

THE WESTPORT WESTON FAMILY YMCA STAFF & VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT



Staff name (print, please) _____

This handbook is given to staff and volunteers to inform and review policies of the Westport Weston Family YMCA. For the use of this document, both staff and volunteers will be referred to as "Staff".

Youth Supervision

Staff will enforce all risk management techniques in their supervision and interactions with youth. These techniques are listed below and others will be included in trainings provided by the YMCA.

- Staff may not be alone with children where they cannot be observed by other staff.
- Staff must follow all YMCA supervision policies including maintaining ratios, setting boundaries, reporting issues and enforcing program and facilities rules.
- Staff may not be alone with children from the YMCA in activities such as babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to your home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrator approval.
- Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised. All staff must follow the rule of 3 when supervising children. This involves always having at least 1 staff with 2 children or 2 staff with one child.
- Staff will not allow 2 or more children to be alone without supervision as this could allow child on child abuse.
- Restroom supervision: Staff will make sure the restroom is not occupied by unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. If the bathroom has stalls, staff will stand in the doorway. If it is a single toilet staff must stand just outside the door. Do not send in more children than there are toilets at one time. If you are using a single toilet, you should bring 3 children with you, or two staff and two children so that you will continue to follow the rule of 3 when one child is in the bathroom.
- Staff should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs of staff. This would include, but is not limited to, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, etc. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
- Staff shall not abuse children. Types of abuse include:
 - Physical - An injury or injuries that happen to a child that are not accidental. These may include burns, bruises, bites, welts, broken bones, strangulation or even death.
 - 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 or mean or constant criticism.
 - Sexual - Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse includes 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.
- Staff will respond to children with respect and treat all children equally regardless of sex, gender identity, race, religion, culture.
- Staff will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. Staff will always touch children in a respectful and appropriate manner. Children are not to be touched in areas that would be covered by a bathing suit or in ways that can be considered intimate or inappropriate.
- Staff will refrain from intimate displays of affection in the presence of children, parents, and staff.
- Staff must be free from any condition that could risk harm to a child's physical, mental or emotional safety and wellbeing.
- Staff are not to transport children in their own vehicles.
- Staff may not date program participants under the age of 18 years of age.

Examples of Appropriate Physical Contact	Examples of Inappropriate Physical Contact
Side hugs Pats on shoulder or back High fives and handshakes Verbal praise Pats on head if culturally appropriate Holding hands of small children while escorting them Carrying an infant under the age of 2	Full frontal hugs Kisses Showing affection in isolated areas Lap sitting Wrestling Piggyback rides Tickling Allowing child to cling to a leg Massage given by or to a youth Affection that is unwanted by the child Compliments relating to physique or body development Touching of the chest, bottom or genital areas
Examples of Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Examples of Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
Positive reinforcement Appropriate jokes Encouragement Praise	Name calling or derogatory remarks about child or family Secrets Cursing or harsh language that may scare a child Off-color or sexual jokes Shaming/belittling Discussing sexual or romantic encounters Involving youth in personal problems or issues

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

- Every YMCA staff member is a mandated reporter and therefore must report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse, molestation, neglect or sexual misconduct to CT DCF. Staff are required to make the report to DCF. If you are unsure of how to file, or uncomfortable filing the report, you may work with your supervisor to do so. Either way, you are responsible to make sure a report is filed and an incident report is submitted. You should notify your supervisor, HR director or CEO of the report to make sure the YMCA is able to take full measures to help support and protect the child(ren) involved. The Westport Weston Family YMCA takes all allegations of abuse very seriously and any information you share with your supervisor will be acted upon appropriately and in a timely manner. Remember confidentiality is very important so do not share information with other staff or anyone outside the YMCA other than DCF or other appointed agencies conducting an investigation.
- If a staff member would like to report a concern or situation regarding other staff or children to YMCA management, they can do so in writing or in person to their supervisor, the Senior Program Director, Human Resources Director or CEO.
- If you would like to report a concern but wish to keep your report anonymous to the investigating staff, you may make the report to the HR director or CEO and ask that they not share your name. They may come back to you for more information to help protect the child(ren) in question, but they will not share your name with others.
- **Responding to a disclosure of abuse**
 - If a child tells you something- It is important to remain calm if a child discloses abuse to you. React in a calm and reassuring way. While you can ask questions, do not ask leading questions that may make the child nervous or may make them say something that is not true. **Do not promise that you can keep it secret,**

tell the child that it is your job to keep them safe and you hope that they trust you to only tell people who want to keep them safe.

- If you see something- If you observe a person abusing a child, a child abusing another child or two children behaving in a sexual or abusive manner, stop the behavior immediately and remove the child(ren) from the situation. Immediately report the behavior to your supervisor or another YMCA Director. Stop the behavior immediately and get the child(ren) to a safe place.
- If you observe suspicious or concerning behavior, tell your supervisor or another director as soon as you can. When in doubt, say something.
- **The Reporting Process:** In the event that there is a question of child abuse in any form (physical, neglect, emotional, or sexual) with a participant in one of our programs, the Westport Weston Family YMCA will take immediate action as follows:
 - All staff of the YMCA are mandated reporters and are responsible for reporting any suspicion of abuse to DCF. They should make this report within 12 hours of having a suspicion. Reports are made by using the DCF-136 form and calling the hotline number on the form. If a staff member would prefer, they can ask a supervisor to help them file the report. Either way, a report must be made to DCF and an incident report should be filed.
 - Suspected abuse can be observed, told or overheard. The staff member should be careful to only listen to the child and not make him/her feel questioned or interrogated. You may also suspect possible abuse by observing red flag behavior by another staff member or even a child. That should also be reported to your supervisor.
 - Once you report the incident or suspicion to your supervisor, they will decide whether or not to make a report to DCF. They may discuss the incident further with you but you may not discuss it with other staff or anyone outside the YMCA. Confidentiality is very important in these situations. All staff and volunteers must cooperate fully with the investigation and any authorities who are investigating the situation.
 - The director of the program will make the call to DCF. If you do not feel like your supervisor is following up on the situation or if you are unable to discuss it with your supervisor, report it to either the senior program director or CEO.
 - If any staff member or volunteer is named in a suspected case, the CEO will suspend their employment and/or volunteer responsibilities immediately during the investigation process.
 - Director will follow-up with staff involved. Very often, we do not know what happens after we make a report. It is still very important that we file a report and keep the information confidential.
 - The number for DCF is (800) 842-2288.

Youth Behavior Management

- Staff will always use positive guidance techniques when working with children. This includes:
 - Positive Role modeling of desired behaviors and interactions consistently.
 - Setting reasonable and age appropriate goals and limits along with clear and logical consequences.
 - Providing youth with choices and opportunities to express their feelings and opinions.
 - Redirecting children when possible or talking with children about appropriate behavior suggestions and how best to react to situations.
- Staff will refrain from inappropriate or unacceptable behavior management techniques. These include:
 - Any form of abuse such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, mental or emotional abuse or sexual abuse.
 - Staff will not neglect a child by withholding food, water, kindness or basic care.
 - Staff will not intimidate youth with a threatening tone or body language.
- Staff will react to a child harming themselves or others by separating them from the situation and bringing them to an area where the child can calm down until the staff member and child believe they can return to the group.
- If negative behaviors persist, staff or their supervisor will discuss the behavior with the child's parents or guardians to create a management plan.
- Staff who are struggling with the behavior of a child or group of children will discuss options with their

supervisor or a designee to find a solution that is best for the child and the YMCA.

- If a child is removed from YMCA program or facility usage due to abusive behavior, their reinstatement will be decided by the program leadership team. The team will follow the youth reinstatement policy to make this decision.

Staff Performance

- Staff must appear clean, neat, and appropriately attired. Appropriate attire includes staff shirts where required and name tags.
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours or on YMCA property is prohibited.
- Staff must report any arrests while employed by the YMCA to their supervisor and Human Resources.
- Smoking or use of tobacco, E-cigarette or vaping during working hours is prohibited.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment is prohibited.
- Staff will portray a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
- Under no circumstance should staff release children 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).
- Staff are required to attend and take all trainings assigned to them by their supervisor. This includes a child abuse prevention training as assigned by their supervisor in the first 30 days of their employment.

Electronics and Social Media Representation

- Any messages that you put out into public where members and youth can see or hear them, must be in line with the YMCA mission and voice and must represent the YMCA in a positive light.
- No social media account bearing the name of the Westport Weston Family YMCA or any of its program names may be created or maintained by staff or volunteers, other than those sites specifically approved by the CEO or designee.
- Staff may not include the YMCA name, logo, photos, program name or location name in their own personal social media posts.
- Staff may not ridicule or negatively represent the YMCA or a program.
- Staff may not have contact with any youth member or participant under the age of 18, outside of YMCA program areas. This includes personal email, texting, phone calls, or connections on social media.
- Any email contact should be made via Westporty.org email.
- Texting of program-related information such as schedule or location changes is permitted if the youth's parent or guardian is included in the text.
- Care should be taken in accessing personal websites and email while at the YMCA or any of its programs in order to not inadvertently access inappropriate content.
- Do not disclose any confidential information about the YMCA, a program or participant. If you are not sure if information is confidential, do not disclose it until you consult with the CEO or a designee.
- Management will monitor various sites and respond to complaints made by parents, youth, prospects, etc. Staff will be made aware of any violations and may be asked to remove the offending material.
- Staff may not use YMCA technology to view, display, create or store inappropriate material that contains violence, offensive language, extreme views or pornography. Staff may not use their own electronics to view, share, display, or create such material at the YMCA.
- Staff should not speak to the media, or make public comments about incidents at the YMCA. All requests for information about an incident should be forwarded to the CEO or their designee.
- Staff must limit cell phone usage while working.

Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct Receipt Acknowledgement

I, _____ have received the Westport Weston Family YMCA Code of Conduct and have reviewed it with my supervisor. I understand that it is my right and responsibility ask to my supervisor any questions that I may have both now and in the future, in order to make sure that I am clear on all YMCA policies. I understand and will follow all YMCA policies. I understand that not following the code of conduct may result in disciplinary measures or termination.

I have reviewed and been oriented to the following areas of this Code of Conduct (please **initial** each area):

- _____ Youth Supervision
- _____ Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting
- _____ Youth Behavior Management (if applicable to position)
- _____ Staff Performance
- _____ Electronics and Social Media Representation

Staff or Volunteer Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date