

# Safe Behaviours Policy

## (Safeguarding Children and Young People)

### Policy Statement

Y People commit to creating a child-safe culture and maintaining a child-safe environment. Y People will maintain the highest standards of professional conduct in their attitudes and behaviour toward children and young people, participants, colleagues and members of the community. Y People understand their objective is to empower children and young people by being positive role models.

### Introduction

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people in our care and ensuring that they feel safe and are safe. Accordingly, we wish to ensure that our Y People strive for the highest possible standards with respect to safeguarding children and young people from abuse. To that end we have developed this Safe Behaviours Policy to identify clear expectations for behaviour towards and in the presence of children and young people, and so prevent, behaviour that may be harmful to the children and young people in our care. It is important to remember that some under 18 year olds may also be Y Canberra Region Employees or Volunteers (Y People), therefore this policy must be applied to them also.

Y Safeguarding have developed our national Safe Behaviours that align with our values and safeguarding commitment. There are three posters for Y People to use including a child and teen friendly version. On the final page of this policy you will find a copy of this document.

### Y CANBERRA REGION – Safe Behaviours Policy (formerly Safeguarding Code of Conduct)

Ref #	Owner	Internal/External	Approved	Last Amended	Status
SG01	Safeguarding Team	Internal	August 2021	August 2021	Approved

## Policy

This Safe Behaviours Policy has been developed to protect children and young people engaged in Y Canberra Region Activities, Programs and Services, and has been formally approved and endorsed by the Y Canberra Region CEO.

You should read this Safe Behaviours Policy in conjunction with the specific requirements of your role as defined in your 'position description' statement. Our relevant policy and procedure documents, include:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2020
- Mandatory Reporting – Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations
- Reportable Conduct – Responding to Child Protection Allegations
- Applicable laws and legislation, including in relation to privacy, confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping.
- General community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour between adults and children.

As part of your commitment to observing this Safe Behaviours Policy you will be required to sign a Y Safeguarding - Safeguarding Children and Young People Commitment Statement. To extend upon this we also have an e-commitment which provides guidance around how you will interact with children and young people online.

We consider a failure to observe this Safe Behaviours Policy as misconduct, and will take appropriate disciplinary action against any offending Y People. 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 follow our Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct requirements, and will report to the police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

There may be exceptional situations where this Safe Behaviours Policy does 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 this Safe Behaviours Policy is breached.

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## Sexual misconduct

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children or young people participating in any Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs. Engaging in sexual behaviour while participating in our service is prohibited even if the young persons involved may be above the legal age of consent.

Sexual behaviour needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- 'contact behaviour', such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution
- 'non-contact behaviour', such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to digitally shared pornography or nudity.

## Positive Guidance (discipline)

We strive to ensure that children and young people participating in Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive experience for all participants. Children are encouraged to feel safe and be safe, and have positive relationships and friendships with their peers.

Wherever possible, children and young people are encouraged to 'have a say' (UN Rights of a Child – Article 12) and participate in all relevant organisational activities, especially on issues that are important to them. Children and young people are given information about their safe participation in organisational activities including access to information about child abuse prevention programs. (e.g. business cards, posters, curriculum planned experiences and community activities.)

However, there are times when Y People may be required to use appropriate techniques and positive behaviour guidance strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children, young people or Y People participating in Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs.
- Following steps on any Positive Behaviour Support Plans where required.

We require our Y People 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 Y People to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

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## Adhering to professional role boundaries

Y People 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 Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs.

All Y People:

- must not provide unauthorised transportation, for example, “giving a Child or Young Person a lift to or from the Service at which they attend or work at”.
- must not engage in activities with children or young people who are clients/ members of our organisation outside authorised Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs such as soliciting or accepting offers of any personal work from the participants of Y Canberra Region activities which is intended to be performed outside of the workplace, and; accepting or attending events outside of activities that the Child or Young person is participating or attending.
- must not engage with participants and/or family members on Social Media.
- must not provide their own private phone number and or details to children young people or family members.
- must not provide any form of support to a child or young person or their family, unrelated to our Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs, for example, providing babysitting, transporting, household cleaning or any other duties for the parent.
- must not seek contact with children or young people (or former participants) outside our Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs.
- must not accept an invitation to attend any private social function at the request of a child or young person who has participated, or is participating, in Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs – or at the request of their family.
- must not develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- must not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
- Must advise the People and Culture in writing on commencement, and during the course of employment of any pre-existing relationship before working at the Y Canberra Region (for example, friends of the family, children and young people coached in a sport or another activity and members of extended family)

If any of our Y People become aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that person's role, or beyond the scope of our organisation's usual service, they should at the earliest opportunity:

- refer the child or young person to an appropriate support agency or
- contact the child or young person's parent or guardian or
- seek advice from management

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## Supervision of Y People (Under 18 Years of Age)

An employee and volunteer under the age of 18 is still considered to be a child or young person for the purposes of this policy and other Safeguarding policies. However, for the protection and the safety of all people at the Y Canberra Region there may be times when their status is that of an employee and volunteer for the purposes of ratios or other safety.

In these scenarios, the under 18-year-old continues to be encompassed within the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policies. Therefore, two (2) fully vetted over 18-year-old Y people must be present when an under 18-year-old is either employed or a volunteer.

### Use of language and tone of voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should:

- provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them
- not be harmful to children – in this respect, avoid language that is:
  - discriminatory, racist or sexist
  - derogatory, belittling or negative, for example, by calling a child a ‘loser’ or telling them they are ‘too fat’
  - intended to threaten or frighten – profane or sexual.

### Promoting Equity and Diversity

All Y People must ensure that their approach and interactions with children and young people are sensitive, respectful and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities. Where our organisation has involvement with children who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), those who have a disability, LGBTQIA + and those unable to live at home; our Y People will promote their safety (including cultural safety), participation and empowerment.

### Supervision

Y People are responsible for supervising the children and young people to which our organisation provides Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs to ensure those participants:

- engage positively with Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs.
- behave appropriately toward one another.
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats, for example, not releasing a child from a program or service to a person other than the authorised parent or guardian unless formally authorised to do so in writing.

Our Y People 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 Y People.

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### Use of electronic and online communications

We prohibit all electronic communication between our service delivery Y People and the children and young people to whom we provide service at the Y Canberra Region.

### Giving gifts

The Manager of the Business unit is to authorise any gifts to children or young people involved in Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs, or to their families, including rewards, prizes, treats, or second-hand equipment.

### Photographs and Videos of children and young people

Under this Safe Behaviours Policy:

- Photographs may only be taken of children with the express written consent of the child's parent or guardian, granted through the Enrolment process for a Y Canberra Region program or activity.
- Devices used to take photographs and videos must be the Y Canberra Region property. Personal devices cannot be used at any time.
- Photographs of children and young people may only be used for the purposes listed in the consent
- Additionally, children and young people to whom we deliver service are only to be photographed while involved in Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs if:
  - Coordinator/Director/Manager/Executive Manager/CEO has granted prior and specific approval
  - the context is directly related to participation in Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs
  - the child is appropriately dressed and posed
  - the image is taken in the presence of other Y People
- 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 or guardian, 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.

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## Physical contact with children and young people

Any physical contact with children and young people must be appropriate to the delivery of our Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs such as assisting a child or young person to perform a physical activity correctly such as Basketball, Ed Gym, and Gymnastics based on the needs of the child or young person (such as to assist, or comfort a distressed young person, physical needs – toileting and/or lifting) rather than on the needs of our Y People.

Under no circumstances should Y Canberra Region People have contact with children or young people participating in our programs or services that:

- Involves touching:
  - Genitals
  - Buttocks
  - Breast area
- That is other than as part of delivering medical or allied health services.
- Would appear to a reasonable person observing 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 – for example, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other rough play.
- Is unnecessary – for example, assisting with toileting or medical assistance when a child does not need 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
  - Positive Behaviour Support plans are to be implemented for children and young people with known concerns requiring particular physical management
  - 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

## Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements

Bush Capital Lodge and Leumeah Lodge host overnight stays that are to occur only for school groups and Y programs where parents/ guardians of the children and young people consent.

Practices and behaviour by our Y People during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of Y Canberra Region Activities and Services at all times.

Standards of conduct that must be observed by our Y People 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.

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- 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 lodge 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 or room as a child or young person.
- The right for children to contact their parents/guardians, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay.
- Parents expecting that their children can, if they wish, make contact.

### **Change Room/Bathroom arrangements**

Y People are required to supervise children and young people in change rooms while balancing that requirement with a child or young person's right to privacy. In addition:

- Y People should avoid one-to-one situations with a child or young person in a change room area
- Y People are not permitted to use the change room/ bathroom area to, for example, undress, while children and young people are present
- Y People need to ensure adequate supervision in 'public' change rooms/bathrooms when they are used
- Y People need to provide the level of supervision required for preventing abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy
- A minimum of two Y People to enter change rooms/bathrooms when assisting participants (Y People to be of same gender where possible)

### **Uniform**

Our Y People should wear their uniform only while involved in delivering service or as required by our organisation, such as when representing our organisation at designated functions, to and from work.

You should have your WWVP or WWCC identification Card present in delivery of all Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs services.

### **Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs**

While on duty, Y People must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug
- use or be under the influence of alcohol
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children and young people participating in our Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs.

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Use of legal drugs other than alcohol is permitted, provided such use does not interfere with your ability to care for children involved in our service.

### Transporting children

Children are to be transported only in circumstances that are directly related to the formal delivery of our programs and services, for example, as part of an authorised excursion. Y People are not to provide casual lifts or use their own personal vehicles.

Children can be transported only with prior authorisation from our CEO 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
- the route to be followed, including any stops or side trips
- details of anyone who will be present during the journey other than our Y People who are involved in delivering Y Canberra Region Activities and Programs.

### Reporting obligations

All Y People are expected to make a report immediately (i.e. as soon as possible or before the end of the day) if:

- they become aware of any allegations of child abuse
- they have a concern for the safety of a child or young person in our services
- they notice any Y People member whose practice or behaviour is contrary to the expectations of behaviour set out in this Safe Behaviours Policy.

Please refer to the following policies for detailed guidance when making a report:

- YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2020
- Mandatory Reporting – Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations
- Reportable Conduct – Responding to Child Protection Allegations

### Communication

We communicate this Safe Behaviours Policy requirements to all our Y People in our Association. We involve our Y People in reviews of our Safe Behaviours Policy requirements. We communicate any significant alterations to our Safe Behaviours Policy requirements and resources to all Y People.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This document will be reviewed every three years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer. We retain records

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of each review undertaken. Such records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

An Internal review will be conducted based on a sample; this will be facilitated by the Australian Childhood Foundation and based on the Y Safeguarding Children and Young People Licensing Standards.

### Related Policies

- YMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2020
- Mandatory Reporting – Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations
- Reportable Conduct – Responding to Child Protection Allegations

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of Y Canberra Region as defined in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, and includes Board Directors.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer and Executive Managers	Implement policy and procedures across the organisation. Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures. Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement procedures.
People and Culture	Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders Support the coordination of the SCYP framework and implementation Provide training and advice in the application of policy
Safeguarding Team	Review and update the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Provide advice and guidance if Y People are placed on leave during investigation.
Managers Directors, Coordinators and Supervisors	Ensure policy is followed and implemented
Y People	Compliance with policy

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# Safe Behaviours



At the Y we expect all Y People to:

- **Listen** and **respond** to the views of children, young people and their families. Hear what they have to say, no matter how big or small and always take them seriously
- **Protect** children and young people, put their safety first and do not cause harm in any environment – this includes online
- **Respect** and **support** all children and young people regardless of their backgrounds, everyone should be made to feel welcome and included
- **Speak** using clear language that is appropriate to children and young people
- **Act** within the laws, regulations, policies and procedures and set a positive example for others
- **Be aware** of signs that may indicate abuse or harm to children and young people and notice if they aren't themselves or things don't seem right
- **Respond** appropriately to any suspected or disclosed abuse or harm to children and young people
- **Empower** children and young people - this includes allowing them to do personal things for themselves
- **Encourage** children and young people to be the best they can be without showing any favouritism
- **Be professional** and **respect the boundaries** of your role at the Y – Y People should not be left alone with a child or young person (this includes transportation) or have any contact outside the Y's programs or facility unless approved by their local Y Association

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**Y Safeguarding**  
Feel Safe, Be Safe

e: [safe@ymca.org.au](mailto:safe@ymca.org.au) w: [ymca.org.au/safe](http://ymca.org.au/safe)



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