



## Our Commitment: A Child Safe Environment

The YMCA of the North Shore is committed to keeping children safe in our community. This means educating ourselves and our community about child abuse and how we can work together to prevent it. This document is designed to be an overview about our commitment to child safety, some information about child abuse and important resources and steps you can take to protect children.

### YMCA Child Safe Policies and Protocols

The YMCA of the North Shore has more than 1100 staff members and volunteers working with youth in a wide range of programs so to meet our commitment to keep kids safe we have enhanced:

- **Our Protocols: Screening**  
To keep children in our programs safe and provide multiple layers of protection, we screen our employees and volunteers through a comprehensive interview process, reference checks, criminal background record checks and fingerprinting.
- **Our Protocols: Training**  
Employees and volunteers complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program to make sure they understand the problem of abuse and know the warning signs to look for. Supervisors and managers complete additional training to further promote a child-safe environment. All staff and volunteers are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.
- **Our Policies: Interaction**  
Staff and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth, transporting youth, interacting with youth outside of program areas (including babysitting) and contacting youth over social media. If you observe a member of our staff or a volunteer violating these policies, please alert us.
- **Our Policies: Appropriate Care**  
Our staff are trained to engage age appropriately with children to support their physical and emotional development. Our Code of Conduct prohibits all areas of maltreatment including but not limited to the use of harsh language, physical punishment, inappropriate touch, shaming and withholding care.

### Information about Child Abuse

The following information can be triggering to some. Please take care as you review this information. It is important to know that everyone has a responsibility and plays a role in preventing abuse. Unfortunately, child abusers can come from all walks of life and could be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors or anyone who comes into contact with children. They can even be other youths. Keeping our eyes and ears open for the signs and responding appropriately can help prevent and stop abuse.

Below are the four types of child abuse that are recognized by most states:

1. **Emotional:** Threatening a child or using words that can hurt a child's feelings and self-esteem; withholding love and support from a child
2. **Physical:** Causing injuries to a child on purpose, such as bruises, burns, scars or broken bones
3. **Sexual:** Having sexual contact in any form with a child, including exposing, fondling, intercourse, pornography or internet solicitation
4. **Neglect:** Not providing children with enough food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene or supervision

## What Can You Do?

**KNOW**—“Know” our policies and protocols

**SEE**— Keep an Eye Out “See” if Rules are being broken

**RESPOND**—

- a. Interrupt the person breaking the protocol or policy
- b. Remind them of the protocol or policy
- c. Report the incident to a Supervisor
- d. Follow up if you see the same behaviors happening or don't feel/see it being addressed.

### Talk to Your Child

Have an open and honest discussion with your child on a routine basis about his or her experiences in our programs, school, sports and other activities. Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens to him or her.

### Drop In

Drop in on your child's programs. There's no need to provide advance notice. We welcome you to stop by and see how things are going.

### Trust Your Instincts

If something seems “strange”, don't wait. Please speak up and inform a staff member if you see:

- Unexplainable bruising or other physical markings
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- Abrupt changes in behavior-anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal or depression
- Fear of a certain person or place
- Discomfort with physical contact

### Special Attention

Listen and watch for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving. This may include favors, treats, gifts, rides, increasing affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, child care or other activities.

### Ask Questions

Every once in a while, ask your child these questions:

- What does safe mean to you? How do you know when you are safe?
- Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
- Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
- Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?
- Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like or you are not sure about?

## Important Resources for Reporting

If you suspect a child in our program is being treated inappropriately, please do not hesitate to report to our Y leadership or through the following:

### Reporting Suspected Abuse or Policy Violations at the YMCA

- Contact a member of YMCA leadership
- Utilize the YMCA Red Flag Reporting system at
  - [www.RedFlagReporting.com](http://www.RedFlagReporting.com) or call 1-877-647-3335
- Reach out to one of the other available reporting resources on the next page.

**TOGETHER WE CAN ENSURE WE KEEP KIDS SAFE!**

## OTHER REPORTING RESOURCES

Massachusetts Child at Risk Hotline  
1-800-792-5200

New Hampshire Child at Risk 24 Hour Reporting  
Bureau of Child Protection Services  
(603) 271-6562

Department of Children and Families (Cape Ann Area Office)  
45 Congress Street  
Salem, MA 01970  
1-978-825-3800

Department of Children and Families (Haverhill Office)  
3 Ferry St. 2nd Floor  
Bradford, MA 01835  
1-978-469-8800

Department of Early Education and Care  
360 Merrimack Street, Building 9, Third Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
1-978-681-9684  
[www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us)

New Hampshire Child Care Licensing Unit  
Department of Health & Human Services  
129 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
1-603-271-9025  
[www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/cclu/contact.htm](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/cclu/contact.htm)