

THE BASICS OF A CODE OF CONDUCT

A code of conduct is a document that describes how staff, volunteers, and older youth will interact and conduct themselves with children.

Organizations should have a clear code of conduct for staff, volunteers, and older youth who serve children. A good code of conduct is balanced. It allows for interactions that are warm, encouraging, and appropriate; it clearly prohibits interactions that are dangerous, inappropriate, and harmful. It should contain descriptions that reflect values and the activities within the youth serving organization.

✓ ENCOURAGED INTERACTIONS

- Praise, encouragement, and acknowledgement
- Rewards available to all who achieve
- Asking permission to touch for necessary purposes
- Side hugs, handshakes and high fives
- Warmth and kindness
- Public social media alerts to groups of kids and parents
- Any touching or affection in youth serving organizations should be observable

✗ PROHIBITED INTERACTIONS

- Isolated one-on-one interactions
- Risqué jokes or profanity
- Favoritism, such as gift giving to an individual child
- Private interactions through social media, computer or handheld devices
- Touching of personal areas- face, mouth, legs, breasts, stomach, genitals or patting buttocks
- Corporal punishment of any kind
- Showing or involving youth in child sexual abuse material

DISTRIBUTION

The code of conduct should be posted throughout the environment, shared with parents and children, and be available on a website. This creates transparency. It helps parents and children cooperate with and support the guidelines that staff and volunteers must follow

REVIEWING THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Each Staff member, volunteer, and older youth should receive an in-person review of the code of conduct when they fill a youth serving role. They should review and sign the document annually.

For more information, visit us online at d2l.org/codeofconduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Portions of the sample are excerpted from YMCA of the USA's Code of Conduct.
A code of conduct should be customized to the needs, activities, and culture of your organization.

1. To protect (org name) staff, volunteers, and program participants, at no time during a (org name) program may a staff person or volunteer be alone with a single child where the staff person or volunteer cannot be observed by others.
2. Staff shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Staff and volunteers will make sure a restroom is not occupied before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. If staff or volunteers are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
4. Staff and volunteers will conduct and supervise private activities (diapering, putting on bathing suits, showering) in pairs. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff shall not abuse children or use corporal punishment of any kind. This includes physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, mental abuse, or neglect. Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and is cause for dismissal.
6. Staff and volunteers will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. A child's right to say "No" is to be encouraged and respected. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched in areas of the bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
7. Staff and volunteers will use appropriate touch including pats on the back or shoulder, side hugs, handshakes and high fives. Staff and volunteers will refrain from full frontal hugging, touching of personal areas, or patting of the buttocks.
8. Staff and volunteers will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism.
9. Staff and volunteers will not give gifts or special favors to individual children, or show preferential treatment to a child or group of children to the exclusion of others.
10. Staff and volunteers will not have private interactions through social media, computer or handheld devices with any children in the program.
11. Staff and volunteers will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual identity, or culture.
12. Staff and volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward others.
13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment is prohibited.
16. Staff may not be alone with children they meet in (org name) programs outside of (org name). This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to their home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrator approval.
17. Staff are not to transport children in their own vehicles.
18. Staff may not date program participants under the age of 18 years of age.
19. Under no circumstance should staff release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian [written parent authorization on file with (org name)].
20. Staff and volunteers are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the proper authorities and are required to read and sign all policies relating to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse and attend prevention training.

I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.

Employee Signature & Date

Supervisor Signature & Date