

Community Athletic Association Youth Protection Guidelines

Website: <http://protectyouthsports.com/child-safety-training/>

Community Athletic Association (CAA) cares about the safety and welfare of all players, coaches, referees and League participants. Consequently, CAA has developed Youth Protection Guidelines designed to help ensure the safety and well-being of all league members, particularly our youth. The guidelines are aimed at eliminating any opportunities for abuse within our sports program. It is the responsibility of all league participants to ensure that these policies are followed.

It must be understood that our volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse, and should never attempt to do so, but they must take responsibility for promptly reporting any concerns to the YMCA

All coaches, referees and volunteers, who are working directly with children under the age of eighteen, are required to participate in, and adhere to, the Youth Protection Guidelines which includes:

1. Background checks on all prospective volunteers to evaluate the individual's suitability to perform in a responsible leadership capacity around youth.
2. Reading the YMCA volunteer guidelines.
3. Signing the Code of Conduct form and Protect Youth Sports form

Youth Protection Guidelines

The following guidelines and expectations have been established for persons serving in volunteer roles at the YMCA

1. Conduct yourself in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating behavior appropriate for a positive role model for youth.
2. Demonstrate exemplary behavior at all times when dealing with parents, coaches, assistant coaches, referees and other personnel involved in the sport.
3. Encourage good sportsmanship by the players during both practices and games.
4. Treat all players with respect and dignity. Promote respect for all the participants including the opposition and game officials.
5. Put the welfare and well-being of the players first, before winning. Kids first, winning second.
6. Create a positive environment for training and competition. Make sports enjoyable and promote fair play.
7. Encourage and support players. Provide constructive feedback. Take time to offer praise whenever the youth does anything praiseworthy. Focus on the positive.
8. **Where possible, avoid one-on-one situations with individual players. Meetings, discussions and drills should be conducted in view of other adults and/or youths.**
9. Obtain parental consent to transport young players to and from practices and games.
10. **While physical contact between an adult and a youth is not absolutely prohibited, as in high-fives when congratulating a youth for an accomplishment, adults must be very alert to the appropriateness of any physical contact. It is possible that it may be experienced by the youth or seen by others as inappropriate. For example, as in most social situations, you should avoid bear hugs and limit yourself to "shoulder-to-shoulder" hugs, maintaining space between your bodies.**
11. Respect privacy. All youth are entitled to personal privacy from adults, and when necessary or appropriate, from other youth as well. A health and safety concern is the only exception. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
12. Discipline used in youth programs should be constructive and reflect high values. Profanity and corporal punishment are never permitted.
13. Physical hazing, initiations, ridicule, inappropriate teasing or aggression are prohibited and may not be included as part of any youth activity.
14. Young players must not be left alone without guidance or supervision. Ensure that a child is not left alone at any time (such as waiting for his/her parents to pick them up after a practice or game).
15. Keep medical and emergency contact details for the players with you at all practices and games in the event of an emergency.

16. Comply with anti-discrimination laws. YMCA offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.
17. The use of illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products is prohibited at all YMCA practices and games.
18. Coaches should communicate all relevant league information to their teams. Details should include number, length and times of practices, games dates and other related League information.
19. If the event of an injury, immediately obtain or provide the appropriate medical assistance.
20. Respect, adhere to, and enforce the rules, policies, and guidelines established by YMCA including all state laws related to child abuse and substance abuse.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Youth protection policies and procedures address issues of child abuse. Child abuse is deliberate emotional, physical or sexual injury of a child by an adult or older child. Neglect is harm caused by withholding life's necessities: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education.

Signs of Abuse

Any abrupt change in behavior that is maintained for a week or longer is a sign that the child is experiencing stress that could stem from a variety of causes, including family disruption, illness, death of a pet, a move to a new neighborhood, or child abuse. Some of the possible specific signs for each kind of abuse are listed below:

Possible signs of Physical Abuse: Suspicious injuries that are different from those normally associated with childhood "wear and tear" such as burns, bruises, lacerations, abrasions and fractures.

Possible signs of Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse of others, extreme sensitivity to criticism, self-destructive behavior, appears to be a danger to others, continuous unwillingness or inability to form trusting relationships, chronic rebellion against authority, constant socially disruptive behavior, lagging physical development, and in severe cases habit disorders such as thumb sucking or rocking.

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse: Difficulty in walking; torn, stained, or bloody clothing; pain or itching in the genital area; bruises or bleeding in the body's private areas; sexually transmitted diseases; an age-inappropriate understanding of sex; reluctance to be left alone with a particular person; persistent and inappropriate sex play with peers; wearing excessive amounts of clothing; fear of touch; and abuse of animals.

Possible signs of Neglect: Child consistently shows up inappropriately or poorly dressed, shows obvious need of medical care, lacks personal hygiene, repeatedly borrows money for basic necessities, and is consistently overly hungry. If asked, the child will likely make excuses for his or her parent(s).

Your Responsibility

1. Show support and concern for any youth who might be affected
2. Do not jump to any conclusions. Act with all due diligence.
3. Ask the youth in indirect ways if "everything is all right." Be available for the child.
4. Consider stating your observations to the child's parents. Do not directly or indirectly accuse a suspected adult of child abuse.
5. Speak confidentially with other adult leaders who have contact with the child.
6. Handle the matter as discreetly as possible.
7. If necessary, remove the child from danger and obtain medical treatment as needed.
8. Report any League related concerns to the CAA President. The law requires only that you have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused.

Reporting Procedures

YMCA views the reporting of suspected child abuse as both a personal and ethical obligation. All League members should be alert to the physical and emotional state of all program participants.

1. If child abuse is suspected, report your reasonable suspicions to the league Director who will immediately investigate the allegations. During the investigation period, the accused individual will be suspended from all activities involving the supervision of children. The suspension will continue until the person is cleared or allegations are proven. If the allegations are proven correct, the individual will be removed from all YMCA activities.
2. When any YMCA member suspects child abuse or neglect occurring outside of the YMCA program, they are urged to report the situation to appropriate local authorities at the Department of Human Services and the YMCA.
3. All information regarding alleged child abuse will be maintained under strict confidentiality. Information will be communicated only on a "need-to-know" basis.

I adhere to all guidelines stated above:

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____