

HOPKINS COUNTY FAMILY YMCA

ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES AND REPORTING GUIDELINES

We take the safety of safety of children and youth seriously. The Y is about youth development: kids and young adults must be safe to grow, thrive and reach their full potential in a nurturing environment. The mistreatment or neglect of members, participants and everyone in our care and the resulting severe effects is of primary concern.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is mistreatment or neglect of a child by parent(s) or others resulting in injury or harm. Child abuse may be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual, and lead to severe emotional, physical and behavioral problems.

Child abuse is a specific form of child abuse. It is the exploitation or coercion of a child by someone older than the child for the sexual gratification of the older person. Sometimes this coercion is by someone very near in age – a bully for example. Sexual abuse can range from non-physical abuse – an example would be pornography – to violent, forcible touching offenses. It can be a single encounter, occasional fondling, or years of on-going abuse.

ABUSE PREVENTION RULES

The following are the Hopkins County Family YMCA's expectations of employees, volunteers and others when working with children, youth and vulnerable young adults (participants). It provides clarity to unacceptable interactions between staff (employee or volunteer) and children, youth and vulnerable adults, and the consequences for those actions. The lists are illustrative and not all-inclusive. Everyone has a role in keeping participants safe. Even someone who is not working with participants can observe and report others who might be crossing boundaries of appropriate behavior.

NOT ALLOWED

Behavior that, when substantiated and the employee knew or should have known the rule, represent gross misconduct with the likelihood of rehire eligibility prohibited, even if it is the first offense. **We don't want you to lose your job because you didn't know the rules, but that could happen. Some interactions may**

be okay at other organizations but not okay at the Y. Please read carefully.
(Exceptions are marked with an asterisk (*) – see the Appropriate section)

TOUCHING:

1. Sexual abuse, molestation
2. Physical abuse, punishment, discipline (e.g., use of physical force, striking, whether used for behavior management or not)
3. Physical inappropriate interaction (e.g., touching breast or genital area*, wrestling, twisting nipples, sitting on lap, patting on bottom*, kissing)

OTHER ACTIONS:

4. Bigotry (e.g., making derogatory comments, including making fun of the individual/individual's family, national origin, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, threatening bodily harm to the individual or individual's family/friends)
5. Bullying, taunting, intimidation of physical force
6. Using inappropriate consequences for behavior (e.g., closing child in closet, cabinet; restraining child inappropriately such as tying their hands with string; taping or covering their mouth)
7. Telling or asking a child not to tell an adult or parent of words or actions of staff, volunteers.
8. Founded violation from CPS or law enforcement agency related to the safety of children or youth.
9. Failure to fully cooperate with an investigation by the YMCA, law enforcement agency or other authorized outside agency.
10. Sexual exploitation (e.g., sharing or taking nude photos)
11. Accessing, displaying or possessing pornography on Y property or equipment
12. Being nude in front of youth under your care or direction
13. Illegal activity on work time
14. Undisclosed past criminal history (as required by our disclosure requirements)
15. Using, selling or providing alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs to participants or in programs. Selling or providing over-the-counter drugs to children and vulnerable participants, except by documented parental authorization.

PROCEDURES:

16. Supervisory staff instructing employee in mandatory reporting situation not to make a report.
17. Unauthorized off-hour contact, including babysitting, movies, foster care, giving rides, weekend trips, dating.

18. Unauthorized social networking with youth, and with young adult social services participants: including texting, Friending, mobile phone use, private or secret messages, intimidating messages, or posting pictures of Y participants on social media sites.
19. Leaving a child behind which leaves a child unsupervised (e.g., transitions, transportation)
20. Releasing a child to unauthorized person in programs with controlled pick-up procedures.
21. Leaving other staff person over established ratio by leaving the program when scheduled to be there
22. Unauthorized time alone; being alone with a single participant where you cannot be observed by other staff or adults*
23. Taking a child to the bathroom or locker room by self, outside the view of others or without door open
24. Transporting participant in personal vehicle without clearance from YMCA leadership
25. Dating a program participant under the age of 18

GENERALLY NOT ALLOWED

These behaviors could result in corrective action and up to termination of employment. Examples of specific exceptions are included, and program exceptions are marked with an asterisk (*) and can be found in the Appropriate section.

TOUCHING:

1. Frontal hugs*, bear hugs (child initiated and release acceptable), unwanted touch
2. Applying sunscreen (allowed with younger children to ensure coverage)
3. Holding hands* - intent is to eliminate special, singular relationships (allowed for groups, games, preschool children, a child at each hand escorting)
4. Lifting*, carrying*, piggy-back rides (exceptions could be for challenge course activities, group games, moving an injured child)
5. Patting on head (demeaning in some cultures)
6. Restraint of child (e.g., strapping child into a chair, unless: child is in immediate danger to self and others; to avoid harm to a child; physically redirecting a child to safety)
7. Rough with children for behavior management (e.g., yanking arm, grabbing shoulder, squeezing, pushing child into position)
8. Roughhousing (aggressive physical contact, often for fun; child not in control of body; tickling; swinging children by ankles or wrists)

OTHER ACTIONS:

9. Verbal abuse (e.g., sarcasm, harsh words, cursing, name-calling, rejecting or stating you do not like a youth, yelling in an aggressive or threatening manner, belittling)
10. Neglect – failure to provide for basic needs of children (including failure to ensure children apply sunscreen, have clean diaper; failure to ensure child is adequately fed, hydrated, and clothed; denying snack as behavior consequence.; providing inappropriate first aid or medical care)
11. Staff clustering or standing together instead of spreading out for best supervision (okay briefly for communication outside)
12. Personal gifts to children or their parents (includes any gift, money, food or beverage intended to give a child and/or parent special attention not given to others)
13. Losing a child, child left activity, unaware not supervised, unaware of an extra child (depends on child's age, duration, when/where child found, how occurred)
14. Failure to supervise child according to program or individual guidelines (depends on program structure, ages, duration, circumstances)
15. Crossing boundaries of appropriate/inappropriate emotional and behavioral interaction with youth (including telling stories of personal sexual relationships, illegal activity, siding with participant as opposed to supporting staff with rules, having secrets, off-color jokes)
16. Singling a child out for favored attention or giving the appearance of grooming
17. Illegal activity outside program hours or off-site
18. Being under the influence of or in possession of alcohol or drugs on-site and/or in program (allowed: hosted event and those of age)

PROCEDURES:

19. Failing to report suspicion of abuse or neglect internally and to CPS
20. Unattended child in program area (may vary by program, age, duration)
21. Violating reporting procedures or failing to report rule-breaking to supervisor
22. Supervisory staff instructing employee not to report a situation to YMCA leadership
23. Not interacting with children while supervising (exceptions could be naps, playground supervision)
24. Being out of ratio without prior advising and approval of supervisor
25. Failure to follow supervision protocol for high-risk areas and times (bathrooms, locker rooms, changing clothes and transitions)
26. Unintentional overdosing, giving wrong medicine, or forgetting dose of prescribed medication)
27. Unintentional serving food to a child with known allergies

APPROPRIATE

Generally to be encouraged. However, even appropriate touch can be inappropriate when lingering or excessive, done for staff's personal pleasure, or when the intention is to give preferential treatment.

TOUCHING:

1. Side hugs
2. "A"-frame hug
3. Shaking hands
4. High fives
5. Hand signs and greetings
6. Touching upper back, shoulder, arms, hands, legs at knees and below
7. Fixing hair (i.e., put clip back in, put hair in ponytail or braid to remove from face; not okay for selected attention or prolonged time with any one person or just playing with child's hair)

APPROPRIATE, ALLOWABLE EXCEPTIONS FOR PROGRAMS AND AGE GROUPS

EXCEPTIONS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS (CHILD WATCH) & PRESCHOOLERS:

1. Patting on bottoms (infants in Child Watch)
2. Holding hands
3. Sitting close
4. Frontal hugs (if initiated by child)
5. Lifting & carrying
6. Back rubs (during nap time)
7. Helping young children at toilet (door should be open)

EXCEPTIONS FOR SWIM INSTRUCTORS & AQUATICS STAFF:

1. Lifting & carrying
2. Sitting close, holding close
3. Arm around body
4. Holding hands

EXCEPTIONS FOR FITNESS INSTRUCTORS/PERSONAL TRAINERS:

1. Touching body areas to identify areas for focus (ask permission first)

CONSEQUENCES

1. Consequences may include all forms of corrective action up to and including termination. Self-reporting is encouraged and may impact consequences.
2. All efforts will be made to help supervisors support their staff successfully. However, supervisors may also have consequences similar to those of their employees when it can be shown they have not provided adequate support to ensure procedures and abuse prevention rules are followed.

EDUCATING PARTICIPANTS

Participants may be informed in a manner that is age appropriate of their right to set their own "touching" limits in a Personal Safety Talk, and they will be encouraged to tell an adult who listens if someone is abusing them.

INTERNAL DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING

Report observations, knowledge of rule-breaking or an incident to your supervisor and the Puzzle Master.

Puzzle Master – The Organization Abuse Prevention Point Person(s)

The purpose of having a point person is so that observations are funneled to one or two persons who can pick up a trend. If multiple people are used as point persons and people are not communicating, an organization is not getting the combined picture that might identify a potential abuser. You never know if you are reporting the first piece or the final piece of a puzzle.

1. Employees should **report suspicions of an employee or volunteer who is breaking or bending the rules of appropriate behavior** with participants to their supervisor or the program director and to the Puzzle Master – even if it was not during work hours. We don't want staff to wait to report until they have suspicions of abuse; we want them to report rule-breaking or any other behaviors that might be considered "grooming."
2. Employees should **report any sexualized behaviors by children and youth**, even minor ones, to a parent or guardian, a supervisor, a program director, and **to the Puzzle Master**. The behavior should be documented and communication may be through sharing of the documentation. Sexualized behaviors are the yellow and red flags of potentially more serious sexual touching behaviors between youth. This must be prevented.

3. Employees **report all abuse**, whether it happened at home, in a licensed program or in any other Y program or facility, to the supervisor or program director AND to the Puzzle Master.

● The Puzzle Master's role is as a safety net. He or she makes sure that any next steps in reporting happen, whether internal or to external agencies.

Our YMCA's Puzzle Masters are Kelly Forbes and Chad Hart. Both are Certified Praesidium Guardians (certified in abuse prevention: including the best practices in organizational abuse prevention, specific steps to take to prevent incidents of abuse by employees, volunteers or program participants, and how to respond effectively if an allegation or incident occurs).

REPORTING PROCEDURES - WHEN SUSPICION OF ABUSE OCCURS

It is the intention of the YMCA to assure that all suspicions of child abuse are reported to the Child Protective Services (CPS) or the local law enforcement agency.

1. At the first reasonable cause to believe that any abuse exists, it should be reported to your supervisor or YMCA leadership so that proper reporting can be initiated. Inability to consult with a supervisor or leadership should not delay a call to authorities.
2. If it's perceived that a child is in imminent danger at that moment, 911 will be called instead of CPS. The supervisor or YMCA leadership will be called to bring support to the immediate situation.
3. All reports to CPS or legal authorities must be reported to Kelly Forbes (270-821-9622 ext. 109) or Chad Hart (270-821-9622 ext. 111).
4. Mandated reporters are required by law to report known or suspected instances of abuse and not doing so is a gross misdemeanor. Who is a mandated reporter? A mandated reporter is any person in his or her official supervisory capacity who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect caused by a person over whom he or she regularly exercises supervisory authority, including employees, volunteers and independent contractors. In addition, mandated reporters within the YMCA are employees or volunteers who work in programs for care of children, including day camp, preschool, licensed programs, or who are doctors, professional social services counselors, teachers or licensed or registered nurses.
5. Any information regarding abuse or potential abuse should be documented in writing.
6. Following reports of crossing boundaries of appropriate behavior or suspected abuse, appropriate actions will be taken regarding an employee or volunteer, including suspension or termination from YMCA employment or volunteer

status, and the YMCA's protocol for making a report to the appropriate authorities will be followed.

Confidentiality of information related to abuse is crucial and should be limited to the immediate supervisor and/or YMCA leadership. However, inappropriate and sexualized behaviors initiated by participants towards others in YMCA programs will be shared with the Puzzle Master and other staff who work with the participant.

COMMITMENT TO ABUSE PREVENTION

I read the Abuse Prevention Rules. In particular, I read the behaviors listed under "Not Allowed" and I understand my employment can be terminated if I break the rules. I understand the Y's abuse prevention policies and procedures, and I agree to abide by the guidelines as stated. I also know that the association Puzzle Master plays a crucial role in determining if grooming and rule breaking is occurring. I will report all rule-breaking to our Puzzle Master; my information may be the key piece that's needed. I will also report all sexualized behavior of youth to the Puzzle Master to help prevent peer-to-peer abuse. Furthermore, if I work in programs for care of children, day camp, preschool, or licensed programs, or I am a professional social services counselor, licensed or registered nurse, physician, or teacher, or I have supervisory authority over any employee, volunteer or contractor for whom I believe has caused a child to suffer abuse or neglect, I am aware that I am required by law to report known or suspected instances where a child (or vulnerable adult or developmentally disabled person) has been abused or neglected, and not doing so is considered a gross misdemeanor.



HOPKINS COUNTY FAMILY YMCA

I have read and fully understand that I have a legal and ethical duty to report suspected mistreatment or abuse of youth. No type of abuse will be tolerated and may be cause for immediate termination. We are committed to providing all youth with a safe environment. I also fully understand and agree to comply with the Hopkins County Family YMCA's Child Abuse Prevention Policies and Reporting Guidelines.

Staff Member Signature

Date

Staff Member Name (PRINTED)

Supervisor Signature

Please return signed acknowledgement to your supervisor. It will be filed in employee's personnel file.

** Employees/volunteers may keep the Child Abuse Prevention Policies and Reporting Guidelines document.