



Merrimack Valley YMCA Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

1. To protect YMCA staff, volunteers, and programs members, at no time during a YMCA program may a staff person be alone with a single child where he or she cannot be observed by others. As staff supervise children, they should space themselves in such a way that other staff can see them.
2. Staff and volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised
3. Rest-room supervision: Staff and volunteers will make sure that rest room is not occupied by suspicious or unknown individuals before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff and volunteers will stand in the doorway of the rest room while children are using the restroom. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff and volunteers (not being alone with a child). If staff or volunteers are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open. No child, regardless of age, should ever enter a bathroom alone on a field trip or at other off site location. Always send children in pairs (known as the rule of three) with a staff.
4. Staff and volunteers should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs (one staff with two children) - diapering, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, and so on. When this is not feasible, staff and volunteers should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff and volunteers shall not abuse children in any way, including:
 - a. Physical abuse – striking, spanking, shaking, slapping, and so on;
 - b. Verbal abuse – Humiliating, degrading, threatening, and so on;
 - c. Sexual abuse – Touching or speaking inappropriately
 - d. Mental abuse – Shaming, withholding kindness, being cruel, and so on;
 - e. Neglect – Withholding food, water, or basic care

No type of abuse will be tolerated and may cause for immediate dismissal.
6. Staff and volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism. Staff will have age-appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize

the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in predetermined situations (when necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), administered only in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.

7. Staff and volunteers will conduct a health check of each child upon his or her arrival each time the program meets, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, and so on. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a nonthreatening way. Staff will document any questionable marks or responses.

8. Staff and volunteers will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally, regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, economic level of the family, or disability.

9. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights not to be touched or looked at in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched on area of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.

10. Staff and volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents, and staff.

11. Staff and volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles or allow youth participants old enough to drive to transport younger children in the program.

12. Staff and volunteers must appear clean, neat, and appropriately attired.

13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.

14. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.

15. Possession or use of any type of weapon or explosive device is prohibited.

16. Using YMCA computers to access pornographic sites, send e-mails with sexual overtones or otherwise inappropriate messages, or develop online relationships is not allowed.

17. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, volunteers, or other staff is prohibited.

18. Staff and volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in YMCA programs outside of the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, driving or riding in cars, and inviting children to their homes. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to prior administrator approval.

19. Staff and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
20. Staff and volunteers will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.
21. Staff and Volunteers should not give excessive gifts (e.g., video games, Jewelry) to youth.
22. Staff and volunteers may not date program participants who are under the age of 18.
23. Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on the file with the YMCA).
24. Staff and volunteers are to report to a supervisor any other staff who violate any of the policies listed in this Code of Conduct.
25. Staff and volunteers are required to read and sign all policies related to indentifying, documenting, and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.
26. Staff and volunteers will act in a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible manner consistent with the mission of the YMCA.