

Young Men's Christian Association of the Inner North East of Adelaide Inc.



Staff Code of Conduct



We build strong **PEOPLE**
strong **FAMILIES** strong **COMMUNITIES**

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1 INEA YMCA Staff Code of Conduct

Policy Name: INEA YMCA Staff Conduct

Policy Owner: INEA YMCA President and Chief Executive Officer

Policy Scope:

- All board members, staff and volunteers

Stakeholders:

- Staff, Customers and Children and Young People who use INEA YMCA services and programs.

Responsibility for implementing policy:

- INEA YMCA President
- Chief Executive Officer
- Programs Manager
- Centre Coordinator, Kensington

Date policy implemented:

This policy was implemented on 23 October 2014

Review Date of Policy:

Review Period: Three Years

This policy is due to be reviewed by 30/9/2017

2 Purpose

INEA YMCA is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people who use our programs and services.

INEA YMCA supports the rights of children. We strive to deliver a child-safe environment at all times. INEA YMCA also supports the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers.

We encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people.

Our staff are required to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct towards customers, colleagues and members of the community. We acknowledge that there is an inherent power imbalance in a staff/customer or client relationship.

Our staff are never to act in a manner which exploits or could be seen to exploit this power imbalance.

To these ends we have developed these practice and behaviour guidelines to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to the children and young people in our care.

3 Application

All staff, including our Board, managers, casual staff and volunteers, are required to observe these practice and behaviour guidelines. Developed to protect children and young people engaged in our programs and services, these guidelines have been formally approved and endorsed by the INEA YMCA Board.

4 Commitment

You should read these practice and behaviour guidelines in conjunction with:

- the specific requirements of your role as defined in your 'position description' statement
- our relevant policies and work instructions, including:
 - INEA YMCA Safeguarding children and Young People Policy
 - Responding To Child Abuse Reports and Allegations
 - INEA YMCA Positive Guidance Policy
 - Membership, Enrolments and Facility Hire Policy
 - Recruitment Policy
- all applicable laws
- general community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour between adults and children.

As part of your commitment to observing these practice and behaviour guidelines you will be required to sign a statement of commitment acknowledging that you have read and agreed to abide by these guidelines.

Failure to comply by these guidelines will be considered misconduct, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Such disciplinary action may, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, we will report to the police, or other relevant government body as required by law, all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

5 Exceptions

There may be exceptional situations where these guidelines do not apply, for example, in an emergency situation. However, it is crucial that, where possible, you seek management authorisation prior to taking action that contravenes these guidelines or that you advise management as soon possible after any incident in which these guidelines are breached.

6 The guidelines

Our practice and behaviour guidelines address the major areas where you interact with the children and young people who take part in our programs and services. We have developed these practice and behaviour guidelines to help you to safeguard those children and young people from abuse or neglect.

6.1 Guidelines:

Staff and volunteers:

- must remain alert to the risk indicators of child abuse and promptly report suspected incidents to their Manager/Supervisor or to the Child Protection Officer and, where required by law, to the relevant authorities.
- Who are engaged in the direct delivery of children's programs and services are required to regularly access training in child protection and related matters and will be supported by INEA YMCA to do so
- are to avoid placing themselves in potentially compromising situations with children and ensure that, in all circumstances, government and INEA YMCA prescribed staff: child ratios are adhered to.
- are to ensure they are never alone with a child where they cannot be observed by other INEA YMCA staff members, volunteers or other adults.
- Where possible are to roster an appropriate mix of male and female staff/ volunteers for children's programs
- Are to ensure that children under the age of eight (8) who are participating in INEA YMCA programs/services are appropriately supervised in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms or be required to accompany one another in pairs at such times.
- Are to ensure that parent/guardian permission is obtained in writing prior to any child being taken on a INEA YMCA excursion or camp or in relation to any photos of children being taken.
- Are to ensure that preschool children are supervised and accompanied by an adult at all times while in a INEA YMCA Centre or program. Parents may need to be available to take children to the toilet in this instance.

6.2 Transporting children

Children and young people are to be transported only in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of our programs and services. Children and young people should never be given casual lifts.

Children are to be transported only with prior authorisation from one of the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, and from the child's parent/guardian. Gaining approval involves providing information about the proposed journey, including:

- the form of transport proposed, such as private car, taxi, self-drive bus, bus with driver, train, plane or boat
- the reason for the journey
- details of anyone who will be present during the journey other than our personnel who are involved in delivering our programs and services
- Parents/guardians are to be informed of travel and sleeping arrangements prior to the commencement of any excursion or camp.
- Parents, children and young people are to be appropriately informed of INEA YMCA's 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 INEA YMCA program, excursion or camp.

6.3 Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements

Programs that require overnight stays are to occur only with the authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer and of the parents/guardians of the children or young people involved.

Practices and behaviour by our personnel during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of our programs and services at other times.

Standards of conduct that must be observed by our personnel during an overnight stay include:

- providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing
- observing appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present – such as no exposure to adult nudity
- not allowing children or young people to be exposed to pornographic material, for example, through movies, television, the Internet or magazines
- not leaving children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as hotel staff or friends
- not involving sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of children and young people such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child or young person.
- the right of children to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay
- parents expecting that their children can, if they wish, make contact.

6.4 Physical contact with children and young people

Any physical contact with children and young people must be appropriate to the delivery of the programs and services and based on the needs of the child or young person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed young person) rather than on the needs of our personnel.

Under no circumstances should any of our personnel have contact with children or young people participating in our programs or services that:

- involves touching:
 - of genitals
 - of buttocks
 - of the breast area (female children)
that is other than as part of delivering medical or allied health services
- would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person – for example corporal punishment
- is overly physical – as is, for example, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing
- is unnecessary – as is, for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance
- is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child/young person or to others, in which case:
- physical restraint should be a last resort - the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances, and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others
- the incident must be reported to management as soon as possible.

Our staff are required to report to management any physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is sexual and/or inappropriate, for example, acts of physical aggression, as soon as possible, to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child or young person, our personnel and any other participants.

6.5 Positive guidance [Discipline]

We strive to ensure that children and young people participating in our programs and services are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive experience for all participants. However, there are times when personnel may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children, young people or personnel participating in our programs and services

We require our personnel to use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved. The child or young person needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances are our personnel to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

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).
- verbally or emotionally abuse or punish children in their care.
- make negative, violent or sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke;
- engage in rough physical games.
- cuddle, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive manner.
- undertake a task of a personal nature that a child can do for itself, for example changing clothes, grooming, feeding, and toileting
- discipline children by use of; emotional abuse, favouritism, physical abuse, verbal abuse, reference to cultural/ethnic differences, swearing.

6.6 Program Attendance

Program/service staff and volunteers are not, under any circumstances, to release a child from a YMCA 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, along with 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.

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.

6.7 Uniform

Our personnel are to wear their INEA YMCA uniforms only while involved in delivering service or as required by INEA YMCA, such as when representing INEA YMCA at designated functions, or when travelling to and from work, in accordance with the INEA YMCA Uniform Policy.

Program/service staff and volunteers providing direct care to children must be identified by a INEA YMCA name badge and, where practicable, a branded uniform that is familiar to the children and is the same as that of their co-workers.

INEA YMCA uniforms may NOT be worn to any other employment, either paid or voluntary.

6.8 Adhering to role boundaries

Our staff should not, of their own volition or at the request of a service user, act outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description) when helping to deliver our programs and services.

INEA YMCA staff and volunteers must not provide unauthorised transportation. For example, driving a child home at the end of a program.

If any of our staff become aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that staff person's role, or beyond the scope of our organisation's usual service, they should seek advice from their immediate manager at the earliest opportunity.

Program/service staff and volunteers are to advise their manager supervisor if they have developed friendships with families and/or children who participate in INEA YMCA programs prior to them being employed by INEA YMCA.

INEA YMCA actively discourages program/service staff and volunteers to engage with children who participate in INEA YMCA programs, or members of their family in non-YMCA activities such as babysitting and weekend trips. Such activities may only occur with prior written approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

All staff/volunteers are obliged to immediately report knowledge of such activities to their Manager or Supervisor.

Under no circumstances can personal work be solicited by an INEA YMCA staff/volunteer while at an INEA YMCA site

6.9 Photographs of children and young people

Under these guidelines:

- Children and young people to whom we deliver service are to be photographed while involved in our programs and services only if:
 - the context is directly related to participation in our programs and services
 - the child is appropriately dressed and posed
 - the image is taken in the presence of other personnel.
- Prior written parental authorisation will be obtained except for special events such as concerts, fairs, performances, open days and competitions.
- Images are not to be distributed (including as an attachment to an email) to anyone outside our organisation other than the child photographed or their parent, without management knowledge and approval.
- Images (digital or hard copy) are to be stored in a manner that prevents unauthorised access by others, for example:
 - - if in hard-copy form, in a locked drawer or cabinet
 - - if in electronic form, in a 'password protected' folder.
- Images (digital or hard copy) are to be destroyed or deleted as soon as they are no longer required.
- Images are not to be exhibited on our website without parental knowledge and approval, or such images must be presented in a manner that de-identifies the child or young person. Any caption or accompanying text may need to be checked so that it does not identify a child or young person if such identification is potentially detrimental.

6.10 Use of electronic communications

Wherever possible, email and text messages sent to a child or young person should be copied to their parent or guardian.

Where a parent is not included in the communication:

- Restrict such communication to issues directly associated with delivering our programs and services, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled.
- Limit the personal or social content in such communications to what is required to convey the service-related message in a polite, friendly manner. In particular, do not communicate anything that a reasonable observer could view as being of a sexual nature.
- Do not use such communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact.
- Do not request a child or young person to keep a communication a secret from their parents.
- Communication with young people on social networking sites is only allowed through official INEA YMCA Sites and by authorised INEA YMCA Social Media personnel.

The INEA YMCA Facebook Guidelines are to be followed at all times.

Staff are not to communicate with children outside our services, such as siblings or friends who are known to personnel via a child participating in the service.

Staff are required to ensure appropriate monitoring of children and young people when they use our INEA YMCA's electronic communication equipment to ensure that they do not inadvertently place themselves at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, gaming sites or web searches, or through inappropriate email communication.

6.11 Supervision

Staff are responsible for supervising the children and young people to which INEA YMCA provides programs and services to ensure those participants:

- engage positively
- behave appropriately toward one another,
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats, for example, vehicle movements

Our personnel are required to avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with children and young people to whom we provide services, and (where possible) to conduct all activities and/or discussions with service recipients in view of other personnel.

Exception: See recommendations for **Counselling** within this document.

6.12 Giving gifts

INEA YMCA's managers are to authorise any gifts to children or young people involved in our programs and services or to their families, including rewards, prizes, treats, or second-hand equipment.

6.13 Guidelines for counselling

During a counselling session at least one other on-duty staff person is to be on duty within the same building and to have knowledge that counselling is occurring.

The room should be private, but not secluded or isolated. It should be apparent that other people are close by.

Parents/carers are to be encouraged to wait outside the room used for counselling.

Staff are to hold appropriate qualifications in providing counselling services.

Records are to be kept of each session, including location, date, time and counselling staff, and client.

A formal supervision process for the counsellor is to be in place so that the supervisor is aware of the work that is being done during a session.

Formal feedback mechanisms are to be used to seek feedback from the child or young person undergoing counselling. This feedback is to be submitted to the counsellor's supervisor.

7 Enquiries

Enquiries about this policy to:

Scott Dalglish

YMCA of the Inner North East of Adelaide Inc.

39 Smith Street, WALKERVILLE 5081

Ph: 8344 3811

Fax: 8342 0040

email: inea@ymca.org.au

Please detach this page, and sign the form with your manager/supervisor who will then place it on your personnel file

YOUNG MENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE INNER NORTH EAST OF ADELAIDE INC.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER CONFIRMATION AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

I, _____ (print your full name),

confirm that I have read and understand the YMCA of INNER NORTH EAST OF ADELAIDE's *Staff Code of Conduct* and undertake to act in accordance with this at all times during my employment with the Association.

I also understand that a copy of this signed statement will be included in my personnel file.

Staff
member/Volunteer
Signature:

Date: ____/____/____

Manager/supervisor
Signature:

Date: ____/____/____

If you are a new employee, please be aware that you cannot commence your employment until this form has been received by the Chief Executive Officer.