

Child Protection Policy

YMCA Greater Wellington Child Protection Policy

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1.0 A message from YMCA Greater Wellington

The YMCA provides programmes and services for children, young people and their families. As a child-safe organisation we acknowledge that safety does not just happen. It requires conscious action to protect children from harm. It extends guardianship to all children and young people.

The YMCA strives for an inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to reach his or her potential. The YMCA is committed to providing opportunities for all people to grow in body, mind and spirit. Caring about the welfare of children and young people is our first consideration.

The YMCA has a legal, moral and Mission-driven responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, so we have developed this policy. The priority to protect children and young people will apply equally by all who work with or for the YMCA.

Everyone who is bound by this policy is expected to do all they can to ensure every child or young person in the care of the YMCA is safe from harm. It is the responsibility of our YMCA People (Board Directors to staff, volunteers, contractors and any others engaging with children or young people) to deliver its services, to understand the important role they personally have to play to ensure the safety of the children and young people in their care is

at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. This includes ensuring the requirements of the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014 (and subsequent amendments) are met or exceeded.

At this time our focus is to provide robust and easily understandable child protection initiatives for YMCA Greater Wellington. With this policy we reiterate our commitment to the way we improve child protective practice within YMCA Greater Wellington.

2.0 Definitions of abuse

| Term | Definition |
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| Child Abuse | Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person. |
| 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 behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child or young person’s physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development. |
| 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. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking. It also includes giving children or 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. |
| Sexual abuse | Sexual abuse occurs when an adult involves a child or young person in any sexual activity. Sexual abuse also occurs when a child or young person involves another 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 or young person, engaging children or young people to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child or young person’s genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse. Encouraging a child or young person to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. |

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| 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 to the family. |
| <i>Domestic Violence</i> | <p>Violence means—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · (a) physical abuse: · (b) sexual abuse: · (c) psychological abuse, including, but not limited to,— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) intimidation: (ii) harassment: (iii) damage to property: (iv) threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial or economic abuse (for example, denying or limiting access to financial resources, or preventing or restricting employment opportunities or access to education) in relation to a child. |
| Witnessing Domestic Violence | Witnessing domestic violence is a specific form of emotional and psychological abuse. Witnessing domestic violence occurs when children or young people are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children and young people. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Domestic violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a |

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| | <p>child or young person’s life. Exposure to domestic violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p> |
| Sexual exploitation | <p>Sexual exploitation occurs when children or young people are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children or young people who are forced into prostitution.</p> |
| Harm | <p>Harm, to a child or young person, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child or young person’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or · sexual abuse or exploitation; · a single act, omission or circumstance; or · a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. |
| 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) · Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions). |

3.0 Definitions used in the Policy

| Term | Definition |
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| Child or young person | The YMCA considers a child or young person to be a person under the age of eighteen years who is not married or in a civil union. |
| Child Protection Policy | <p>The Child Protection Policy is the document that defines the principles and intent in relation to child safe practices within YMCA Greater Wellington. The principles and intent of this policy are to be implemented locally to protect children and young people from any form of abuse, bullying and exploitation.</p> <p>The YMCA Child Protection Policy requires compliance by all of its YMCA People (Board Directors to staff, volunteers, contractors and any others engaging with children or young people).</p> |
| Duty of Care | <p>A duty to use reasonable care towards children and young people enrolled in YMCA programmes and services.</p> <p>Duty of care continues for as long as children and young people are at the YMCA programme or service.</p> |
| Grooming | <p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child or young person (their family and wider community) with a view to abusing them. 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. 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 (but not limited to) leisure, music, sports and cultural activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media, by text or via any other electronic transmittable devices.</p> |
| Extended Guardianship and or Caregiver | <p>Extended guardianship and or caregiver is a term that acknowledges that children and young people rely on all adults to create a safe environment and act in an informed and committed way to protect them. It is expected that all YMCA staff and volunteers act as extended guardians and or caregivers of children and young people who take part in a YMCA service, activity or programme.</p> <p>This definition is also a term that acknowledges our responsibilities for the care and protection of children and young people.</p> |
| Child Safe | <i>YMCA believes that children have the right to be protected from being harmed both physically and mentally. YMCA's must ensure</i> |

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| | <i>that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.</i> |
| YMCA | Means YMCA Greater Wellington. |
| YMCA People | Includes all YMCA Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, hirers and anyone else engaging with children and young people whilst on duty during YMCA activities, services and programmes. |
| Service Use | Service User is an individual who participates in a YMCA programme or who uses a YMCA service or facility. |

4.0 Purpose of our Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the YMCA's commitment to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of every child or young person in our care.

This commitment includes ensuring the requirements of the:

- Vulnerable Children's Act 2014;
- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989; and
- Any other relevant legislative requirements (and subsequent amendments) are met or exceeded.

Who does the Policy apply to?

Adoption of the Child Protection Policy is required by all YMCA People and all Service Users.

How we will ensure our Policy is continually improved

The Child Protection Manager will review this policy at least every three years (or earlier as required).

5.0 Our Policy Commitments

Our commitment to children and young people

- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access any of our programmes, services or facilities.
- We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their view seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- We commit to take action to ensure that children and young people are protected from exploitation, abuse or harm.
- We commit to support families and communities to promote children's healthy development and wellbeing.

Our commitment to parents and caregivers

- We commit to supporting parents and caregivers to protect their children and young people. We will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their children.
- We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and caregivers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We commit to engaging and listening to parents and caregivers views in regards to our child protection policies and procedures.
- We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and caregivers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.

Our commitment to YMCA People

- We commit to having a management structure that supports and develops YMCA People in their roles.
- We commit to providing our YMCA People with the necessary resources and support to enable them to fulfill their roles.
- We commit to provide opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child protection. This will include regular training with regards to understanding the principles and intent of the YMCA and Member Association Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

- We commit to listen to all concerns voiced by YMCA People in regards to keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to provide opportunities for YMCA People to access support and counselling arising from incidents of child abuse.

Our commitment to ensuring a child safe organisation

- We commit to creating an environment that recognises risks and has effective strategies to prevent and respond to child abuse.

- We commit to creating an environment for children and young people to:

1. be safe and to feel safe;
2. *be respected, valued, heard and encouraged to reach their full potential.*

- We commit to using best practice standards in;

1. The recruitment, training and supervision of our YMCA People
2. Responding to allegations of child abuse
3. Situational prevention of child abuse in our organisation.

6.0 What we expect from our YMCA People

We expect our YMCA People not to harm or exploit children or young people.

It is a serious breach of this policy, if a YMCA Person harms or exploits a child or a young person. Breaches of this policy include, but are not limited to, YMCA People who:

- sexually assault children or young people;
- physically assault children or young people;

- verbally abuse, denigrate or bully children or young people;
- sexually harass children or young people;
- take, reproduce, distribute and/or electronically transmit photos/images/videos of children or young people without the consent of their guardians;

Therefore we expect all our YMCA People to understand the meanings of abuse contained within this Policy.

We expect our YMCA People to understand children and young people's rights.

An understanding of children and young people's rights is an important basis for all of our programmes and services that we offer to children, young people and their families. It enables us to identify when children's needs and entitlements are compromised and if they require support.

Therefore, we expect our YMCA People to have a working knowledge of children and young people's rights appropriate to their role and use it to inform decisions about how to behave and act with and on behalf of children and young people.

We expect our YMCA People to be respectful of children and young people.

As part of our commitment to children and young people, we will facilitate opportunities for them to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat children as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities.

Therefore, we expect YMCA People to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respect and support children and young people.

We expect that our YMCA People do not contravene any policies, regulations or laws in relation to the safety and protection of children and young people.

It is a serious breach of this policy if YMCA People contravene any regulations or laws in relation to the safety and protection of children whether or not they are working or volunteering at the time.

We expect our YMCA People to understand and acknowledge the significance of family relationships for children and young people.

Families, in all their diverse forms, are the foundation of children and young people's development. Families can act as supportive resources for growth and resilience in children and young people. Family relationships can also restrain and harm children and young people's functioning. Families are the single most significant influence in shaping the way children and young people develop and perceive their sense of identity.

The YMCA will provide documentation in developmentally appropriate language and in translation to accommodate the communities that access our services.

Therefore, we expect YMCA People to recognise, respect and work to strengthen the capacities of parents/caregivers and other family members to care and protect their children.

We expect our member associations to adopt a Child Protection Code of Conduct that sets out the rules for behavior with and around children and young people. A member association Child Protection Code of Conduct must ensure that YMCA staff and volunteers are always safe and act to protect children and young people.

We expect our YMCA People to understand and respond to the needs of all children and young people.

We acknowledge that all children and young people are vulnerable due to their age and associated stage of development.

Therefore, we expect our YMCA People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of all children and young people.

We expect our YMCA People to show extended guardianship to all children and young people. This includes ensuring that our YMCA People have a duty of care to all children and young people.

Therefore, notwithstanding our obligations under the law, we expect our YMCA People to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing or safety of a child or young person.

We expect our YMCA People to know and follow section 15 of the Child Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 in relation to reporting of ill-treatment or neglect of a child or young person.

That is, we expect that any YMCA who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived to report the matter to a social worker or a constable.

We expect our YMCA People to act on any concerns or complaints raised by children, young people and/or their parents/caregivers.

We expect our YMCA People to cooperate with Child Youth and Family and/or the New Zealand Police during formal investigations.

We expect our YMCA People to respect the cultural and religious practices of families (within an appropriate context) who access our services.

We recognise the importance of culture and religion in the lives of children and families. However, no cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of children or young people to be protected from harm, physically and mentally.

We expect our YMCA People to be aware of and adhere to the formal recruitment, screening and employment practices of the YMCA in relation to recruiting people to work, volunteer or engage with children and families.

The pre-screening of our YMCA People must be in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

All potential YMCA People will be subject to police clearance through the NZ Police Licensing and Vetting Service Centre (<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/vetting-process>), prior to starting work. The main purpose of Police vetting is to protect society's most vulnerable members, including children and young people. It ensures our YMCA People make informed decisions about potential employees, current employees or volunteers who work directly with these vulnerable groups of people.

It is a serious breach of this policy if an individual, who has convictions under Schedule 2 of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 is employed as a paid staff member or volunteer.

It is also a serious breach of this policy, if an individual continues in his/her employment or volunteer role with us if he/she has been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Police clearance in accordance with the Vulnerable Children Act, and where appropriate Ministry contract requirements.

Therefore, we expect that our YMCA People understand that their continued participation in our organisation is based on the outcomes of these employment practices.

We expect our YMCA People to protect the privacy of children, young people and families.

YMCA member associations must have a written privacy policy that complies with the Privacy Act 1993. YMCA staff and volunteers must adhere to this policy.