

**The Family YMCA (YMCA) PROMOTES A SAFE ENVIRONMENT THAT IS FREE FROM ABUSE.
NO FORM OF ABUSE WILL BE TOLERATED.**

All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with our Child Abuse Response Procedures. Any instances of confirmed abuse will result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer engagement and may also include reporting to the appropriate legal and reporting authorities, where necessary as mandated reporters. We will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse require investigation; staff and volunteers should also cooperate fully with any investigation of child abuse by assigned authorities. Refusal to cooperate can lead to termination of employment or expulsion from volunteering. Our YMCA and its staff will not retaliate against any staff, volunteer, participant or otherwise who makes a report or participates in an investigation of alleged child abuse.

I. CODE OF CONDUCT

The following are required expectations that all staff and volunteers should abide by at all times:

1. To protect YMCA staff, volunteers and youth, staff/volunteers are not to be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others.
2. In situations where one-on-one interactions are approved, such as tutoring and private coaching sessions, staff and volunteers should observe the following policies to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:
 - i. When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are observable by others.
 - ii. Avoid physical interactions that can be misinterpreted. Limit physical interactions to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
 - iii. If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
 - iv. Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.
 - v. Supervisors must keep a schedule of private tutoring and coaching sessions, which should include times, youth involved, and location of sessions.
 - vi. Staff/Volunteers must have supervisor approval for any tutoring or private coaching sessions.
 - vii. Tutoring and coaching sessions with our organization's youth may not occur outside of YMCA Facilities or programs.
3. Staff/Volunteers will never leave a child unsupervised.
4. Restroom Supervision
 - i. Staff/Volunteers will make sure the restroom is not occupied before allowing children to use the facilities.
 - ii. Staff/volunteers will monitor the restroom area while it is being occupied by children.
 - iii. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child).
 - iv. When staff are needed to assist younger children with bathroom needs, doors to the facility must remain open. The "rule of three" will be followed (i.e. two children and one staff; two staff and one child; or a staff, child, and volunteer) at all times.
5. Staff/Volunteers will conduct or supervise private activities in pairs: diapering, putting on bathing suits, helping children with bathroom accidents, taking showers, and the like. When this is not feasible, staff shall position themselves so that they are visible to others. Staff should ensure that participants are not 1:1 with other participants, staff or volunteers in changing stalls or showers.
6. Staff/Volunteers should assess all children daily and take note of any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, and all symptoms or issues that are visible on a child. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. If a child states that the parent caused an injury, staff/volunteers will contact the program director immediately. Staff/Volunteers will document any questionable marks or responses.
7. Staff/Volunteers will respond to children in a respectful manner and consideration and treat all children equally, regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, economic level of the family, or disability. Discrimination on any basis will not be tolerated.
8. Staff/Volunteers may not transport children in their own vehicles and discourage youth participants old enough to drive to transport younger children in the program.
9. Staff/Volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting children to their homes. Should a staff member/volunteer have a pre-existing relationship with a child in a YMCA program, that should be disclosed and documented with Human Resources or direct supervisors, as appropriate.
10. The YMCA prohibits the access, display, production, possession, or distribution of pornography and/or Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) on the YMCA's property or equipment or within any YMCA associated Facilities, Programs, or events.

11. Staff/Volunteers will not give excessive gifts to or accept excessive gifts from youth (e.g., TV, video games, jewelry).
 - i. Small gifts may be given on behalf of the YMCA with approvals from a supervisor and the youth's family
 - ii. Small gifts given to staff/volunteers from youth, or their families are permitted if disclosed to a supervisor.
12. The YMCA will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another youth. Refer to Section IV for further description.
13. Staff/Volunteers may not date program participants, volunteers or staff who are under the age of 18.
14. Under no circumstances will staff/volunteers release children in child programs 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).
15. Staff/Volunteers are to report to a supervisor any observation or suspicion of another staff or volunteer in violation of these policies and/or other concerns related to potential abuse of minors. Refer to Section II for further information.
16. All staff and volunteers must wear an ID badge and/or Y Staff shirt provided by the Y, which must be returned upon termination.
17. Staff/Volunteers will not abuse children in any way. Refer to Section VIII for further description.
18. There are occasions in which staff/volunteers will need to use approved personal or YMCA issued electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit policies and practices from supervisors governing use; staff should abide by all policies and practices for use. Situations which may require use of personal or YMCA- issued electronic communication devices include: (a) Field Trips, (b) Off-site Programs, and (c) Emergencies.
19. While assigned to work with youth, staff/volunteers are not permitted to use electronic communication devices except during approved breaks and emergency situations. Internet use, text messaging and/or emailing pictures while assigned to work with youth is strictly prohibited regardless of the type of device used and whether for business or personal reasons. Staff/Volunteers should ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy and provide alternate means of reaching them.
20. Staff/volunteers shall not withhold access to or require as punishment consuming any food items, bathroom access, or physical activity, such as running laps and doing push-ups.
21. Staff/volunteers have never been adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children.
22. Staff/volunteers have never been subject to any court order involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to a domestic order or protection.
23. Staff/volunteers will immediately notify their supervisor or Human Resources Department if they are arrested or convicted of a crime while they are employed by the organization.
24. All staff and volunteers must wear an ID badge and/or Y Staff shirt provided by the Y, which must be returned upon termination

II. BACKGROUND CHECKS

Staff/volunteers must satisfy the background check requirements put in place by The Family YMCA's policies. The cost of the required background check will be covered by the YMCA.

All offers of employment at the YMCA are contingent upon clear results of a thorough background check. Background checks will be run on all final candidates and all employees (who are 18 years of age or older) annually, as deemed necessary.

Subsequent background checks will be run for the following scenarios:

- Any break in employment/volunteering that is more than 6 months.
- Any active staff who turned 18 years old in the previous year.
- Background checks will be run every year for staff who have been continuously employed with the YMCA.
- Background checks will be run every 2 years for volunteers who have been continuously volunteering with the YMCA.

If an employee's responsibilities include driving YMCA owned vehicles or transporting minors participating in any YMCA programs, a mandatory driver's license background check or MVR will be performed annually.

III. BOUNDARY AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

A boundary violation is the act of disregarding or disrespecting the limits set by a person or group, or in our case, the Y. These limits can be physical, emotional, or informational. Boundary violations can be intentional or unintentional, but they ultimately cause discomfort or harm to the other person. Boundary and policy violations are common among those that abuse children. They can be innocent in intent but can also be early warning signals that a potential abuser is laying the groundwork for abuse in the future, also known as grooming. Look for the following or similar Red Flags Behaviors, Boundary, or Policy Violations:

- Goes above and beyond the call of duty to spend extra time with kids.
- Breaks the Y's established rules and doesn't follow policy or program operating procedures.
- Discourages other adults from participating in or monitoring his or her activities with children.
- Communicates privately with children via email messages, instant messages, texting, or social networking sites such as TikTok, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Discord, Snapchat, Lemon, BlueSky, etc.
- Becomes overly physical or becomes progressively more physically inappropriate.
- Taking personal photos or video of children – any photos or videos should be with permission from parent or guardian and must be on YMCA approved camera.
- Allowing or assigning participants to take staff roles/responsibilities (wearing a nametag or staff shirt, or controlling the walkie-talkie, etc.)
- Staff dating youth program participants regardless of staff/participant ages; this is an imbalance of power and prohibited.
- Exclusive relationships of any kind, including singling out one child/friend for different treatment (i.e. gift giving, special treatment, isolated situations or interactions) or acting possessive of a particular child may be seen as "choosing favorites." Spends too much time with a child or is overly involved in the child's private life.
- Encourages children to break or "stretch" rules.
- Gives special gifts, especially without permission or in secret.
- Treats children as if they were peers (uses inappropriate language or swears, tells off-color jokes, talks to kids about details of their personal lives).
- Asking that a secret be kept, or having interactions that are secret.
- Threatens or intimidates a child.

If you observe any of these or other inappropriate behaviors, you should:

1. Interrupt and stop the behaviors and
2. Report to your supervisor immediately.
3. You are required to document your observations and response in the form of an incident report, according to the YMCA Incident Reporting Guidelines, within 24 hours of the incident/observation.

Once a staff member, volunteer, youth or parent has expressed a concern, observed any inappropriate behavior, or made an allegation, swift and determined action will be taken to reduce any subsequent risk to the youth, to the accused staff member or volunteer, and to the organization. Because our organization is dedicated to maintaining zero-tolerance¹ for abuse, it is imperative that every staff member or volunteer actively participates in the protection of youth.

¹ It is the position of the YMCA that we will not interpret a person's intent or motivation, and will therefore, respond to all boundary and policy violations uniformly. We will not interpret the intent of a behavior/actions/report but pass on all observed actions and/or reports to the appropriate authorities.

IV. YOUTH-TO-YOUTH BULLYING AND PROBLEMATIC SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

The YMCA has a policy of zero-tolerance for youth-to-youth bullying and problematic sexual behaviors; we will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behaviors.

Peer-to-Peer Misconduct is harmful conduct by one child towards another child. Youth-to-youth bullying or problematic sexual behavior can take on various forms, including:

Physical Misconduct – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

Verbal Misconduct – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.

Nonverbal or relational Misconduct – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of misconduct also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

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: (a) sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images, (b) posting sensitive, private information about another person, (c) pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad, or (d) 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 Behavior – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposure of, attempt to touch, or touching of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Y staff and volunteers who witness incidents of misconduct and do not intervene or respond are not upholding the standards of conduct expected at the YMCA.

V. BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

1. Staff/Volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism.
2. Staff/Volunteers will have age-appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline.
3. Physical restraint is used only in predetermined situations (when necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), administered only in a prescribed manner by authorized staff, and must be documented in writing post incident.

VI. DEFINING APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

The Family YMCA encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff or volunteers towards youth in YMCA programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment/volunteer experience.

1. Staff/Volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched or looked at in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
2. Staff/Volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection in the presence of children, parents, and other staff/volunteers.
3. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives and hand slaps • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Side arm around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback/shoulder rides • Tickling • Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg • Any type of massage given by or to a youth • Any form of affection that is unwanted. • Compliments relating to physique or body development. • Touching any areas that would be covered by a bathing suit.

VII. DEFINING APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE VERBAL INTERACTIONS

1. Staff and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youth in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, harassing, or humiliating.
2. Staff and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with youth, parents, staff, or volunteers. Staff and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities, intimate details of one's personal life in the presence of children, parents, volunteers, or staff.
3. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Silly, age-appropriate jokes • Encouragement • Verbal praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Jokes that are of a sexual, vulgar, demeaning, or crude nature or are otherwise not suitable for youth. • Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the • personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers • Secrets • Cursing/profanity • Off-color or sexual jokes • Shaming • Belittling • Derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth • Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family

VIII. GOVERNING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STAFF AND YOUTH

- For the protection of YMCA youth, staff, and volunteers, any private electronic communication between staff and youth, including the use of social networking websites like – Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, direct messaging, texting, etc. – is prohibited except when directed to do so by a supervisor to conduct official business on behalf of the YMCA. Use of personal electronic communication devices or accounts to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) youth for personal and/or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment/volunteer experience.
- All communication between staff and youth must be transparent. Provide this information to your participants' parents so that they know what is appropriate and inappropriate from your staff.
- The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

Appropriate Electronic Communication	Inappropriate Electronic Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youth ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth's parent • Communicating publicly with youth via "organization group pages" on Facebook or other approved public forums • "Private" profiles for staff and volunteers which youth cannot access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments • Sexually oriented conversations • Private messages between staff and volunteers with youth • Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites • Posting inappropriate comments on pictures • "Friending" or "Following" participants on social networking sites • Allowing participants to "Follow" staff's personal, public or private accounts on social networking sites • Taking or sharing pictures of participants • Video game play outside of scheduled program times (e.g., E-Sports programs at the Y) or use of video game chats or other communication forums between staff and youth.

IX. CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE PROCEDURE

Every staff member and volunteer, as a mandated reporter, has a legal and ethical duty to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse, molestation, neglect, or sexual misconduct to their local Child Protection Agency. Reasonable suspicion means that it is understandable for a person to entertain the impression, drawing when appropriate on their training and experience, that abuse may have occurred. The Child Protection Agency will determine the validity of the report.

Types of abuse:

- Physical – An injury or pattern of injuries that happens to a child that is not accidental. These may include burns, bruises, bites, welts, broken bones, strangulation or even death. Some examples of physical abuse include striking, spanking, shaking, or slapping.
- Neglect – Neglect occurs when adults responsible for the well-being of a child fail to provide for or protect the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, or shelter; failing to keep children clean; lack of supervision; and withholding medical care.
- Emotional – Any chronic and persistent act by an adult that endangers the mental health or emotional development of a child, including rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, shaming, withholding kindness, being cruel, humiliating, degrading, threatening, constant criticism, making mean remarks, insulting and giving little or no love, guidance or support.
- Sexual – Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period or a single incident. Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to rape, incest, sodomy, fondling, exposing oneself, oral copulation, and penetration of genital or anal openings as well as forcing children to view or appear in pornography. The perpetrator keeps the child from disclosing through intimidation, threats or rewards.

In the event that there is a suspicion of abuse in any form (physical, neglect, emotional, or sexual) with a child at the YMCA or participant in one of our programs, the YMCA will take immediate action as follows:

1. If a staff member or volunteer suspects abuse, observes an incident of abuse, or if abuse is disclosed to them, the staff/volunteer is to immediately **interrupt** the behavior if observed, then **report** it to their supervisor and directly to the appropriate Child Protection Agency. *If you feel the child is in immediate danger, call 911 to involve law enforcement.*
2. Staff should immediately **document** their observations, the allegation, or disclosure of the abuse and necessary details in writing. If multiple staff were present or involved, each staff member should independently document their staff statement and independently share it with their supervisor before discussing the incident with each other. The supervisor should reinforce the importance of confidentiality for the safety of all involved and the incident/allegation/disclosure should not be shared with anyone outside of the supervisor or the Child Protection Agency and/or law enforcement as assigned.
3. All reports of inappropriate behavior with youth or allegations of abuse should be taken seriously. Our organization will fully **cooperate** with the authorities if allegations of abuse are made and investigated. All staff and volunteers should fully cooperate with any investigation of child abuse by assigned authorities. Refusal to cooperate can lead to termination of employment or expulsion from volunteering.
4. The supervisor will contact their next level supervisor or administrator and/or the CEO to inform of the concern. As necessary, these leaders help guide staff in reporting to the appropriate Child Protection Agency.
5. Before reporting to the Child Protection Agency, gather the following information:
 - Child's name and date of birth
 - Parent's name and date of birth (if accessible)
 - Does the child live with both parents?
 - Home address and telephone number
 - Total number of children who live in the home (if accessible)
 - Parents' employers (if accessible)
 - Do we feel the child is in immediate danger?
6. If any staff member or volunteer is named as a suspect in an incident of abuse, YMCA leadership will immediately remove the staff member from their duties, ask them to document their statement, and suspend their employment and/or volunteer responsibilities immediately during the investigation process. Human Resources should be contacted to determine appropriate terms of the suspension (length, paid/unpaid, alternative work, etc.).
7. When a situation involves a YMCA staff or volunteer– the YMCA should self-report to the appropriate Child Protection Agency and the State Childcare Licensing Agency, if applicable.
8. The supervisor will follow up with staff involved to inform them of steps taken to address their concerns while protecting confidentiality. If you have not heard from your supervisor within 24 hours about the action that has been taken, contact the Child Protection Agency or Risk Management directly.



9. If any staff member, volunteer or youth needs support or consultation for abuse prevention questions or issues, contact the Operations Director or CEO.

X. CONTACT NUMBER FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS, DISCLOSED OR SUSPECTED ABUSE:

New Mexico Child Protective Services	1-855-333-SAFE (7233) or #7233
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------

XI. YMCA REPORTING

All members of The Family YMCA community are encouraged to participate in the protection of children in all YMCA programs. If you have a grievance, would like to make a report, or would like to ask a question or obtain more information, please contact our YMCA KNOW. SEE. RESPOND Hotline. Call the YMCA KNOW. SEE. RESPOND. Hotline if you have concerns about the safety of anyone in our YMCA Facilities or Programs: (720) 617-7201.

XII. ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AND COOPERATION WITH AUTHORITIES

The Family YMCA has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse. Therefore, all reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youths or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. The Family YMCA will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made and investigated. All staff and volunteers should fully cooperate with any investigation of child abuse by assigned authorities. Refusal to cooperate can lead to termination of employment or expulsion from volunteering. Our YMCA and its staff will not retaliate against any staff, volunteer, participant or otherwise who makes a report or participates in an investigation of alleged child abuse.

XIII. PROTECTION OF REPORTING PARTIES

New Mexico state law provides that anyone making a "good faith" report is immune from civil liability and criminal penalty. Furthermore, regarding the terms and conditions of YMCA employment, volunteering or program participation, YMCA policy prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith report of abuse or neglect in accordance with state mandated reporting requirements.

XIV. INVESTIGATION STATEMENT

The Family 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.

I understand that as a condition of employment, The Family YMCA and its assigned agencies will conduct a criminal background/sex offender check on me, which may include a review of criminal records maintained by government agencies. I understand that my position is dependent upon receiving no inappropriate information on my background check. I am subject to suspension by the YMCA at any time in the event of inappropriate behavior as outlined in the Code of Conduct. I attest that the facts set forth in my application are true and complete. I understand that if engaged, false statements on this application will be considered sufficient cause for dismissal.

I understand that I will be required to take training (online or in person) about Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting. Participation in this training, or an equivalent, will be required of all staff and volunteers at The Family YMCA on an annual basis.

APPLICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

Please read all statements and sign below:

I authorize both The Family Y and persons listed – references, schools, current (unless noted) and former employers and any others with whom The Family YMCA desires to check, to communicate with regard to any relevant information that may be required to reach an employment decision. I agree to hold such persons harmless with respect to any information they may supply. I understand and agree that any offer of employment is contingent upon successful completion of all background check processes, including a criminal history background check.

I certify that all information provided by me in this application is correct, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the falsification, misrepresentation, or omission of any facts in this application or any other document submitted in connection with YMCA employment will result in denial of employment or termination of employment regardless of the timing or circumstances of discovery.

If I am employed by The Family Y I understand my employment can be terminated, with or without cause and with or without notice, at any time at the option of The Family Y or myself. I understand that, other than the CEO of The Family Y, no manager, supervisor or representative of The Family Y has authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specific period of time, or to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing. Only the CEO of The Family Y has the authority to make any agreement contrary to the foregoing and then only in writing. I further expressly agree that, with respect to the at-will employment relationship, this constitutes the full, complete and final expression of the parties' intent concerning the nature of any employment relationship between myself and The Family Y.

I understand that all offers of employment are conditional upon my ability to provide appropriate documents regarding my identity and legal right to work in the United States. I understand that this application is only valid for the position applied for at present and that The Family Y is not obligated to retain or consider this application for future openings. If hired, I agree to abide by The Family Y's policies and rules at all times. I acknowledge that I have read the above statements and understand them.

Signature:

Date:

Admin: Hand this copy of the application to be stored in the Personal File for the applicant with the Director of HR.