

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY



Purpose

YMCA North (referred to throughout this document as “the Y” or “YMCA”) has zero-tolerance towards abuse and neglect of children and young people. We are committed to the rights of all children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in our organisations activities, services and programmes. The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities, procedures and practices required by all staff within the Y in relation to keeping children and young people free from abuse and neglect.

This policy supports our international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children’s Act 2014, the te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children’s and Young People’s Well-being Act 1989). As such, our policies and procedures reflect child safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children and young people within our organisation. Our Board of Directors approves and endorses our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

We take seriously our responsibility to deliver an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. We are committed to taking action in advancing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensuring compliance with all requirements set out in this policy.

Application

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all staff, including; employees, casual staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors involved with the Y.

This policy applies in all our operational environments and without fail wherever children and young people are participating in our organisation’s activities, programmes, services and/or facilities.

Guiding Values

In keeping children and young people safe the following values are a mechanism for guiding our actions and assisting in decision-making, they are a reference to which personnel can refer, to ensure their responsibilities to children and young people are upheld;

- Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility, it is reliant on all individuals within our organisation to keep children and young people safe in our care.
- Any form of abuse or neglect towards children and young people will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken upon report of any suspected harmful or abusive behaviours.
- The best interest of the child will be the primary consideration in all actions and decisions concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- We are accountable to the children and young people we work with by fostering high ethical standards in a culture of openness and transparency.
- We empower children by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and support them to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong. We work to include the participation of children and young people in decision making regarding any services or other matters affecting them.

Responsibilities

Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility within our organisation. It is the responsibility of all at YMCA, from the Board, to senior leaders, to employees, volunteers and contractors to:

- Protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect by our people.
- Be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service; and
- Create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer, support or access our programmes and services.

We expect all within our organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from such harm by:

- Adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour set within our policy and procedural guidelines, when carrying out their roles, and
- Reporting any abuse and neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family and whanau, their family's extended network or strangers.

We expect all within our organisation to promote equity and respect diversity by:

- Actively anticipating children and young people's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities.
- Informing children and young people of their rights and giving all children and young people access to information, support and complaints processes.
- Respecting the rights of children and young people to participate in decision making, paying particular attention to the needs of children and young people of diverse ethnic, religious, sexual, displaced or deprived backgrounds.

The responsibility of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is detailed in all individuals' position descriptions.

Safeguarding Governance

Our organisation has a safeguarding children and young people governance structure with robust systems in place which support staff and service users to report safeguarding concerns and facilitate effective risk-based and informed decisions that ensure accountability to children and young people.

Our governance structure, including the Safeguarding Governance Group defines the roles and responsibilities associated with providing oversight, management and implementation of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

Our Commitment

YMCA is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programmes, services and/or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. Our safeguarding policies and procedures are:

- Publicly accessible, online and in forms that are easy to understand;
- Informed by stakeholder consultation; and



- Communicated to children, young people and their families, our staff, our partners and contractors and the general public.

To inform and review our safeguarding policies, we seek feedback from all our services users and providers. We gain endorsement and advise stakeholders of any changes.

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people

Through our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy we document our clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We communicate our commitment to all of our staff and ensure that our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is available in child-friendly versions that reflects the ages, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children and young people whom we deliver services.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse and neglect and take seriously any raised concerns / incidents.

Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to children and young people associated with our organisation's service delivery and considers online and physical or psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children or young people utilising our services.

Our staff know the behaviour we expect

We ensure that each person involved in the delivery of our services understands their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We utilise position descriptions which clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements.

Our organisation requires all staff to acknowledge, in writing, their commitment and adherence to our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

We have a Safeguarding Code of Conduct, which is approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our organisation that outlines our expectations for behaviour towards children and young people.

We monitor and supervise all staff, including volunteers, contractors and partner organisations, for appropriate practice and behaviour in the delivery of our service to children and young people.

Any failure to observe our Safeguarding Code of Conduct is taken seriously, and we are committed to taking appropriate disciplinary and legal action wherever necessary.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable

We have appropriate measures in place and require applicants to undergo extensive screening processes prior to appointment to minimise the likelihood that we, or an external recruitment agency or contractor, will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- Our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for all positions.
- Face-to-face interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions.
- Two professional reference checks are undertaken which include safeguarding-related questions.
- Screening checks are undertaken, including identity, New Zealand Police Vetting, and where applicable, International criminal history checks, and qualification checks.



We require our staff to disclose criminal convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people both prior and subsequent to their employment, and we review police vetting records periodically.

We ensure that there will be no discrimination as part of the recruitment process, with respect to inclusion and equal opportunity and where possible, hire appropriate staff that represent the diverse range of children and young people and their families involved in our organisation.

Induction and training is part of our commitment

We have an induction process ensuring all new personnel are informed and supported to understand our organisations safeguarding children and young people policies, procedures and practices. Our staff have access to our organisations Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy (along with all other Safeguarding policies) and where applicable, the Staff Recruitment Manual.

Our induction process provides guidance relating to an individual's safeguarding responsibilities and offers opportunities to seek clarity in relation to the commitments and behavioural expectations set out in our safeguarding policies.

We have a training plan that outlines how and when we support ongoing education for all our staff in relation to how keeping children and young people safe will be fulfilled. This plan includes training regarding children's rights, voices and participation, cultural safety and humility.

We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their families

We have processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback with children, young people and their families. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and engagement.

We promote participation and empowerment of young people and provide opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard, and space to express their needs and concerns. We actively encourage children and young people to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them. We create opportunities for involvement and seek input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures and practices.

We involve children, young people, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children, young people and their families (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- Our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children and young people
- The behaviour we expect of our staff
- The behaviour we expect from the children, young people and their families who access our services
- Our policy and mechanism for reporting abuse or concerns.

Our personnel understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse

Our policy for reporting and responding to child abuse is approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our organisation and applies to all our staff. The policy states that:

- Staff must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of staff.
- Staff must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements.
- Staff must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports.
- Failure to report is considered to be serious misconduct.

Our staff have access to the policy and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

We maintain and improve our policies and practices

Our organisation seeks to continuously review and improve our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. The responsibility for implementing and reviewing our safeguarding children and young people approach is led by the Safeguarding Governance Group biennially.

To identify any key improvements needed, our organisation incorporates findings from; internal audits / reviews that assess our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children and young people safe, input and feedback received by children and young people and their families, feedback gained from communication with our staff and feedback gained from 'complaints and compliments' received.

Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed by our Safeguarding Governance Group at least every 2 years. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors and/or Chief Executive Officer.

When there are any updates or changes to this Policy, they will be communicated to all staff and stakeholders.

External audit and verification based on a sample, conducted by the Australian Childhood Foundation shall occur at 3 yearly intervals.

Records and Documentation

We retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

Key relevant documents

The following policies and legislative requirements must be considered in relation to this document:

- YMCA North Commitment to Safeguarding
- YMCA North Safeguarding Children and Young People policy
- YMCA North Child Abuse Reports and Allegations policy
- YMCA North Responding to Child Abuse Reports policy
- YMCA North Safeguarding Code of Conduct policy



- YMCA North Parent and Carers Safeguarding Policy
- YMCA North Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- YMCA North Safeguarding Imagery Policy
- YMCA North Safeguarding Incident Management Policy
- YMCA North Safeguarding Partner Agencies Compliance Policy
- YMCA North Safeguarding Young Staff Policy
- YMCA North Safeguarding Transportation Policy
- YMCA North Drug and Alcohol Policy
- YMCA North Whistleblower Policy
- ACF Accreditation Requirements / Standards
- Children’s Act 2014
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 (as at reprint 1st July 2017)
- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008 (HS31-HS34)
- MSD OSCAR Standards for approval and provider guidelines 2011
- MSD Social Sector Accreditation Standards, Level 3, 2016
- MSD Specialist Accreditation Standard: OSCAR Programmes, Level 3, 2016
- MSD Specialist Accreditation Standard: Outdoor Pursuits and Camp Programmes for Children and Young People, Level 1, 2 and 3, 2016

Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the YMCA North Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is detailed below;

Role	Responsibility
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy and its expectations. • Promote the commitment to this Policy and its expectations both internally and publicly. • Support policy review on a 3 year cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines. • Monitor compliance to the Policy via an inbuilt mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this policy. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.



<p>Chief Executive Officer / Safeguarding Governance Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. • Ensure all staff understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. • Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst personnel. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children and young people practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy. • Fully support staff with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and neglect. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any staff involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect. • Ensure that all staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practices in relation to safeguarding children and young people.
<p>Safeguarding Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders • Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children and Young People framework and its implementation • Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy • Provide training and advice in the application of this Policy
<p>Role</p>	<p>Responsibility</p>
<p>Employees / Volunteers / Contractors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. • Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • Ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations • To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children and young people by engaging in regular review and discussion of organisational policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement



- To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy.
- To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour
- To take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- To report any abuse committed by staff within our organisation or by others.
- To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Bullying	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	A person under the age of eighteen years.
Code of Conduct	The Safeguarding Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people in our service. The Safeguarding Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children and young people.
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child or young person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child or young person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child or young person’s physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
Family Violence	Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person’s life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given

Term	Definition
	special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
Harm	Harm to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child or young person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child or young person’s health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Online environment	Anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as: social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child or young person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child or young person. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, suffocating, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children and young people harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child or young person at risk of being hurt.
Risk management	In the context of creating safe environments for children and young people, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of an employee, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the organisation to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused.
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child or young person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child’s genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also



Term	Definition
	sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where children and young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child or young person may not even realise they are a victim.
Staff	All who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including; employees, casual employees, volunteers, Board and committee members and contractors.
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	Is an international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

Policy Amendments

YMCA is entitled to amend and vary this policy from time to time at YMCA’s sole discretion and all employees are required to observe such amended policy.

Creation Date: April 2017	Date Reviewed: Dec 2022	Next Review Date: Feb 2024 <i>Note – the default frequency is every 2 years unless otherwise required</i>
Owner: Safeguarding	Approved by: YMCA North Board of Directors	
	Signed:  Signed on behalf of YMCA North Board Date: December 2022	
Document Control: Original signed document is approved. No unauthorised copies. Reviews of this policy will include input from the Safeguarding Governance Group		

Tracking Changes

	Reviewed by who and when	What was Changed	Version #
Written	Safeguarding Manager, Sep 2017	ACF endorsement of policy	2
Amendments:	Safeguarding Manager, Feb 2020	Internal review of document	3

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	Safeguarding Manager, Dec 2020	ACF reaccreditation, new format, simplification of a large document into several smaller policies	4
	Safeguarding Manager, Dec 2022	Biennial review, along with amendments to reflect new branding. Changed references from personnel to staff. Reflected Identity statements to be the same as the Diversity and Inclusion Policy Included all safeguarding sub policies Reordered content to align with wider YMCA policy format	5