

KNOW SEE RESPOND



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION YMCA OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM

We take the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults seriously. The Y is about youth development: kids must be safe to grow, thrive and reach their potential in a nurturing environment. The mistreatment or neglect of children, youth and vulnerable adults is of primary concern to the YMCA.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY:

The YMCA of Greater Birmingham has zero tolerance for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of children and teens in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service and cooperation with local law enforcement and the Department of Human Resources

ZERO TOLERANCE INTERACTIONS:

Such behaviors represent gross misconduct and can result in the immediate termination of all staff (employee or volunteer). This chart is intended to clarify unacceptable interactions between staff and children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This list is not all-inclusive; other behaviors may be identified.

1. No Inappropriate Touch

- Sexual abuse, molestation, physical abuse, punishment, discipline (eg. use of physical force, striking, squeezing, whether used for behavior management or not)
- Physical inappropriate interaction (eg. tickling, wrestling, twisting nipples, swinging children by ankles or wrists, massages, caressing, sitting on lap, patting on bottom, kissing)

2. No Inappropriate Language

- Verbal abuse (yelling in an aggressive or threatening manner; belittling, including making fun of the individual/ individual's family, national origin, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation; threatening bodily harm to the individual or individual's family/friends)
- Bullying, taunting, intimidation or physical force
- Using inappropriate consequences for behavior (eg. closing child in closet, cabinet; restraining child inappropriately such as tying their hands with string, strapping child in a chair; taping their mouth)
- Telling or asking a child not to tell an adult or parent of words or actions of staff, volunteers
- Crossing boundaries of appropriate/inappropriate interaction with youth (including telling stories of personal sexual relationships, illegal activity, and siding with participant as opposed to supporting staff with rules)

3. No Alone Time

- Taking a child to the bathroom or locker room by self, outside the view of others or without open door.
- Use of an office, stairwell, or locker room to have a private conversation.
- Unauthorized time alone; being alone with a single participant where you cannot be observed by other staff or adults.

4. No Favoritism

- Singling a child out for favored attention or giving the appearance of grooming
- No presents or rewards for a single child; all children deserve respect

5. No Outside Contact

- Online social media contact (email, texting, Snapchat, gaming, etc)
- Transporting program participants in personal vehicles is prohibited
- Baby Sitting, Tutoring, Social Interactions

APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS

Generally to be encouraged. However, even appropriate touch can be inappropriate when excessive, or when the intention is to give preferential treatment.

Appropriate Physical Interactions

- Side hugs
- Shaking hands
- High fives or fist bumps
- Hand signs and greetings
- Touching upper back, shoulder, arms, hands, legs at knees and below.
- Fixing hair (i.e. put clip back in, put hair in ponytail or braid to remove from face)
- Holding hands when age appropriate

Appropriate Verbal Interactions

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
- Encouragement
- Praise

The YMCA of Greater Birmingham annually reviews all youth abuse prevention policies for relevance, utility and necessity, and modifies or rescinds as appropriate.

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Abuse situations can occur: 1) At home or away from the Y; 2) At licensed sites or in contracted programs; and 3) in any Y program. If signs are observed at the Y or a child makes a disclosure that they have been sexually abused, it is your responsibility to report to a Y staff immediately. **Possible situations at the Y:** 1) staff (employee or volunteer) can break rules or cross boundaries of appropriate interaction with children, youth or young adults; or 2) Children & youth can sexually act out by themselves or with other children, including bullying or intimidation.

Educating participants: Participants may be informed in a manner that is age appropriate of their right to set their own "touching" limits for personal safety, and they will be encouraged to tell an adult if someone is abusing them.

REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING ABUSE/NEGLECT AND OTHER UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

You don't need proof that abuse is occurring to make a report, only reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion means that you have witnessed maltreatment or boundary violations, either in the child and/or adult, or you have received a disclosure from a child about abuse, neglect, or boundary violations towards them. Child sexual abuse reports should be made to the police and/or state child protective services.

MANDATORY REPORTERS

All Y team members are recognized as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse under the State of Alabama laws and are therefore required to report any suspicion of abuse against those who participate in programs at the Y.

If you have any questions or concerns about Y staff, volunteers or another program participant, you can:

- Report concerns to a YMCA Director.
- Call the Praesidium Helpline dedicated to YMCAs at 1-855-347-0751. Praesidium's Y Helpline allows employees, volunteers, parents, and participants to report suspicious or inappropriate behaviors and policy violations anonymously if desired.
- Click [HERE](#) to complete our online reporting form or scan the QR code.



QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the Executive Director at your branch or email us at childcare@ymcabham.org.

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Praesidium Accreditation® publicly demonstrates to consumers that the YMCA of Greater Birmingham has achieved the highest industry standards in abuse prevention. Praesidium is the leading innovator of scientifically based solutions designed to transform the way organizations approach the prevention of sexual abuse. Praesidium's expertise, consulting, and solutions help to foster safer environments for children, vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers, and all parties involved. For over 30 years, Praesidium has trained more than one million people online and hundreds of thousands in person. As the largest and most comprehensive sexual abuse risk management firm globally, Praesidium knows how sexual abuse happens and, more importantly, how to prevent it. For more information visit www.PraesidiumInc.com