
	Management Area: Children's Services	Version No: 7.0
	Category of Policy: Operational	Pages: 6
		Approval Date: April 2020
		Policy Approver: CEO
Policy Title: Safeguarding Children and Young People – Safety Code of Conduct		Author: Area Manager – Children's Services

# YMCA SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## Safeguarding Children and Young People – Safety Code of Conduct

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## 1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It sets out the behaviours required of all YMCA South Australia staff and volunteers towards and in the presence of children and young people.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff (whether casual, permanent, fixed-term, or temporary) and volunteers of the Young Mens Christian Association of South Australia Inc. or YMCA South Australia Youth and Family Services Inc. (collectively, 'YMCA South Australia').


## 3. Policy Statement

YMCA South Australia is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing its programs and services. YMCA South Australia supports the rights of the child and will strive to deliver a child safe environment at all times.


YMCA South Australia also supports the rights and wellbeing of its staff and volunteers and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. Staff and volunteers must maintain the highest standards of professional conduct in their attitude and behaviour toward clients, colleagues and members of the community. In particular, staff recognises the power imbalance inherent in a staff / client relationship and will never act in a manner that exploits or could be seen to exploit that power imbalance.

## 4. Procedures

- Staff and volunteers engaged in the direct delivery of programs and services for children and young people, are required to regularly access training in child protection and related matters and will be supported by YMCA South Australia to do so.
- Staff and volunteers must remain alert to the risk indicators of child abuse and promptly report suspected incidents to their manager / supervisor and, where required by law, to the relevant authorities.
- Staff and volunteers must avoid placing themselves in potentially compromising situations with children and young people, and ensure that in all circumstances, government and YMCA South Australia prescribed staff: child ratios are adhered to.
- Staff and volunteers must ensure they are never alone with a child where they cannot be observed by other YMCA South Australia staff members, volunteers or other adults.
- Program / service staff and volunteers must achieve an appropriate mix of male and female staff / volunteers wherever possible when preparing rosters for programs.

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- Young children under the **age of eight (8) in** YMCA South Australia programs / services must be appropriately supervised in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms or be required to accompany one another in pairs at such times.
- Pre-school children must be supervised and accompanied by an adult at all times while in a YMCA South Australia centre or program. Parents may need to be available to take children to the toilet in this instance.
- Program / service staff and volunteers are to ensure that parent / guardian permission is obtained in writing prior to any child / young person being taken on a YMCA South Australia excursion or camp or in relation to any photos of children / young people being taken.
- Parents / guardians are to be informed of travel and sleeping arrangements prior to the commencement of any excursion or camp.
- Parents and children / young people are to be appropriately informed of YMCA South Australia safeguarding policies and procedures, and relevant safeguarding options available to them.
- Program / service staff and volunteers are not to travel, or be accommodated alone with a child participant before, during or after a YMCA South Australia program, excursion or camp unless an emergency has been identified.
- Program / service staff and volunteers are not to discipline children through the use of physical punishment or the withdrawal of the necessities of care (including food, shelter and emotional warmth), or to verbally or emotionally abuse or punish children in their care.
- Program / service staff and volunteers are not, under any circumstances, to release a child from a YMCA South Australia owned or operated facility, program or service to anyone other than the authorised parent(s)/guardian(s), or to an individual authorised by parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing, including relatives of children.
- Sign-in and sign-out logs showing arrival and departure times and parent(s)/guardian(s) signatures are to be maintained on a daily basis and kept on file at program/service sites. Program / service staff and volunteers are required to be vigilant in witnessing the departure of individual children/young people.
- Staff / volunteers employed in licensed or otherwise regulated Child Care and Children's Services are specifically required to have knowledge of, and at all times to adhere to, all Regulations.
- Program / service staff and volunteers providing direct care to children must be identified by a YMCA South Australia name badge and, where practicable, a branded uniform that is familiar to the children and is the same as that of their co-workers.

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- Program / service staff and volunteers who have developed friendships with families and/or children who participate in YMCA South Australia programs / services prior to them being employed by YMCA South Australia must promptly advise their manager / supervisor.
- YMCA South Australia does not encourage program / service staff and volunteers to engage with children who participate in YMCA South Australia programs, or members of their family in non-YMCA South Australia activities such as baby-sitting and weekend trips. Such activities may only occur with prior written approval of the CEO. All staff and volunteers are obliged to immediately report knowledge of such activities to their manager / supervisor.
- Under no circumstances can personal work be solicited by a YMCA South Australia staff member or volunteer while at YMCA South Australia or can a YMCA South Australia uniform be worn to this personal work.

#### **4.1 Staff and Volunteers are to:**

- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model to children / young people, and as a representative of YMCA South Australia.
- Read, understand and formally agree to abide by YMCA South Australia policies and procedures around the safety of children and young people as outlined in the YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, a copy of which will be given to them during induction to read and sign as understood.
- Raise all concerns, issues, and problems with their manager / supervisor as soon as possible.

#### **4.2 Staff and volunteer conduct considered unacceptable, subject to disciplinary procedures and possible dismissal:**

- Engage in rough physical games.
- Cuddle, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive manner.
- Make negative, violent or sexually suggestive comments to a child even as a joke.
- Undertake a task of a personal nature that a child can do for him / herself (e.g. changing clothes, personal grooming, feeding, and toileting).
- Take a child / young person to your home, or encourage meetings outside the YMCA South Australia program/service activity.

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- Discipline children / young people by use of emotional abuse, favouritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, reference to cultural / ethnical differences or swearing.
- Transport of an individual child or group of children to or from YMCA South Australia programs / services in private vehicles without the written consent of your manager / supervisor or the CEO. This is only an option when all other avenues of transport have been excluded. A code of conduct for travelling in cars needs to be adhered to at all time.
- Share accommodation with a child without other staff members, volunteers or children present.
- Mobile phone texting or emailing information directly to a child / young person is mobile or email address. All communication made should be directed to the parents / guardians.
- Use personal (non-work related) social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter to contact or converse with children.
- Use personal mobile phones or other hand held devices to take photographs of children in care of the YMCA South Australia.

#### 4. Breach of the Policy


Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

#### 5. Definitions

**Child or young person** means a person who is under 18 years of age.

#### 6. Key Relevant Documents

- Legislation
  - *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)*
  - *Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017 (SA)*
- Policies and Procedures
  - YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
  - Safeguarding Children and Young People Mandatory Reporting Procedure
  - YMCA South Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People – Recruitment and Screening Procedure
  - YMCA South Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People - Positive Behaviour Procedure
  - YMCA South Australia – Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedure

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- YMCA South Australia – Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- YMCA South Australia – Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure
- YMCA South Australia – Recruitment and Selection Policy
- YMCA South Australia – Learning and Development Policy
- YMCA South Australia – Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Other (e.g. International Standards, Forms etc.)
  - N/A

## 7. Monitoring Evaluation and Review

State how often the policy will be reviewed and provide details in the table below. Most policies are reviewed every two years.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier for reasonable cause or upon the request of the YMCA South Australia Board.

## 8. Version History

Version	Date	Description of changes	Effective Date	Review Date
1.0	2011	Child, Young and Other Vulnerable Persons Safety Code of Conduct	June 2011	June 2013
2.0	2013	Updated Child, Young and Other Vulnerable Persons Safety Code of Conduct	July 2013	July 2015
3.0	2014	Updated Child, Young and Other Vulnerable Persons Safety Code of Conduct	May 2014	May 2016
4.0	2016	Minor Amendments	May 2016	May 2017
5.0	May 2017	Review	25 May 2016	May 2018
6.0	May 2018	Reviewed in line with the adoption of YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy	26 July 2018	July 2019
7.0	February 2020	Updated wording to align with YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Updated template	April 2020	April 2022