



Child and Youth Protection Policy

Parent and Guardian Handbook

June 10, 2024

ymcaottawa.ca

Shine On  National
Capital
Region

Child and Youth Protection Policy

The YMCA of the National Capital Region recognizes its responsibility to promote safe practices and to protect children and youth from abuse and exploitation. The YMCA shall continue to instill a culture of shared accountability and responsibility across the Association for the protection of children and youth. All staff and volunteers will immediately refer any concerns that a child might be abused or at risk of harm to the appropriate child protection authority.

The Senior Executive Team, including the CEO and Board Chair, will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy annually, and adapting them whenever there is a significant change in the Association or if there are any legal changes.

To fulfill the above policy statement, the YMCA is committed to:

- Providing safe environments for children and youth
- Identifying any child who is suffering, or at risk to suffer harm
- Training staff to ensure that any concerns that a child who may be abused or at risk of harm are reported to Children’s Aid Society of Ottawa (CAS) or Valoris
- Reviewing and evaluating implementation of this policy annually and updated, if necessary



The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa | La Société de l'aide à l'enfance d'Ottawa



In pursuit of these aims, the YMCA will approve and review policies and procedures with intention of:

- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and youth and protect them from abuse while participating in Y activities/programs.
- Defining the Code of Conduct in service to safeguarding children and youth applicable to all staff and volunteers to outline employee expectations and behaviours.
- Defining the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging statement applicable to all children and youth in all programs to feel safe to have a voice and a sense of belonging.
- Implementing recruiting, training, supporting, and supervising staff and volunteers to adopt best practices to safeguard and protect these individuals from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Making policy readily available to staff and volunteers on an ongoing basis and includes relevant provincial legislation and reporting forms. Requiring staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the YMCA Child and Youth Protection Policy.
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations, complaints, or claims of abuse against staff or volunteers.
- Explaining the records retention process relating to allegations or complaints of abuse being retained indefinitely.

Parental Responsibilities - Duty to Report

Report immediately any suspicion of abuse to the appropriate protection agency

Ottawa: Children's Aid Society (CAS) - 613-747-7800

Prescott/Russell: Valoris - 1-800-675-6168

Phone calls are preferred to give detailed information regarding the child or caregiver in question, detailed concerns, your telephone number or email address.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

We are committed to promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging in all aspects of our Child and Youth Protection Policy to ensure that every child is treated with respect and dignity. We believe that enabling a child or youth to have a voice in matters that affect them helps foster a sense of belonging, which is fundamental to empowering children and youth to feel safe and be safe.

We recognize that children come from diverse families, including single-parent households, blended families, same-sex parents, adoptive families, foster families, and families with different cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. We acknowledge that family diversity is a strength and enriches children's lives. Therefore, we strive to create a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates family diversity and promotes positive relationships among children, families, and staff.

We recognize that children come from diverse backgrounds, with different experiences, cultures, beliefs, and abilities. We also acknowledge that some children may be at higher risk of harm due to various factors, such as socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. Therefore, we strive to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all children, regardless of their background.

We also recognize that our staff, volunteers, and partners play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Therefore, we are committed to providing ongoing training and support to our staff and volunteers to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to recognize and respond to child safeguarding concerns in an equitable, diverse, and inclusive manner.

The YMCA of the National Capital Region will ensure:

- Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity training in Onboarding
- Diversity and Inclusion Committee to review policies and practices
- Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion practices to ensure accessibility in child and youth programs i.e., Camp, HFA, and child care

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

The YMCA of the National Capital Region is committed to support YMCA mission critical work where children and youth are safe, families are strong, and communities are supported. As members of the YMCA employee community, we each hold the morale and ethical responsibility to uphold YMCA policies and procedures, both formal and informal, in service to safeguard all children and youth attending YMCA programs and services.

Child safeguarding refers to the standards upon which each YMCA employee and volunteer accepts the responsibility to proactively exercise measures to ensure that they do no harm to children, such that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the YMCA has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, result in timely and appropriate actions that include, reporting to their local child protection agency.

All staff and volunteers of the YMCA of the National Capital Region must acknowledge that they have read and understand the Code of Conduct. It is their responsibility to comply with the principles and standards outlined in this code and it is an ongoing condition of employment to participate in regular training, as determined by the YMCA, on the YMCA Child and Youth Protection Policy requirements and practices.