



# **YMCA Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**YMCA of Timmins**

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**YMCA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **COMMITMENT FROM THE CEO**

As the CEO of the YMCA of Timmins, I am committed to an ongoing strategy for the protection of children, youth and vulnerable persons and maintaining safe environments, which includes:

- Training and education to ensure staff and volunteers know their responsibilities and Duty to Report;
- Monitoring YMCA of Timmins's effectiveness in its commitment to protecting children, youth and vulnerable persons;
- Providing mechanisms for feedback and appropriate response to complaints or disclosures.

The YMCA of Timmins Child Protection Policy and Procedure is discussed often and is a part of the YMCA of Timmins culture. It is reviewed annually and is continually discussed in all conversations at the Y of Timmins. I have appointed Courtney Berlinghoff as the Child Protection Lead to manage the policy and procedures in our organization.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

The YMCA is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people in its care. It recognizes its responsibility to promote safe practices and to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Throughout these policies and procedures, reference is made to "children and young people". This term is used to mean "those under the age of sixteen". The YMCA also recognizes that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse, and therefore the procedures may be applied accordingly (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

The YMCA is committed to ensuring that it:

- provides a safe environment for children and young people;
- identifies children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm; and
- takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe at the YMCA.

In pursuit of these aims, the YMCA will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and young people and protecting them from abuse while participating in Y activities/programs;
- recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff and volunteers to adopt best practices to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves;
- requiring staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures;
- establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers; and
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy and these procedures and adapting them whenever there is a significant change in the association or if there are any legal changes.

The YMCA will refer concerns that a child or young person might be at risk of significant harm to the North Eastern Ontario Family & Children's Services – Children's Aid Society or Kuuwanimano.

There will be a senior member of the YMCA management team with special responsibility for child protection issues, the Child Protection Lead.

### 3. TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are used in this policy:

**Child** under provincial child protection legislation is someone who is under the age of 16 years of age.

**Child Abuse** can be of a physical, emotional or sexual nature, or neglect. It may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. Vulnerable persons also may be at risk of abuse or neglect. See *Vulnerable Persons - Types of Abuse* below for more information.

A **child** can be subjected to more than one form of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** could result from a parent or person in charge causing physical injury to a child, or failing to adequately supervise a child or from a pattern of neglect of the child.

**Examples of physical abuse** include beating, slapping, hitting, pushing, throwing, shaking, burning. **A child who is physically abused** may have burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object; not want to go home; be afraid of adults; wear inappropriate clothing (e.g. long sleeves on a very hot day).

- **Sexual abuse** happens when a parent or other person in charge sexually molests or uses a child for sexual purposes or knowingly fails to protect a child from sexual abuse.

**Examples of sexual abuse** include any sexual act between an adult and a child, including intercourse; fondling; exposing a child to adult sexual activity; sexual exploitation through child prostitution or child pornography. **A child who is sexually abused** may have an inappropriate knowledge of sexual acts; be very compliant or extremely aggressive; be afraid of a certain person or a family member; have difficulty walking or sitting.

- **Emotional abuse** occurs when a parent or other person in charge harms a child's sense of self. It includes acts or omissions that result in, or place a child at risk of serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental health problems.

**Examples of emotional abuse** include yelling at, screaming at, threatening, frightening, or bullying a child; humiliating the child, name-calling, making negative comparisons to others; showing little to no physical affection (such as hugs) or words of affection or praise; saying that everything is the child's fault; withdrawing attention, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'; confining a child in a closet or a dark room, or tying the child to a chair for long periods of time; or exposing a child to domestic violence, allowing the child to be present during violent behaviour of others, including the physical abuse of others. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse. **A child who is emotionally abused** may show signs of serious anxiety, depression or withdrawal; show self-destructive or aggressive behavior; show delays in physical, emotional or mental development.

- **Neglect** happens when a child's parent or other person in charge fails to provide for basic needs.

**Examples of neglect** include failing to provide proper food, clothing suitable for the weather, supervision, a home that is clean and safe, medical care as needed; failing to provide emotional support, love and affection. **A child who is neglected** may not wear clothing that's suitable for the weather; be dirty or unbathed; be very hungry; or not be properly supervised.

*Any of the above signs of child abuse noticed by a staff or volunteer must be reported immediately to a child protection authority. See page 17 for child protection authority contact information.*

**Duty of Care** is a legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants.

**Duty to Report** is defined under CFSA s. 72(2) that sets out what must be reported to a child protection authority or agency. A report must be made immediately if a child is or appears to be suffering from abuse or is at *risk of harm*. Duty to report applies to the public, and includes special reporting responsibilities for professionals whose work involves children.

**On-going Duty to report** is defined under CFSA s. 72(2) and states that if a person has made a previous report about a child, and has additional reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, that person must make a further report.

- **Child in need of protection** is defined under CFSA s. 72 (1) *as a child who is or who appears to be suffering from abuse, neglect or risk of harm*. Anyone who has *reasonable grounds* to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion to a child protection authority (e.g. Children's Aid Society - CAS). Refer to Section 6 for Duty to Report procedures.
- **Risk of harm** is the risk that a child is likely to be physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected.
- **Reasonable grounds** refers to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgment, would need in order to decide to report. It is not the person's responsibility to prove or have proof of abuse; investigation is the role of child protection authorities.

**Police records check (PRC)** is a search of the records held in the information database of a police agency. It may include a check of national or local and regional police records. Basic types include a Police Criminal Record Check or Police Information Check or Police Vulnerable Sector Check. At the end of the process, a report is issued. *Refer to the YMCA of Timmins Human Resources Policy for more information.*

**Position of Trust** or authority is created when an individual's relationship with someone else has any of the following characteristics: decision-making power; unsupervised access; closeness inherent in the relationship; personal nature of the activity itself.

**Staff** means salaried, regular, hourly, seasonal, contract and supply staff.

**Volunteers** include program volunteers, policy (Board/Board Committees/Regional Council) volunteers, philanthropy/fundraising volunteers and student placements. Occasional and special event volunteers are defined as volunteers i) who have limited interaction and are not left alone with children; and ii) whose involvement with the YMCA is limited in duration and frequency and are not

left alone with children.

**Vulnerable person** for the purposes of this policy and reporting means a young person 16 or 17 years of age, or an adult at risk. An **adult at risk** is a person aged 18 or over who is, or may be unable to protect themselves from abuse. The vulnerability of an adult is related to how able the adult is to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence of any sort, and to protect themselves from abuse. *Refer to section 7 for examples.*

Vulnerable persons may be at risk of one or more **types of abuse** including physical abuse or neglect (defined above), or emotional abuse, sexual abuse and financial abuse or exploitation.

- *Emotional abuse* of a vulnerable person is any act which may lessen the sense of identity, dignity or self-worth of a person, such as: confinement; physical and social isolation; verbal assault, harassment, humiliation, or intimidation; denial of information, privacy, visitors; coercion.
- *Sexual abuse* of a vulnerable person is any act involving unwanted touching/activity of a sexual nature, or a situation in which an adult consents or submits to sexual activity because a person in a position of trust or with authority has used that trust/authority to gain that consent. Such acts include: sexual assault, sexual harassment, any act designed to use the vulnerable person for the perpetrator's sexual gratification.
- *Financial abuse or exploitation* is any act involving the misuse or abuse of funds or assets belonging to a vulnerable person. Examples include obtaining property and funds without the person's knowledge or consent, or by using undue influence; or where a person is not mentally competent, or not acting in the person's best interest.

*Alleged, suspected or witnessed abuse of a vulnerable person may constitute a criminal offence and the police should be informed.*

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

While the primary responsibility for the protection of children from abuse rests with Children's Aid Society, all YMCA staff and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people have a duty to help protect them from abuse or risk of abuse.

The responsibility for managing this policy lies with the YMCA's senior management. Every association will appoint designated person(s) who will have responsibility for the implementation of the child protection guidelines and procedures in their association and office(s).

##### **4.1 YMCA of Timmins Board of Directors**

YMCA of Timmins Board of Directors is further responsible for protecting children and vulnerable persons by:

- produce an acceptable PRC VS check upon board approval of hire and every three years thereafter, as well as re-checks if requested by YMCA;

- to read, understand, ask any questions if required and sign off (annually thereafter) on the YMCA Child Protection Policy and YMCA of Timmins Crisis Communications Framework;
- provide oversight of a protection framework that includes establishing and monitoring policies and procedures;
- establish a reporting protocol that complies with provincial child protection legislation;
- establish recruitment and screening including police records check procedures;
- ensuring systems are in place for regular review, reporting and evaluation of effectiveness of YMCA of Timmins Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

#### **4.2 Management's Responsibility:**

YMCA Management is responsible for ensuring that a safe environment is maintained in all facilities and programs by:

- producing an acceptable PRC VS check upon hire and every three years thereafter, as well as re-checks if requested by the YMCA;
- reading, understanding and sign-off and ensure that all staff, students and volunteers read and sign-off on the YMCA Child Protection Policy and Procedures and YMCA of Timmins Crisis Communications Framework; Completed upon hire and reviewed whenever major changes are made.
- Complete the LMS Child Protection Modules Level 1 and 2 prior to working and refresher annually thereafter;
- implementing all procedures relating to child protection;
- establishing a reporting protocol that complies with provincial child protection legislation;
- ensuring recruitment and on-boarding process is compliant, including police records vulnerable sector checks procedures are implemented;
- establishing guidelines that ensure programs are developmentally appropriate and well planned in advance; and
- ensuring that all staff and volunteers have read, understand and signed the "Child Protection Policy and Procedures Sign Off" form or master policy sign off form
- ensuring that all staff complete the LMS Child Protection Modules Level 1 before they begin working with children and vulnerable persons and ensure that the LMS Child Protection Refresher Module is renewed annually thereafter;
- ensuring that all of your student placements complete the LMS Child Protection Orientation module and volunteers complete the LMS Child Protection Module Level 1 before they begin working with children or vulnerable persons and the refresher is renewed annually thereafter;
- ensuring that a "Facility Access and Programs Controls" plan is in place and reviewed annually in partnership with staff, volunteers, supervisors and administration staff. It will be located in the front of the Child Protection Tool Kits
- ensuring that children, youth and vulnerable persons are effectively supervised;
- maintaining physical boundaries, security measures and other safeguards to protect participants from accessing non-program areas or areas not within your department boundaries;

- respond promptly to any complaints, reports or allegations against staff or volunteers;
- ensuring all job descriptions reflect their role for child protection.

#### **4.3 Staff and Volunteers:**

YMCA staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and young people in their care by:

- producing an acceptable PRC VS check upon hire and every three years thereafter, as well as re-checks if requested by the YMCA;
- reading, understanding, asking questions if needed and signing-off on the YMCA of Timmins Child Protection Policies and Procedures and Crisis Communications Framework on or before first day of work, staff will review the policy if and when any major changes are made
- completing the required LMS Child Protection modules prior to working with children, youth or vulnerable persons and the refresher modules annually thereafter: Staff – Level One, Supervisors – Level One and Two
- reporting immediately any suspicion of abuse that a child is in need of protection as provided in Section 72. (1) under the Ontario Child & Family Services Act;
- contacting police services if they believe that a vulnerable person's safety is at risk;
- notifying their supervisor that a report is being made;
- following the code of conduct and prohibited practices (Section 4);
- following guidelines that ensure programs are developmentally appropriate and well planned in advance; and
- creating a safe and caring environment for children and young people that will challenge their development in spirit, mind and body.

## **5 EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION**

Validation of effective supervision through specific observations is the role of everyone.

Effective and active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observations of all participants at all times. Staff / volunteers plan where they will position themselves so they can see and hear all children at all times to prevent children from harm. They also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what he/she will do, then get involved and redirect if necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely. A 100% is expected when it comes to supervision, ratios and attendance. Effective supervision includes:

- All children and / or vulnerable persons are supervised by a YMCA staff / volunteer at all times;
- Child Care volunteers are never to be left alone with children;
- Staff / volunteer ratios are compliant at all times;
- All children are signed in upon arrival and out when they leave right away;
- A small group attendance tracking is in place when groups separate to ensure accountability;



- Each staff must know how many participants they have in their care at all times (by head counts); this is documented through the use of an attendance sheet and cross-referenced;
- Staying close to children, youth or vulnerable persons who may need additional support;
- Staff / volunteers make sure there are always safe and clear paths where children are playing, sleeping and eating so they can react quickly when necessary; and
- Staff / volunteers ensure there are set and safe boundaries for all participants and the participants are aware of those set safety boundaries.

## **6 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The YMCA supports and requires all staff and volunteers to observe the following code of conduct, including verbal and non-verbal actions when involved in activities with children and young people. This code of conduct is a clear and concise guide of what is and is not acceptable behavior or practice when working with children and young people.

Through defining what is and is not acceptable behavior, good practice can be promoted and opportunities for abuse minimized. This can also help prevent false allegations being made against staff and volunteers.

All concerns about breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and responded to in line with the association's performance management, disciplinary procedure and/or procedure for respond to concerns about child abuse.

### **6.1 Good Practice:**

- Treat all children and young people equally, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- Give constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Involve parents wherever possible and reasonable.
- Be vigilant and aware of how actions can be misinterpreted and always work in an open environment. Avoid private or unobserved situations with a child or young person unless personal assistance such as toileting or changing is required.
- Ensure the number of adults is appropriate to safely supervise an activity.
- Have two staff members present when in situations with children and young people where it is necessary for staff to change or undress (i.e., swimming) so this activity is not misconstrued.
- Avoid taking a child or young person alone on journeys. Where this is unavoidable the child should sit in the back seat. Where possible parents should be advised before departure.
- Get help from your colleagues when you are having difficulty dealing with a specific child and/or behavioral incident(s). Having another staff step in for you can often defuse the situation.

## **6.2 Practice to be avoided:**

In the context of your role within the YMCA, the following practice should be avoided:

- Spending excessive (i.e., unwarranted) amounts of time alone with children and young people away from others.
- Relating to children and young people from programs in non-program activities, such as baby-sitting or weekend visits.
- Having “favorites” - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and young people and could be misinterpreted by others.
- Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children and young people that they can do for themselves.

## **6.3 Practice Never to be Sanctioned:**

In the context of your role within the YMCA, the following practices will never be sanctioned and may also be prohibited by law:

- Engaging in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the game or competition.
- Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with children and young people.
- Allowing or engaging in touching a child or young person in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Allowing children and young people to swear or use sexualized language unchallenged. Be cognizant of a child’s age and stage of development as there is a difference when children use swearing as an attention seeking behavior and when used as a form of aggression. There are different strategies that can help a child use appropriate language. [YMCA of Greater Vancouver]
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Reducing a child or young person to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Inviting or allowing children and young people to stay with you at your home.
- Asking children and young people to keep any type of secret from other children and young people, staff or from their parents.

## **6.4 Prohibited Practices under the Child Care & Early Years Act**

In the context of your role within the YMCA, the following practices will never be sanctioned and may also be prohibited by law:

- Corporal punishment of the child.
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- Locking the exits of the child care Centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless

such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.

- Use harsh or degrading measures or threats or use derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- Inflicting and bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.
- All employees will sign off a separate Prohibited Practices Sign Off sheet annually or as required. Sign off forms are included in the appendices.

## **7 RECRUITING, SCREENING AND TRAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

The YMCA will take all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working or volunteering, with children and young people.

This recruitment and selection procedure has two functions:

- It provides the YMCA with an opportunity to assess the suitability of an individual to work/volunteer with children and young people; and
- It provides the prospective employee or volunteer with an opportunity to assess the organization and the opportunities available.

Compliance with these policies and procedures will be audited periodically to ensure: recruitment guidelines are adhered to;

- staff/volunteer operating guidelines when caring for children and young people/vulnerable adults are adhered to; and
- training of new staff/volunteers on Child Protection Policy operating guidelines takes place.

For all positions that require regular contact with children and young people the following procedures will apply:

- All forms of advertising used to recruit and select staff/volunteers to positions involving regular contact with children and young people will include a statement that a Criminal Reference Check – Vulnerable Sector Screening is a requirement for the position.
- All applicants will be requested to complete an application or submit a resume. The purpose of this is to obtain from the applicant relevant details for the position including any previous youth work involvement.
- Prior to appointment a Criminal Reference Check – Vulnerable Sector Screening Records Check will be requested for all adult volunteers/staff who will have regular contact with children and young people.
- A Child Abuse Registry Check (where available) will be completed for all adult volunteers/staff who will have regular contact with children and young people.
- For every position involving regular contact with children and young people, a minimum of three reference checks will be completed before an offer is made. At least two of these references will be at arm's length from the association. Where possible, at least one of the references will

be from an employer or volunteer organization where the position required working with children and/or young people. References from relatives will not be accepted.

- Formal interviews, either in person or by telephone, will be required for all positions of trust with questions designed to determine suitability for working with children and young people or vulnerable adults.
- Potential employees and volunteers will be offered positions conditional upon the production of a satisfactory Criminal Reference Check – Vulnerable Sector Screening and acceptance of the employment obligations e.g., agreement to the child protection policies and procedures of the YMCA. Vulnerable Sector Check may not be older than 90 days from the date of offer.
- If offered an internal position, a formal reference check with their immediate supervisor is required.
- During orientation, new staff and volunteers will be made aware of policies on protecting children and young people, on staff conduct and, all legal requirements in reporting suspected abuse. This orientation will be completed within the first day of starting their position. This will include the overview of the Child Protection Toolkit and where it is accessible to staff. All staff in direct contact with children will also complete the YMCA Canada LMS Child Protection Modules Level 1, plus Level 2 if they are starting a supervisor position training within the first 60 business days.
- Until the orientation is complete and a satisfactory Criminal Reference Check – Vulnerable Sector Screening is received, the new staff/volunteer will not have unsupervised access to children, young people or vulnerable adults. Employee or volunteer must sign of an understanding of this policy.
- Once employed by the YMCA of Timmins, employees and volunteers will fill out the Annual Offense Declaration Form was obtained no more than 15 days after the anniversary date of the previous offence declaration or vulnerable sector check, whichever is more recent; and was obtained no more than 15 days after the anniversary date of the previous offense declaration or vulnerable sector check, whichever is most recent. Every three years, employees and volunteers must have another Criminal Reference Check including the Vulnerable Sector Check completed. Employees and volunteers will be given a letter that they must present to the police station and pay for out of pocket. If there is a break in employment (ie. Maternity leave, sick leave) longer than six months, the employee or volunteer must complete a new vulnerable sector check prior to their return and no earlier than 30 days prior to the date of return.
- Management must have employee complete a new offense declaration showing that they are declaring a conviction of an offense under the Criminal Code (Canada) as soon as reasonably possible if an employee has been convicted of an offense under the Criminal Code (Canada).
- A letter of attestation from an agency or an offense declaration is required from support workers from another agency (ie. Resource consultants, speech therapists, physio therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) before they begin interacting with the children in our programs and yearly afterwards.
- All employees and volunteer records, including training records, will be maintained in keeping with information and records management, which will include appropriate safeguards to protect highly sensitive, personal information, personal information such as PRC VS checks and references and kept in the locked administration personnel file cabinet. This cabinet is only accessed by assigned senior management.
- An ongoing PRC VS process for existing staff and volunteers is implemented and followed consistently across the association. The Child Protection Lead shall be responsible for the tracking of all PRC VS checks for staff / volunteers to ensure they are current at all times. The

Child Protection Lead will send the staff / volunteer an email or formal communication at minimum one month prior to their expiry date. PRC VS checks are renewed every three years and can be requested randomly by the association.

***For more information about recruitment, screening and training, please refer to your Human Resources Policies and Procedures established by the YMCA of Timmins.***

## **8 EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE**

Management and all staff working with children and young people will receive training adequate to familiarize them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the YMCA procedures and policies, with refresher training **annually**. The initial training will be documented in the employee's personnel file or volunteer file, as appropriate, on commencement of employment or volunteering.

In the event of any major change to the Child Protection Policy, all staff will review changes to the policy.

### **Education and Training:**

The learning opportunities for staff and volunteers to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to keep children and young people safe will include the following:

- All members of staff and volunteers and other associates have training on child protection when they join the association which includes an introduction to the YMCA's child protection policy and procedures. All staff members that have direct contact with children in their position will also be required to complete the below list within the first 60 business days of hire. This training will have a refresher every three years.
  - ***YMCA Protecting Children and Vulnerable Persons*** and ***Crisis Communications Framework*** policies review, sign-off and opportunities for asking questions;
  - Child Protection LMS Modules: **Staff - Level 1; Supervisory Staff - Level 1 & Level 2;** All staff, students or volunteers have a department orientation and tour to ensure they know where to find their child protection tool kit binder is essential.
- All members of staff and volunteers are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse.
- Children and young people are provided with advice and support on keeping themselves safe.
- Staff members and volunteers with special responsibilities for keeping children and young people safe have relevant training and regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.
- Training is provided to those responsible for dealing with complaints and disciplinary procedures in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behavior towards children and young people.
- Training and written guidance on safer recruitment practice is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.
- Opportunities exist for learning from practical case experience to be fed back into organizational training and development programs.

## **9 RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE**

In the event that a child discloses or there are grounds to suspect child abuse, the YMCA will take prompt and immediate action. The YMCA is mandated by provincial law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

### **a. General Procedure:**

- Staff and volunteers of the YMCA will take allegations of abuse seriously.
- The YMCA will ensure staff working with children and young people are familiar with the procedure for handling a disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child. (Refer to Appendix A for the procedure.)
- Staff will follow the prescribed procedure for handling a 'disclosure'.
- The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk by taking any precautionary measures as advised by Child Protection Authority.
- In the event the reported incident(s) involve staff or a volunteer, the procedure for handling an allegation against a YMCA staff or volunteer will be followed. (Refer to Appendix B for the procedure.)
- A report will be filed in accordance with relevant provincial child protection reporting requirements and the Association will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved.
- All information related to disclosure or an allegation of abuse will be handled confidentially.

## **10 MANAGING AN ALLEGATION, COMPLAINT AND CLAIM OF ABUSE AGAINST THE YMCA**

In event of an allegation, complaint or claim of abuse against a staff or volunteer of the YMCA will follow the following procedures:

### **a. Incident Reporting:**

- If a staff or volunteer suspects or receives an allegation or complaint of abuse about another YMCA staff, volunteer or student, he/she will follow the procedure for reporting an allegation or suspicion of abuse to the appropriate child protection authority.
- The staff or volunteer will notify the Child Protection Lead responsible for child protection as soon as a call to the child protection authority has been made. The Child Protection Lead will notify management to ensure that the insurer is notified promptly of the allegation or complaint of abuse against the YMCA.

### **b. Information Management:**

- Staff and volunteers will follow the documentation and information handling procedures required under relevant child protection legislation. Refer to Appendix I for the procedure.
- All records related to the allegation or complaint will be retained until such time as determined by the authorities, or by YMCA records retention requirements, or by the insurer, whichever is longer.

### c. Insurance

- Any allegation or complaint of abuse involving a YMCA staff or volunteer must be reported promptly to the insurer upon becoming aware of the allegation or complaint, in keeping with notice requirements under insurance policies. Providing the insurer with prompt notice protects the YMCA's ability to trigger abuse coverage under their insurance policies, in the event a legal demand or claim arises in the future.
- Liability insurance policies should be kept indefinitely by the YMCA, and stored in a secure accessible location. Retention is important due to the historical, long tail nature that characterizes abuse claims.

Refer to ***Crisis Communication Framework*** for more information about crisis escalation for prompt notification, effective decision-making and management support during a major or crisis event.

## 10 MONITORING

The YMCA has implemented a formal monitoring system that includes self-assessments, YMCA National Peer Reviews and third party assessments of compliance with policies and procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable persons. Assessments are completed at least annually to identify where further enhancements may be needed to maintain the safety of YMCA program environments. Internal Peer Reviews are led by the Child Protection Lead and an Association team. In addition, supervisors or managers shall monitor programs regularly to identify any potential barriers and strategies including:

- fostering a culture of safety through safeguards including policies, training and education;
- providing children and vulnerable persons with support and guidance on what to do, and who to contact if feeling uncomfortable or afraid at any time;
- adhering to established employment practices, human resources and volunteer management procedures for recruitment, screening, supervising and training staff and volunteers;
- conducting program area checks including regular building sweeps/tours to monitor bathrooms, locker rooms and any isolated areas; and
- maintaining building security through use of central point(s) of entry, sign-in and out procedures, restricted access to child care or child minding areas, doors are locked that should be locked, etc.
- The Child Protection Lead has oversight for tracking of all staff training and certifications, however, supervisors and managers have a joint accountability as they are responsible for ensuring their information or certification is compliant and submitted to the Child Protection Lead.

Validation of effective supervision through specific observations is the role of everyone; therefore, 100% is expected when it comes to supervision, being within ratio and attendance reflects participants in care/group.

## 11 VISITORS, PUBLIC EVENTS & THIRD PARTY CONTRACTORS

### Visitors

All visitors, guests, including service repair agencies must be signed into a 'Visitor Log'. The log will include: full name, company name, reason for visit and sign-in & out time. Photo identification will be checked by a YMCA staff who will also sign them in and out, for privacy purposes and a visitor nametag is provided.

**Please note:** If another YMCA staff has seen their photo I.D. previously there is no need to continually request. If the person is new, I.D. is required. **If YMCA staff are expecting a visitor** they will meet the visitor at these areas and accompany him/her to the location to meet and escort them back to the entrance. Non-members (guests) will be given a 'visitor badge and/or lanyard' to be worn and returned when they are signed-out by a YMCA staff.

### Public Events (YMCA Organized & Outside Agency)

All public events will be discussed at the senior staff level in advance of the planned event. There are **two types** of public events: **YMCA** and **outside agency organized**. Each event will be treated individually and discussed as a senior leadership team to ensure we are planning the event in the best safety interest of all members and non-members when it pertains to ensuring a child protection plan is in place. The event lead is responsible for briefing the team about the event in advance and a safety plan will be discussed and decided; the plan will then be communicated to all applicable staff and volunteers.

Each event may include one or a combination of the following: sign-in, photo identification, additional staffing will be scheduled, red wristbands may be worn, specific areas may be closed for safety purposes, etc... These decisions will be communicated in advance of those particular events to all staff, volunteers and the public.

### Third Party Contractors

All contractors must read and sign-off on the applicable child protection requirements as outlined in their YMCA contract and/or agreement and are expected to follow the policy while within in our facility. It is the responsibilities of the supervisor or manager overseeing the lead third party contractor to ensure their staff are all signed-in and out with photo I.D. at Membership Services or the Child Care Administrative Office before and after each project; if another YMCA staff has seen their photo I.D. there is no need to ask again. The YMCA supervisor or manager for that department contract is responsible to ensure the above-noted is in place.

## 11 CONTACTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

For more information about this policy, staff may speak with their supervisor or the Association Lead for child protection. The following sources also provide additional information about child protection:

- ☐ **YMCA Canada** - National Child Protection Standard Requirements, child protection training and audit tools;
- ☐ Resources available online through **Canadian Centre for Child Protection** at [www.protectchildren.ca](http://www.protectchildren.ca); and **Boost Child Abuse Prevention** at [www.boostforkids.org](http://www.boostforkids.org).

### TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT



### **Child Protection Authorities**

North Eastern Ontario Family & Children's Services (NEOFACS) – 705-360-7100  
Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services – 705-268-9033

### **YMCA of Timmins Management**

General Manager, Child Protection Lead (Courtney Berlinghoff)  
Cell – 705-266-6375  
CEO (Wayne Bozzer)- 705-266-3493

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Procedure for Handling Disclosure by a Child**

1. Staff whom suspect or have witnessed abuse of any child have a duty to report to the appropriate local authorities. Follow procedures outlined here. All forms are available in the Child Protection Tool Kit found at each off site location and at the main offices at main location.
2. Staff must inform their supervisor that they need to make a call to Child Protection Authorities. The supervisor must provide the staff coverage off of the floor to make the appropriate calls.
3. Supervisor will then inform the Child Protection Lead that a call is being made and to expect documentation.
4. The following information should be documented before calling:
  - a. Type of abuse suspected.
  - b. If physical, documented on chart the location, approximate size (relate size to a coin) and colour of marks.
  - c. Name, address, birth date, telephone number and religion of the child. Make sure to document any comments the child might have concerning the marks and also the child's condition at the time of the report.
  - d. The name and telephone number of the individual suspected of abuse and where they can be located. If individual suspected of abuse is not the parent, then the name, telephone number and parent's location is to be given. It is important to let the agency know how to approach these parents.
  - e. If the decision to report was made after talking to the parents, then document where the incident occurred and any other information you might have.
  - f. If this is not the first incident of concern, have other reports available.
  - g. If any other person or agency has been involved with the child, have the name and telephone number available.
  - h. Begin filling out the YMCA Internal Investigation Reporting Form. Continue to fill out form as you make calls and fill out forms. This form must be given to the Child Protection Lead along with the sealed envelope.
5. When you call the Child Protection Authority make sure:
  - a. You give your full name, professional title, and the name of the YMCA branch/department you work for.
  - b. Report all information you have documented.

6. All forms and documentation must be included in the envelope provided in the Child Protection Toolkit and handed to the Child Protection Lead.

## **APPENDIX B PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING AN ALLEGATION AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER**

### **Procedure for Handling an Allegation Against An Employee Or Volunteer**

It can be very distressing when a staff member is accused of abusing a child. A YMCA staff member who receives a disclosure of abuse against another staff member or suspects a colleague of abuse has a legal obligation to report to the local Child Protection Authority. Staff must follow the procedures outlined below if a report is made against a colleague.

In many cases, handling a guidance situation in an inappropriate manner can cause an allegation of abuse. Staff should be familiar with and adhere to the YMCA Child Guidance Policies. In general, an allegation against a staff member is usually made by a parent, a child or a colleague. In all cases, there is a legal obligation to report.

In the event that a parent makes an allegation against another staff member, the obligation to report also lies with the parent. The parent needs to be informed of their duty to report and be encouraged to make the report to the local Child Protection Authority. The staff member who has been informed of the situation or observed the situation, has the legal duty to report as well even if the parent(s) report. The staff member must follow the standard Child Protection Authority reporting procedures to report the allegations against another staff member.

If an allegation is made against a staff member and there will be an investigation, the staff member will be suspended with pay during the course of the investigation.

### **Reporting Procedures for Staff**

Staff must follow these procedures when an allegation or disclosure is made against another staff member or when the abuse by a staff member is witnessed:

- Treat the allegations seriously and confidentially.
- Report immediately to management (includes direct supervisor) any allegations of abuse against a staff member.
  - Management will notify the General Manager of the allegation. The General Manager will notify the CEO.
  - If the General Manager is not available, contact the CEO directly.
- The staff member must complete the YMCA Child Abuse Reporting form and follow the reporting procedures. The form will be reviewed by management to ensure that all required information is recorded.
- Staff are to keep information confidential and not to discuss the allegation with other staff, volunteers, parents, or participants. Any questions regarding the incident should be referred to the CEO or their designate.

## **Procedures for Management**

Management will follow these procedures:

- The Management will notify the CEO.
- Management will ensure that the appropriate reporting procedures have been followed.
- Management must take immediate steps to ensure that children are safe. This includes taking the necessary steps to ensure that the suspected staff member is not left alone with children and is suspended with pay pending the investigation.
- Any questions and enquiries are to be referred to the CEO or to the General Manager
- Child Protection Lead must ensure the YMCA Internal Reporting Form is completed, recorded and filed.

## **Investigation Outcome**

The YMCA will respond to the outcome of the child abuse investigation in the manner outlined in the current Human Resource Policy.



