



**ASHLAND AREA
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATION**

**ABUSE PREVENTION
HANDBOOK**

Revised 2/26/2024



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

Policy: The Ashland Area YMCA promotes a safe environment for everyone and is free from abuse. **No form of abuse will be tolerated.** Forms of abuse include, without limitation, the following:

- Physical abuse is an injury that is intentionally inflicted upon an individual.
- Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between an individual and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
- Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to an individual that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
- Neglect or Negligent Treatment is the failure to provide for an individual's basic needs or the failure to protect an individual from harm.

The organization has **zero tolerance** for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among consumers within the organization. This organization is committed to providing all consumers with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one consumer by another consumer. Conduct by consumers that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, the organization will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

Any mistreatment or abuse by a staff member or a volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service.

Revision 1



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member:

Welcome to the Ashland Area YMCA!

At the Ashland Area YMCA, we take our responsibility to care for everyone very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for all Ashland Area YMCA volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for everyone, protecting everyone, you, and the mission of The Ashland Area YMCA. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign, and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Scott Campbell
The Ashland Area YMCA Executive Director
Ashland Area YMCA

The Ashland Area YMCA

Safety Policies & Procedures

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Overview of the Ashland Area YMCA Safety System

Because we care for everyone and desire to protect them, The Ashland Area YMCA requires all volunteers and staff members to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** *before employment or volunteer work begins.*

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training

The Ashland Area YMCA policies and procedures require that volunteers and staff members avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Volunteers and staff members are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the **Ashland Area YMCA Safety Committee.**

Volunteers and staff members should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip the Ashland Area YMCA volunteers and staff members with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse or maltreatment, The Ashland Area YMCA requires all volunteers and staff members to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided live or online through Abuse Prevention Systems (www.AbusePreventionSystems.com) or MinistrySafe (www.MinistrySafe.com).

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training is required for all volunteers and staff members and must be renewed annually. All training will be maintained and managed in the Abuse Prevention Management System.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Volunteers and staff members are required to complete the Ashland Area YMCA Screening Process, which requires volunteers and staff members to:

- complete an Employment Application
- complete the Safety Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- provide references to be checked.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Volunteers and staff members are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

The Ashland Area YMCA requires that all volunteers and staff members undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

The Ashland Area YMCA has **zero tolerance** for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among consumers with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one consumer by another consumer. Conduct by consumers that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, the organization will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

If volunteers, or staff members observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to an immediate supervisor or the Ashland Area YMCA Executive Director.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

The Ashland Area YMCA is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for everyone. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the **Ashland Area YMCA Safety Committee Chair** and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or a member of the **Ashland Area YMCA Safety Committee**.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ everyone for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the Ashland Area YMCA Safety Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

The Ashland Area YMCA staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all the Ashland Area YMCA policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for

immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the

responsibility of the **Ashland Area YMCA Safety Committee** or the Ashland Area YMCA Executive Director.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

To maintain a safe environment for our everyone, the Ashland Area YMCA staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse of a child should be directed to an immediate supervisor, or the Ashland Area YMCA The Ashland Area YMCA Executive Director.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED OR HARMFUL ACT

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and the Ashland Area YMCA activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves everyone or vulnerable populations at the Ashland Area YMCA. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from the Ashland Area YMCA.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving everyone or vulnerable populations at the Ashland Area YMCA.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

THIS SECTION SHOULD INCLUDE A SHORT SYNOPSIS OF YOUR STATE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, *UNLESS* YOUR ORGANIZATION'S POLICY IS TO REPORT **ALL** SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE, REGARDLESS OF STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS. (BEST PRACTICE)

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

The **Ashland Area YMCA Safety Committee** will take appropriate action on behalf of the Ashland Area YMCA when a report of abuse occurs.

WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN VICTIMIZED

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to supervisory staff and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities (if required), the Ashland Area YMCA will provide the child or the child's parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow

the child (or parent, on the child's behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as available counseling options.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery-age everyone

Because very young everyone may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of everyone of either sex.
- 2) Changing diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Everyone will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving everyone in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Everyone should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Everyone should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with everyone of either sex.
- 3) When everyone is taken into the bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young everyone will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving everyone in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Everyone should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other everyone.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from The Ashland Area YMCA in everyone's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School-age everyone

School age everyone may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, everyone should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker

should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals.

Programs dealing with special needs or handicapped everyone should create specific bathroom and diapering policies tailored to the age and abilities of everyone served. Diaper changing of special needs everyone over age four should be supervised by a program director.

MEDICATION

Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer with a doctor's prescription. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment/medication and insect bite cream, after a parent information sheet is signed by a parent or guardian.

GIFTS TO YOUTH

The YMCA strongly discourages employees and volunteers from exchanging gifts with youth. However, gifts to youth may be given under the following circumstances:

1. Gift requests must be submitted to a supervisor and/or a designated administrator prior to being purchased.
2. The supervisor and/or designated administrator will determine a cost limit regarding how much can be spent on the gift; and,
3. Parents/guardians of the youth must be notified about the gift item and why the youth are receiving the gift.
4. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from giving gifts to individual youth. Gifts must be authorized by a supervisor or designated administrator and given to all youth (i.e., celebration of special events/holidays or group recognition).
5. Employees and volunteers must communicate that the gift is given on behalf of the YMCA, not the individual employee or volunteer.

GIFTS FROM YOUTH

Sometimes it may be difficult to refuse gifts from youth or their families. In many cultures, people give gifts to reflect their appreciation for people or services. To be respectful of youth and their families, the YMCA makes reasonable allowances for acts of gratitude involving small gifts of appreciation from youth and/or their families that

have a monetary value not exceeding \$20. Employees and volunteers must disclose all such gifts to their immediate supervisor and/or a designated administrator. Under no circumstances can money be accepted from youth or their families as a gift.

This gift acceptance policy should be included within materials given to parents/guardians and youth; however, if a parent or youth approaches an employee or volunteer with a gift that exceeds \$20, The employee or volunteer can also encourage the parent or youth to speak with an immediate supervisor and/or a designated administrator if they have any questions.

Artwork and letters of appreciation written by youth for employees or volunteers may only be accepted if these items are displayed in a public area at the YMCA. Employees and volunteers may not take youth artwork or letters away from the YMCA whether to their personal homes or any other location.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in the facility, during a Program activity, or while working with everyone at the Ashland Area YMCA (see page ___ of the Employee Handbook). Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to everyone.

TOBACCO

The Ashland Area YMCA is a tobacco-free facility. The Ashland Area YMCA requires staff members and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of everyone or their parents. The Ashland Area YMCA staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to everyone.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers at the Ashland Area YMCA should never be nude in the presence of anyone in their care.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH EVERYONE

One-on-one interactions with youth should only occur during programming under authorized circumstances. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the YMCA clearly communicates expectations for employees and volunteers and gives examples of appropriate behavior when authorized one-on-one interactions occur. In those situations where one-on-one interactions are authorized, employees and volunteers should observe the following guidelines to limit the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

- Meet youth in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical interactions and/or affection during one-on-one interactions. If physical interactions occur, ensure appropriate physical and verbal interactions align with the YMCA's established policies and are limited to the task at hand. Immediately share the nature and extent of physical interactions that occurred

during the one-on-one interaction with your supervisor after the interaction has ended.

- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.

Inform other employees, volunteers, and/or parents/guardians that you are alone with a youth and encourage them to randomly drop in or pass by the interaction.

- To the extent possible, ensure one-on-one interactions occurring behind closed doors are scheduled in advance, take place in a room with windows or glass in the door, and/or are communicated to your supervisor.
- Ensure one-on-one interactions are documented, especially if behind closed doors. Keep documentation of these meetings (such as in shared calendar, case notes, etc.) and share with your supervisor.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including physical interactions, disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted or that made you uncomfortable.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave their everyone in the care of the Ashland Area YMCA staff members and volunteers for services and activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in the Ashland Area YMCA activities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be a part of all services and programs in which everyone is involved at the Ashland Area YMCA. A parent accompanied by a child to any the Ashland Area YMCA program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

VOLUNTEERS PARENTS

A parent who desires to participate in such a way as to have ongoing contact with everyone in the Program other than his/her own will be considered a Volunteers Parent. All Volunteer Parents will be required to complete the Ashland Area YMCA's Volunteer Parent Application.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

The YMCA's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth, employees, and volunteers. The YMCA encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards youth will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

the YMCA's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions include but are not limited to:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<p>Contact initiated by the youth such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs • Pats on the shoulder or back • Handshakes • High-fives and fist bumps • Pats on the head when culturally appropriate • Touching hands, shoulders, and arms • Arms around shoulders • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) • Asking for permission before touching or guiding in how to do an activity (such as fastening safety equipment or showing how to swing a golf club) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs • Kisses • Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one • Lap sitting • Wrestling • Piggyback rides • Tickling • Giving gifts or money • Allowing a youth to cling to an employee's or volunteer's leg • Allowing youth, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer's lap • Any type of massage given by or to a youth outside of accepted and documented medical treatment • Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the employee or volunteer • Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that is outside authorized and documented personal care assistance

RELEASE OF EVERYONE

At the end of the program day or activity, the Ashland Area YMCA volunteers and/or staff members are responsible for releasing everyone in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents or legal guardians.

If a staff member or volunteer is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, he/she should immediately locate or contact the Ashland Area YMCA Executive Director or his/her designee before releasing the child.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with everyone. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms.

POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

The Ashland Area YMCA staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on Program property or in the presence of everyone. If any such materials are purportedly necessary for classroom instruction, they must be approved in advance by the Ashland Area YMCA Executive Director.

INTERNET/ELECTRONIC MEDIA

This organization strongly encourages employees and volunteers to refrain from electronic communication and/or social media use with consumers. However, if these interactions are part of programming or otherwise unavoidable, this organization offers the following guidelines:

- a. Require employees, volunteers, consumers, parents/guardians to sign a Social Media Code of Conduct that includes guidelines about appropriate and inappropriate communication with consumers. Program administrators should review this Code of Conduct with consumers at the program orientation. At a minimum, the Code of Conduct should:
 - Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
 - Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
 - Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and consumers.
 - Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- b. Program administrators create a public social media page for the program. Then employees, volunteers, and consumers are instructed to communicate through this public page instead of through individual personal profiles. This approach allows the administrators to monitor communication and ensures that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with consumers.
 - The organization monitors its social media pages and removes any posts that violate the organization's policies for appropriate behavior.
- c. The organization informs parents/guardians of any such prohibited posts or online behavior.
- d. Encourage employees and volunteers to have "private" profiles so that consumers do not have access to their private information. Common settings to check are:
 - Which information on certain platforms is always available to the public (e.g. name or username, bio, profile photos, associated networks)
 - Who can send the user a friend or follow request, search for them by email address or phone number, and send them direct messages?
 - Who can tag the user in photos or posts and potentially give away location or personal information?
 - Can the user prohibit search engines from linking to their social media profile or allowing it to appear in public searches?
- e. Encourage employees and volunteers to use platforms designed for smaller groups, clubs, or team communication and which allow all communication to be seen by all

consumers and/or parents/guardians (e.g., Remind, GroupMe, Slack)

- f. Keep in mind that typically social media try and limit usage to only consumers who are 13 years or older. There are very limited circumstances in which an employee or volunteer should need to electronically contact a consumer under the age of 13.
- g. Organizations are encouraged to set “office hours” outside of which employees and volunteers may not generally send or respond to electronic communications.
- h. Employees and volunteers should keep communications professional in nature and limit discussion to programmatic purposes.
- i. Train employees and volunteers on how to respond to private electronic communication from consumers. The responding procedure should include:
 - Alerting a supervisor about private communication and carefully documenting and forwarding the communication according to the organization’s guidelines. For most organizations, employees and volunteers should not respond privately to consumers except to state that such communications are prohibited by the Code of Conduct.
 - Exceptions may be made under emergency situations wherein private messages may occur in order to locate a consumer and secure his/her safety, but all such contact must be documented accordingly.
 - If a consumer reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult or child, the employee or volunteer must report this information to a supervisor and child protective services or law enforcement immediately.
- j. Some organizations allow private communications with consumers within a mentor or advocate relationship.
 - Before using electronic communication or social media in this instance, employees and volunteers should evaluate whether it is necessary for that particular consumer and consult a supervisor for approval. Using social media should be a last resort.
 - Employees and volunteers should engage in electronic and social media communication only with the consumer with whom they have a professional relationship and not with the consumer’s other family members.
- k. Employees and volunteers may choose or be required to include a supervisor or the organization in their direct communications with a consumer.
- l. Provide consumers and parents/guardians with information about how to respond to inappropriate communication from employees and volunteers. The responding procedure should include:
 - Contact information for the program administration.
 - An anonymous method for reporting concerns.

- m. Requests to discontinue – Parents/guardians may request in writing that a consumer not be contacted through any form of electronic communication or social media by the organization.

Electronic Communication and Social Media Code of Conduct

Employees, volunteers, and consumers participating in this organization's programs, events, and activities shall adhere to the following Social Media Code of Conduct:

1. Do not engage in behavior or comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, abusive, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
2. Do not engage in personal attacks, sexually oriented conversations, or discussions about sexual activity.
3. Be a positive role model by exhibiting professionalism in all interactions; portray an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
4. Only program-related messaging may be communicated electronically between employees and volunteers of the organization and consumers, and parents/guardians. Such communication should generally occur during standard business hours.
5. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from sending private messages to consumers and/or replying to private messages from a consumer. If a consumer attempts to privately communicate with an employee or volunteer electronically, their supervisor must be notified immediately.
6. Personal social networking profiles and/or blogs of employees and volunteers shall be private and not shared with consumers. Employees and volunteers with profiles on social networking sites shall not request to be "friends" with or follow consumers or approve friend or follow requests from consumers.
7. Employees and volunteers may not engage in electronic communication or social media contact with other family members or friends of consumers.
8. Never reveal sensitive or confidential information, including identifiable details or photos of a consumer without written consent from their parent or legal guardian.
9. Employees and volunteers may not post or share on their personal social media accounts any photographs or videos of consumers participating in the organization's programs.
10. Employees and volunteers may not post or share inappropriate photos or comments on photos of consumers.
11. Do not make pornography in any form available to consumers participating in the organization's programs, events, and activities or assist consumers in any way in gaining access to pornography.

12. Employees and volunteers may not create web pages on behalf of the organization unless they have prior approval to do so and may not misrepresent their work with the organization or the organization itself.
13. Employees and volunteers engaging in social media and online communication become a public figure associated with the organization and are responsible to help protect the organization and its consumers. Always act in a professional and constructive manner and use sound judgement before posting or sharing content.
14. Rather than personally defend the organization's reputation, employees and volunteers should notify their supervisor or an administrator of a negative comment or online representation or if any member of the media contacts them about any matter related to the organization.
15. Employees and volunteers must adhere to uniform standards of electronic communication and social media use as outlined in any applicable organizational policies and procedures.
16. This Code of Conduct and associated policies and procedures shall be provided to parents/guardians of consumers. It shall also be available on the organization's website for public view.
17. Consumers and Parents/guardians may request in writing that a consumer not be contacted through any form of electronic communication or social media by an employee or volunteer of the organization.

Acknowledgment of Electronic Communication and Social Media Code of Conduct

I have received a copy, read, and voluntarily agree to comply with this organization's Electronic Communication and Social Media Code of Conduct. I understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in my removal from this organization.

(Please Print)

Name _____

Program or Department: _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Parent/Guardian Name *(if applicable)* _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and everyone should be positive and uplifting. The Ashland Area YMCA staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to provide nurturing care to everyone. Staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of everyone.

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to consumers in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

Employees and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with consumers. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with consumers.

Our organization's policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions include but are not limited to:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes
- Encouragement
- Praise
- Strength-based conversations
- Self-disclosure as a supervised therapeutic tool by licensed clinicians, medical professionals, and pastoral counseling

Inappropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Name-calling
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving consumers in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers
- Secrets
- Cursing
- Off-color or sexual jokes
- Shaming, belittling
- Oversharing personal history
- Derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate consumers
- Derogatory remarks about the consumer or his/her family
- Compliments relating to physique or body development

Cooperation with Investigations

This organization takes every allegation of abuse or misconduct seriously and will fully cooperate with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse or misconduct. Employees and volunteers shall cooperate with any external investigation by outside authorities or internal investigation conducted by the organization or persons given investigative authority by the organization.

Cooperation with investigations includes, but is not limited to:

- Promptly acknowledging and responding to requests for information.
- Making oneself available for meetings with investigating officials.
- Providing full, accurate, and truthful information.
- Keeping confidential information learned or transmitted during the investigation, unless directed by legal authorities, and
- Preserving relevant information and documents.

An employee or volunteer's failure to cooperate with an investigation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from the organization.

Managing Interactions between Employees, Volunteers, and Consumers Outside the Organization

This organization strongly encourages employees and volunteers to refrain from outside contact with consumers. However, if interactions with consumers outside of regularly scheduled program activities are part of programming or otherwise unavoidable, this organization offers the following guidelines:

- Define whether and to what extent certain types of outside contact with consumers is permissible and create written parameters for managing these interactions
- Require forms of documentation of these outside contact interactions, such as:
 - Written parent/guardian approval (particularly for consumers that are minors - consider requiring the parent/guardian to sign a release-of-liability statement)
 - Supervisor/administrator notification or awareness
 - A defined purpose or rationale for that outside contact
 - A schedule of the interaction including times of engagement, consumer(s) involved, and location of event/activity
 - If anything, unusual occurred that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate behavior
- Define the acceptable level of contact after consumer participation in programming has ended and communicate those expectations to employees, volunteers, consumers, and parents/guardians. As examples:
 - Only the consumer can initiate sustained communication or contact with employees or volunteers after they leave or end their program participation, and preferably through organization-approved means of communication (i.e., organization email address or business phone line)
 - Consumer and parent/guardian must understand the contact is not affiliated with or represented by the employee or volunteer's professional role within the organization
- Consider other organizational policies governing interactions between employees, volunteers, and consumers (like physical contact, verbal interactions, electronic communications, managing one-on-one interactions)

Ashland Area YMCA Investigation Cooperation Statement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the company's policy regarding cooperation with investigations. I agree to fully cooperate with any internal or external investigations, including but not limited to providing accurate and complete information, participating in interviews, and submitting any relevant documents or evidence as requested.

I understand that failure to cooperate fully with any investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

By signing below, I confirm my commitment to adhere to this policy.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Name (Printed): _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Ashland Area YMCA Legal and Ethical Duty Statement

As a new employee or volunteer of the Ashland Area YMCA, it is imperative that you understand your legal and ethical obligations to maintain the safety and well-being of those we serve. You are required to report any suspected abuse or neglect immediately.

By signing this document, you acknowledge the following:

1. **Duty to Report:** I understand that I have a legal and ethical duty to report any suspected abuse or neglect. This includes any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or financial abuse or neglect that I become aware of in the course of my duties.
2. **Reporting Process:** I am aware of the procedures in place for reporting suspected abuse or neglect within the Ashland Area YMCA, and I commit to following these procedures without delay.
3. **Confidentiality:** I understand that all reports of suspected abuse or neglect will be handled with the utmost confidentiality, and I am committed to maintaining this confidentiality throughout the investigation process.
4. **Consequences of Non-Compliance:** I understand that failure to report suspected abuse or neglect may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service and may also result in legal consequences.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understand my duty to report suspected abuse or neglect and agree to comply with these requirements.

Employee/Volunteer Name: _____

Employee/Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of the Ashland Area YMCA's Safety Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at the Ashland Area YMCA.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by the Ashland Area YMCA.

[For Volunteers]

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this position for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that I am serving as a volunteer and that I may choose to end this service at any time. (If possible, I agree to provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy statement in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between the Ashland Area YMCA and me. If I apply to be a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for the hours I work.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of these policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the Ashland Area YMCA Safety Policies]