



YMCA of the Northern Territory

Safe Behaviours Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and documented practices regarding the safeguarding of children and young people at YMCA of the Northern Territory (YMCA). YMCA is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing its programs and services, it supports the rights of the child and will strive to deliver a child safe environment at all times.

YMCA also supports the rights and wellbeing of our workplace participants and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. Workplace participants' must maintain the highest standards of professional conduct in their attitude and behaviour toward clients, colleagues and members of the community.

2. Scope

This policy and supporting procedures apply to all YMCA workplace participants, regardless of their employment status or seniority.

YMCA workplace participants' include:

- YMCA NT Board Members and any person serving the YMCA NT on a committee or advisory capacity
- YMCA employees, contractors or sub-contractors, labour hire employees, apprentices or trainees and volunteers involved with the activities of YMCA NT

YMCA workplace participants are required to act in accordance with this Policy, adhere to all relevant policies and procedures, their contract of employment, relevant legislation and consider the YMCA Values in determining what constitutes appropriate conduct in the workplace at all times.

3. Behavioural Norms

3.1 All workplace participants:

- Will read, understand and formally agree to abide by YMCA policies and guidelines around the safety of children as outlined in YMCA's Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP) Policy and supporting policies
- Will act and behave in a manner that demonstrates a commitment to the health, wellbeing and safety of children and young people
- Will act in accordance with standards set by the Australian Childhood Foundation's Safeguarding Children and Young People program accreditation.
- Will promote and monitor the safeguarding of children and young people and participate in a culture where all workplace participants are expected to speak up and ask questions about the safety of others
- Must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model to children and young people and as a representative of the YMCA
- Must wear clear identification, including the display of a name tag or working with children card. Where required, a uniform or consistent standard of dress that is familiar must be



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worn. In the case of agency or temporary relief workplace participants, they must be clearly identified and appropriate identification displayed for ease of identification for workplace participants and clients

- Must not make any derogatory, culturally insensitive, violent or sexually suggestive comments, especially to or in the presence of children and young people, as per the YMCA Code of Conduct, Equal Employment Opportunity and Discrimination Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy, and all other YMCA policies
- Must not engage in any sexual or sexualised behaviour with or in the presence of children and young people participating in YMCA service. Any behaviour of this nature with or in the presence of children and young people is prohibited
- At no time will use, possess or supply children or young people with alcohol or drugs
- Verbal, emotional, psychological or physical abuse, physical punishment, or the withdrawal of the necessities of care (including food, shelter and emotional warmth) are unacceptable forms of behaviour at YMCA
- Must not discipline children or young people by use of emotional abuse, favouritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, reference to cultural/ethnic differences and abilities, swearing and any form of corporal punishment or other offensive/inappropriate action
- Will use strategies for discipline that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the child, young person and vulnerable adult involved
- Must raise all concerns, issues, and problems regarding the safeguarding of children and young people with their Manager as soon as possible.

3.2 Clients/Parents/Carers:

- Are expected to comply with any YMCA codes of conduct that it may be provided from time to time.
- Are expected to uphold the principles of this policy and behave appropriately at YMCA services, which includes refraining from any form of abuse and/or the use of unacceptable language
- Are expected to report any concerns regarding the safety, wellbeing and welfare of a child or young person to a YMCA workplace participant immediately
- Parents/guardians are permitted to take photography/videography on YMCA premises of their own child only and are required to seek approval from the YMCA workplace participant
- Affected by alcohol, drugs and other behaviour altering substances, or found to be demonstrating inappropriate and unacceptable standards of behaviour as deemed by a YMCA workplace participant, will be asked not to participate in the program or service.

4. Physical Contact

- 4.1 Workplace participants must at all times demonstrate acceptable and appropriate behaviour/contact that gives regard to a child or young person's age and developmental needs, culture, ability, environment, and their emotional needs
- 4.2 Workplace participants must seek the consent of a child or young person before making physical contact and let them know what they are doing and why
- 4.3 Workplace participants must not have unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with children or young people that:



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- Involves holding, kissing, cuddling and touching children or young people in an inappropriate and/or culturally or insensitive way.
- Children should be comforted when upset, workplace participants should attend to children's needs in a professional manner and where possible, giving consideration for the child's age and developmental needs. Children should never be fully embraced in a cuddle or hug.
- Would appear to have a sexual connotation
- Is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person (e.g. corporal punishment)
- Is overly physical (e.g. wrestling, tickling, or other horseplay)
- Are avoidable personal care tasks (e.g. assisting with toileting, first aid or medical assistance when the person does not require assistance)
- Is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary as a restraint to prevent injury to the child or young person or to others, in which case:
 - ♦ The level of restriction used must be aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others
 - ♦ Physical restraint should be the last resort
 - ♦ The incident must be reported to management as soon as practicable, and before the end of the shift
 - ♦ A Behaviour Management Plan is to be developed following the incident (where applicable).

4.4 Workplace participants must report to their Manager any physical or non-physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is sexual and/or inappropriate

4.5 All concerns of physical contact should be reported immediately to YMCA management

5. Professional Boundaries

5.1 All workplace participants should ensure that their interactions with children and young people involved in YMCA programs/services remain professional and occur within the scope of the program or service and the workplace participant's role with YMCA.

- Workplace participants must not provide any form of support (including financial assistance) to a child, young person or their family that is unrelated to YMCA service delivery or outside of policy scope
- Workplace participants must not make personal/private contact with children or young people involved with the YMCA. This includes communication or contact through social media accounts (e.g. 'friending', 'following', 'tagging'), mobile phone, texting or email communication
- If workplace participants need to make contact with a child or young person outside of the program, all communications must go through the parent/guardian. Any direct contact with families must only be made in relation to the services provided as part of a specific program/service
- Where a specific program or model of care requires direct contact with children or young people, written approval is to be sought from the parent/guardian. Wherever possible the



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parent guardian is copied in to the communication and the process is authorised by the relevant Executive Manager

- Where written approval is not possible because of family or other personal circumstances, the workplace participant must obtain written authority from the relevant Executive Manager
- Workplace participants are not to give gifts to children or young people participating at the YMCA unless a part of a specific program such graduation gifts for the group of clients
- Workplace participants must not initiate, seek or request private arrangements (i.e. outside work or voluntary roles such as babysitting, housesitting etc.) while employed by YMCA. Should a workplace participant be approached to participate in one of these arrangements, they are to advise their Manager immediately.

5.2 In some cases arrangements outside of the workplace are unavoidable such as when a Workplace participant is also a team coach of a child or where a relationship is established prior to commencement of employment, or prior to a client's enrolment/commencement in a YMCA program. In these cases the workplace participants must:

- Notify their Manager of all private arrangements with children or young people who are participating in a YMCA program or service, or regularly present at a YMCA facility.
- When advised of the private arrangement, Managers must inform and remind workplace participants of their obligations of this policy, and must ensure that workplace participants have access to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Safe Behaviours Policy and related policies and procedures
- Managers are required to review private arrangements in consultation with the workplace participant quarterly, or when required, if there is any change in circumstances.
- Workplace participants must inform the client that all private arrangements provided are not endorsed by the YMCA, are in no way affiliated with the YMCA and provide the client with a copy of the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy, Safe Behaviours Policy and any other relevant safeguarding information
- Workplace participants must not wear the YMCA uniform in connection with any private arrangements.

6. Interactions

6.1 Workplace participants should maintain a positive attitude at all times in all interactions, ensuring their language and tone of voice are used in a way that has a positive impact on the wellbeing of the child or young person

6.2 Workplace participants should develop responsive and trusting relationships with children and young people that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion, whilst maintaining professionalism

6.3 Workplace participants must be aware of YMCA's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working in a YMCA facility

6.4 Workplace participants must our commitment to equity and diversity, and respecting the rights of children to participate in decision making, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



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7. Supervision Practices

- 7.1 All workplace participants will ensure that they are not alone in a private space with a child or young person.
- 7.2 When being alone with a child or young person is part of a program or model of care, workplace participants must ensure that the area has transparent visibility (i.e. clear windows, door ajar).
- 7.3 Workplace participants must not travel alone with a child or young person except in unforeseen circumstances.
- 7.4 Unforeseen circumstances only apply in the event of an accident or where something unexpected has happened and there is no other alternative but to take a child alone in the vehicle and to fail to act would put the child at risk of harm. Where these situations are unavoidable, the full consent of the Manager and the child/young person's parent/guardian must be obtained. The incident is then required to be reported as a safeguarding contravention within 24 hours, in line with the Safeguarding Reporting Policy.
- 7.5 Workplace participants must ensure that children and young people are released from YMCA programs/services only to an authorised parent/guardian or other approved safe practice
- 7.6 All workplace participants should make every reasonable effort to provide general supervision to children and young people who attend a YMCA facility without parent/guardian/responsible person accompaniment, and who are not engaged in YMCA programs
- 7.7 Workplace participants will ensure the appropriate use of electronic communications/technology by children and young people whilst they are participating in YMCA programs. This includes monitoring browsing websites, social networking sites, instant messaging or game sites during which children and young people could be exposed to inappropriate content or contact, and prohibiting electronic devices from services where they are not a requirement of the program.
- 7.8 All workplace participants engaging with children and young people will work within and maintain program prescribed ratio requirements.
- 7.9 Workplace participants are required to provide supervision to children and young people whilst using bathroom/change room facilities, whilst balancing that requirement for the child/young person's right to privacy, to do this:
 - Workplace participants should avoid one-to-one situations with a child or young person within a bathroom/change room area
 - Workplace participants are not permitted to use the bathroom/change room area to undress whilst children or young people are present
 - Workplace participants are to ensure when public change rooms are used, they provide adequate supervision that is appropriate for the age of the participants
 - Workplace participants must provide adequate supervision for preventing abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child or young person's privacy
 - Workplace participants are not to enter the bathroom/change room area of the opposite sex while the opposite sex is present, unless in an emergency situation.

8. Overnight stays/sleeping arrangements

- 8.1 Practices and behaviour by workplace participants must be consistent with this Policy and the YMCA Code of Conduct.
- 8.2 Standards that must be observed by workplace participants during an overnight stay include:



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- Workplace participants must not be accommodated alone with children and young people.
- Parents/guardians must be informed of sleeping arrangements prior to the commencement of any overnight stay
- Workplace participants are to provide children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing
- Workplace participants are to observe appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present, such as no exposure to adult nudity and be respectful of cultural norms
- Workplace participants must not allow children and young people to be exposed to inappropriate material, for example pornographic material through movies, television, internet or magazines, and be aware of media classification categories and the age of participants
- Workplace participants must not leave children and young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons,
- Workplace participants must ensure children and young people have the right to contact their parents/guardians, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay.

9. Photography

- 9.1 Workplace participants are not to use their personal phone, camera or video camera equipment for recording purposes in the workplace
- 9.2 Where a specific program requires photos or videos to be taken by workplace participants, only YMCA equipment will be used for taking and storing images or video and parent/guardian permission has been sought prior to the photos or videos being taken
- 9.3 Images taken by workplace participants of children or young people will be taken in the presence of other workplace participants
- 9.4 Workplace participants must take reasonable steps to ensure that members of the public do not take photography/videography of children or young people at a YMCA service without parent/guardian's permission.
- 9.5 Parents/guardians are permitted to take photography/videography of their own children or young people with prior approval from the YMCA workplace participant responsible for the centre or activity.

10. Specific Exclusions to these Provisions include:

The following provisions outline elements of interaction with children/young people where YMCA programs/services have specific requirements for the delivery of that program/service, and should be conducted following the completion of a risk assessment:

- Child specific programs (e.g. day care, OSHC, crèche and holiday programs) may involve bathroom assistance to children and young people
- Child specific programs (e.g. day care, OSHC, crèche and holiday programs) require that children are only released to authorised parents, legal guardians and authorised individuals using sign in and out logs, and identification can be requested at any time, to confirm they are authorised persons



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- Workplace participants who are under 18 years are not considered a child or young person within the context of this policy as they are workplace participants. These workplace participants are required to comply with all Safeguarding Children and Young People training and compliance requirements.
However, all workplace participants are to be conscious of protections under YMCA policies, Australian laws and ensure all interactions are appropriate and safeguard any workplace participants who are under the age of 18 years.
- Any other exceptions to these policies and procedures must comply with relevant regulations, contractual obligations, be accompanied by a risk assessment and Safe Work Procedures, and be authorised by the relevant Executive Manager.

11. Breaches of this practices

- 11.1 Any breaches of this Policy by a workplace participant may result in YMCA taking disciplinary action against that person, which may include termination of services.
- 11.2 In circumstances where a workplace participant breaches this policy and it involves a breach of any Australian law, YMCA may notify the police or other relevant government authority.

12. Related Documents

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Safeguarding Reporting Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Discrimination Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Contractor Safeguarding Standards
- Whistleblower Policy
- Safeguarding Report Form
- Care and Protection of Children Act (Northern Territory)
- Privacy Act (Commonwealth)

13. Definition of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Executive Manager	Executive Managers report directly to the CEO of YMCA Northern Territory.
Child or Young Person	Refers to a person under the age of eighteen years
Client	Any user of YMCA services – children’s services, recreation services, camping services and community programs including children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians and facility users.



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Term	Definition
Private Arrangements	Private arrangements is outside work or voluntary roles such as babysitting, sports coaching, housesitting and transporting where workplace participants would be alone with children and young people.
Reasonable observer	An ordinary person who normally exercises due care while avoiding extremes of both audacity and caution in relation to safe behaviours around children and young people
Safeguarding	Refers to individual and collective conscious efforts and commitment by all workplace participants of YMCA, to be aware of and adhere to their responsibilities as defined by organisational policies, procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant laws. Workplace participants are expected to take all possible actions to prevent risks of harm to anyone in receipt of YMCA services who is a child or young person or group of people who are under 18 years of age
Sexual or sexualised Behaviour	Contact behaviour – sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration, or exploitation through prostitution. Non-contact behaviour – flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography and nudity. This behaviour is strictly prohibited with or in the presence of children and young people engaged in YMCA services.
Territory Families	Territory Families has legislative responsibility for facilitating coordination across government for the care and protection of children and young people believed to be at risk of harm
Workplace participants	Any person YMCA employs or engages including paid employees, volunteers, Board Directors, contractors, consultants and student placements.

14. Version Control

Policy Hierarchy	Operational	
Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer	
Document Owner	Safeguarding Children Coordinator	
Approved By	Date Approved	Date Effective
YMCA CEO	23 June 2017	26 June 2017

Signed _____

Name _____

Date _____

This Policy is:

Version Number	Approved Date	Effective Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	19 May 2017	01 June 2017	Policy Created – due for review on 1 January 2018
2.0	23 June 2017	26 June 2017	Change to Clause 3.1 and Clause 10, in line with recommendations from the Australian Childhood Foundation.