or at any Y sponsored activities.
7. Volunteers will not have secrets with youths and will only give gifts with prior permission.
8. Volunteers will comply with the YMCA's policies regarding interactions with youths outside of our programs.
9. Volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youths.

YMCA OF GREATER PITTSBURGH
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pittsburghymca.org



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10. Volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youths in a private setting. Volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youths.
11. Volunteers will not abuse youths in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
 - b. Verbal abuse: degrading, threatening, cursing
 - c. Sexual abuse: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
 - d. Mental abuse: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
 - e. Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter
12. The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. In addition, our organization 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, is 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 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 another 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:
 - i. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 - ii. Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
 - iii. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
 - iv. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
 - v. 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.

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- vi. Sexualized bullying - when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures 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 youths, staff and volunteers.

- 13. All volunteers must follow Pennsylvania specific mandatory reporting requirements. Volunteers should be trained to be aware of and understand their legal and ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of mistreatment and abuse. Volunteers 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 youths against abuse.
 - c. Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as required by Pennsylvania mandated reporter law:
<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Pages/default.aspx>
- 14. Volunteers will report concerns or complaints about staff, volunteers, adults or youths to their supervisor or Praesidium's Anonymous Helpline at 855-347-0751.
- 15. The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh cooperates fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Any staff or volunteer shall fully cooperate in any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the YMCA or persons given investigative authority by the YMCA. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct

I have read and agree to comply with the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh's Code of Conduct with Youth.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

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