

PARENT VERSION: Safeguarding Children and Young people at INEA YMCA

INEA YMCA is a not-for-profit organisation and is governed by a skills based volunteer board. We operate within a catchment comprising Town of Walkerville, City of Norwood Payneham St Peters, City of Prospect and apart of City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

We provide a range of services to people of all ages including children and young people between the ages of 0 and 18 years and have done so since the 1960s.

Our services include:

- Gymnastics
- Birthday parties
- Court sports
- Squash
- Health and fitness services and classes
- Martial arts
- Hire activities

We take our responsibility to provide an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe very seriously. The INEA YMCA Board is committed to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. In particular, we are committed to safeguarding the children and young people in our care from:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Neglect

A Child In South Australia, under the Children's Protection Act (SA) 1993 a child is any person under the age of eighteen (18). It is important to note that the age of consent is seventeen (17) years of age.

A Young person is defined as being any person between the ages of twelve (12) and twenty four (24). Whilst this age range overlaps with the age group defined as children (0-18) and recognises the fact that transition from childhood to youth is a gradual process, beginning and ending at different ages for different individuals

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All of our staff, volunteers and Board Members have clear roles and responsibilities with respect to safeguarding children and young people. Our staff, volunteers and board members are subject to criminal history checks prior to service and regular ongoing checks during their employment.

INEA YMCA Staff Code of Conduct Summary

INEA YMCA staff and volunteers are required to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct towards customers, children and young people.

We have developed this Staff Code of Conduct to identify and prevent behavior that may be harmful to the children and young people in our care.

Transport

Children and young people are to be transported to and from residence only with prior authorization from a parent/guardian and a INEA YMCA Manager. Staff are NEVER to give children or young people casual lifts home without prior authorisation.

To gain approval from a INEA YMCA Manager, staff are required to submit details about the proposed journey including the form of transport, the reason, details of who will be present.

Overnight Stays

Overnight stays as part of a YMCA program are only to occur with the authorisation of a parent/guardian and INEA YMCA CEO.

Standards of staff conduct 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 include:

- Providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing
- Not leaving children or young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as hotel staff
- The right of children or young people to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay

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).

Positive Guidance

We aim to make children and young people aware of the acceptable limits of their behavior. There are times when staff may be required to use appropriate behavior management strategies to ensure an:

- Effective and positive environment
- The safety and/or wellbeing of children, young people or personnel participating on our programs and services

Any behavior management strategy used must be:

- Fair
- Respectful
- Appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved

The child or young person is to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehavior in a positive way.

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

Uniform

Our staff are to wear their INEA YMCA uniforms only while involved in delivering service, representing INEA YMCA at events, or when travelling to and from work.

Adhering to role boundaries

Our staff and volunteers are not to act outside the confines of their duties, as specified in their position description, when helping to deliver our programs and services.

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

Photographs of children and young people

Children and young people are to be photographed by staff while involved in our programs and services only if:

- Prior written parental/guardian authorization is obtained (with the exception of special events such as concerts, fairs, performances, open days and competitions)
- The Context is directly related to participation in our programs and services
- The child is appropriately dressed and posed

Use of electronic communication

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

Any communication is to be restricted to issues directly associated with delivering our programs and services, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled

Communication with young people on social networking sites is only allowed through official INEA YMCA Sites and by designated INEA YMCA Social Media Administrators and Representatives.

Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations

INEA YMCA staff and volunteers play an important role in protecting children and young people who may be at risk of harm due to abuse or neglect. Staff and volunteers often have daily or weekly contact with children, young people and their families, and so are well placed to observe when a child or young person appears to be at risk of harm.

Our staff and volunteers are required to identify, report and respond to any concerns about, or incidents of, serious abuse or neglect towards children or young people to whom we provide services.

Serious abuse or neglect refers to situations in which a child or young person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Staff are required to:

- Report suspected abuse to their direct supervisor/manager
- Report suspected abuse to the Department of Human Services or the police

Staff will be provided with support during this time.

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to fair and effective reporting processes. Only authorized YMCA staff, Australian Children's Foundation staff and INEA YMCA legal representatives will have access to documentation regarding a report.

INEA YMCA will co-operate with the Department of Human Services and police and other agencies as required by law. We will comply with any reasonable request in a timely manner.