



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YOUTH CODE OF CONDUCT

HARRISBURG AREA YMCA

Our Youth Code of Conduct outlines specific expectations of youth enrolled in Harrisburg Area YMCA programs.

ABUSE OR MISTREATMENT

Our organization's top priority is keeping our youth safe. Any form of abuse or mistreatment of children, adolescents, employees, and volunteers is prohibited. Youth participants shall not abuse or mistreat employees, volunteers, or other youth in any way. Use of abusive language, obscene or profane language, including racial, religious, or sexual references directed at other people will not be tolerated. It is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.

Youth participants shall not engage in the verbal or emotional abuse or mistreatment of other youth, employees, or volunteers.

Appropriate Verbal Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Participants	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate jokes• Encouragement• Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name-calling• Bullying• Ridicule or humiliation• Discussing sexual encounters• Cursing• Hazing• Off-color or sexual jokes• Shaming• Belittling• Derogatory remarks• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate other participants• Derogatory remarks about another participant or his/her family• Inappropriate games like <i>Truth or Dare</i> or <i>Never Have I Ever</i>

Youth shall not engage in the physical abuse or mistreatment of other youth participants, employees, or volunteers.

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Appropriate Physical Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Participants	Inappropriate Physical Interactions for Adolescent and Teenage Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Side hugs• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs• Pats on the shoulder or back• Handshakes• High-fives and hand slapping• Verbal praise• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms• Arms around shoulders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-frontal hugs• Kisses• Showing affection in isolated areas• Lap sitting• Wrestling• Piggyback rides• Tickling• Exposing oneself• Any type of massage given by or to a youth participant• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth participant, staff, or volunteer• Compliments relating to physique or body development• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas• Hitting• Spanking• Shaking• Slapping• Unnecessary restraints• Viewing or showing others pornographic materials

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Appropriate personal relationships between youth are encouraged. However, our organization strongly discourages romantic relationships between youth participants while in programming. Youth are not permitted to hold hands, sit on each others’ laps, use full-frontal hugs, or kiss other youth participants while in programming.

There should never be, under any condition, a romantic or otherwise personal relationship between a youth participant and an employee or volunteer.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth participant, or when a participant is alone with another participant. Our organization aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless approved in advance by the organization administration. If you observe one-on-one interactions between employees and youth, you should report this to the branch Executive Director.

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ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

All communication between employees/volunteers and youth must be approved by parents/guardians and must be in an open electronic environment. The "Rule of Three" must be observed in all electronic communications between youth and employees/volunteers. For example, there should be two employees/volunteers included in on text messages and emails with youth participants. Direct, private messaging between youth and employees/volunteers is not allowed.

Youth participants will comply with the organization's policies governing the use of personal mobile communication devices. Youth participants are not permitted to share cell phones with other youth participants.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND TOBACCO

Possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and tobacco products while at the organization is strictly prohibited. Youth will not be permitted to participate in any program while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or illicit substances. Parents/guardians will be notified as appropriate.

WEAPONS

We want our organization to be a safe place for children and families. Weapons and items that may be considered weapons are prohibited. Anyone found to be in possession of such items will be required to leave and the items will be confiscated. This includes laser pointers. Parents/guardians and/or the authorities will be notified as appropriate.

VIOLENCE

Our organization seeks to provide a safe environment for individuals in our community. Violence and threats of violence will not be tolerated at the Harrisburg Area YMCA, on our grounds, in organization facilities, in other facilities being utilized by our organization, or during Harrisburg Area YMCA sponsored activities and events. Employees are available to assist in the resolution of differences.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

We take pride in the appearance of our organization and we always want to ensure members are safe. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior is not permitted in our organization. This includes, but is not limited to, graffiti, littering, spitting, or throwing objects that could intentionally or unintentionally harm others or cause disorder.

BULLYING

Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one consumer by another consumer. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- *Physical bullying* – When one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- *Verbal bullying* – When someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful name.

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- *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.
- *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:
 - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 - Posting sensitive/private information about another person.
 - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and
 - 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 bullying* – When bullying involves behaviors that 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 participants, employees, and volunteers.

REPORTING

Because our organization is dedicated to maintaining zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative that everyone, including youth, actively participates in the protection of members and youth participants. In the event that participants observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations on the part of other employees, volunteers, or other youth participants, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations. Remember, at our organization, the policies apply to everyone.

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors Between Employees/Volunteers and Youth

- Violation of any abuse prevention policies outlined by the organization
- Seeking private time or one-on-one time with youth
- Buying gifts for individual youth participant
- Making suggestive comments to youth
- Picking favorites

Youth are encouraged to report concerns or complaints about other employees and volunteers, other adults, or youth to a supervisor or the branch Executive Director.