

## VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT, WAIVER & RELEASE

- Volunteers will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA of Lincoln, NE consistent with the mission of the YMCA. Volunteers must adhere to the YMCA Four Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.
- Volunteers must portray a positive role model by maintaining a positive attitude of respect, patience, encouragement, integrity, courtesy, and maturity.
- Volunteers should appear clean, neat, and appropriately dressed.
- Volunteers may not smoke or use tobacco products on YMCA property or during YMCA events and activities.
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on YMCA property or during YMCA events and activities is strictly prohibited.
- Accessing, displaying, producing, possessing, or distributing any form of pornography on the organization’s property or equipment or during any organization-associated activity is strictly prohibited.
- Volunteers must treat program participants of all races, religions, cultures, and backgrounds with the same respect and consideration.
- Volunteers are not authorized to photograph program participants. See Program Director for approval.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes/gestures, intimate displays of affection towards others, sharing intimate details of one’s personal life, offensive mannerisms (e.g., throwing things, flailing movements, foot stomping) and/or any other kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, staff, and other volunteers is prohibited.

### VOLUNTEERS WHO WORK WITH OR COME INTO CONTACT WITH YOUTH IN YMCA PROGRAMS:

- At no time during a YMCA program should a volunteer be alone with a child where they cannot be observed by others.
- Volunteers should never leave a child involved with their program unsupervised. Children must be supervised at all times by YMCA staff or approved volunteers.
- Volunteers are not to transport children involved in YMCA programs or program participants in their own vehicles. Exceptions may be made for volunteer coaches who have received permission from the child’s parent involved in the YMCA Youth Sports activity.
- Volunteers will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement, rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Volunteers should abstain from humiliating or frightening types of disciplinary actions.
  - Volunteers will refrain from any action that could be considered child abuse, including but not limited to: Physical Abuse: spanking, slapping, striking, intimidating
  - Verbal Abuse: humiliating, degrading, threatening
  - Sexual Abuse: inappropriate gesturing, touching, language
  - Mental Abuse: neglecting, shaming, cruelty, put downs
- The YMCA will not tolerate any behavior that is classified as bullying – aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power and strength. Bully can take on various forms, including physical, verbal, nonverbal/relational and cyberbullying. Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging bullying. Volunteers will follow the YMCA’s guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate physical and verbal interactions:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
○ Side hugs	○ Full-frontal hugs or kisses
○ Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs	○ Showing affection in isolated area, Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas
○ Pats on the shoulder or back	○ Lap sitting
○ Handshakes, high-fives and hand slapping	○ Wrestling
○ Verbal praise	○ Piggyback rides
○ Pats on the head when culturally appropriate	○ Tickling

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>○ Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or volunteer</li> <li>○ Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>○ Discipline through physical punishment</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</b>	<b>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Positive reinforcement</li> <li>○ Appropriate jokes</li> <li>○ Encouragement</li> <li>○ Praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name-calling</li> <li>○ Discussing sexual encounters or personal problems</li> <li>○ Secrets</li> <li>○ Cursing, off-color or sexual jokes, derogatory remarks</li> <li>○ Shaming or belittling</li> <li>○ Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth</li> <li>○ Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li> <li>○ Racially or ethnically insensitive jokes or comments; and insensitive comments or jokes regarding people with mental or physical disabilities, including but not limited to the use of slurs such as "he's retarded," or "what a retard," or "she's a cripple."</li> </ul>

- The YMCA strongly recommends that volunteers do not have contact with youth outside of program activities for which the volunteering is taking place. However, if outside contacts are unavoidable, it is recommended that the volunteer follow these guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate outside contact:

<b>Appropriate Outside Contact</b>	<b>Inappropriate Outside Contact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Taking groups of youth on an outing</li> <li>○ Attending sporting activities with groups of youth</li> <li>○ Attending functions at a youth's home, with parents present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Taking one youth on an outing without the parents' written permission</li> <li>○ Visiting one youth in the youth's home, without a parent present</li> <li>○ Entertaining one youth in the home of the volunteer</li> <li>○ A lone youth spending the night with the volunteer</li> </ul>

- The YMCA does not recommend private electronic communication between volunteers and youth, including the use of social networking websites. All communications between volunteers and youth should be transparent. The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

<b>Appropriate Electronic Communication</b>	<b>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youth ONLY when copying in the youth's parent</li> <li>○ Communicating through "organization group pages" on Facebook or other approved public forums</li> <li>○ "Private" profiles for volunteers which youth cannot access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments</li> <li>○ Sexually oriented conversations</li> <li>○ Private messages between volunteers with youth</li> <li>○ Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites</li> <li>○ Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</li> <li>○ "Friending" participants on social networking sites</li> </ul>

- **State law requires any person who suspects that a child has been physically or sexually abused or neglected to report it promptly to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and US Center for Safe Sport (Youth Sports programs only). The YMCA expects a volunteer to abide by this law if they suspect a child they come in contact with has been abused by anyone (parent, grandparent, coach, other youth, etc.).** The YMCA will assist volunteers with this process if they seek assistance from the Director responsible for the program they are volunteering with.
- The YMCA takes every suspicion or allegation of abuse seriously and we cooperate fully with authorities. Volunteers are also expected to cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by the YMCA or authorities.
- Volunteers give the YMCA permission to, at any time, conduct appropriate background and reference checks. Upon request, volunteers must agree to provide any information needed to run such checks.
- A volunteer is required to report any criminal offense to the YMCA. This report should be made prior to volunteering. If the criminal offense occurs while volunteering, a report to the YMCA should be made promptly, within 5 days of when the offense or prior to any additional volunteering, whichever comes first. This report should be made in writing to the YMCA's Branch Executive where volunteering and include the exact offense and the date of the offense. Failure to report these offenses as required will be considered misconduct and grounds for dismissal.
- The YMCA may discontinue an individual's volunteer status at any time for any reason including but not limited to following the guidelines set forth in the Volunteer Code of Conduct. This may include permanent exclusion from YMCA facilities/programs as the YMCA deems necessary.
- By agreeing to volunteer, you agree to follow all YMCA policies and guidelines, including but not limited to those outlined in the Volunteer Code of Conduct. If at any time you have concerns, complaints or grievances, please contact a Program or Executive Director at your volunteer site or contact Human Resources at 402-434-9204.
- Upon agreeing to volunteer you also (waiver and release):
  - 1) agree that you are voluntarily participating and assume all risks, known and unknown, associated with your presence in and/or use of YMCA facilities, equipment and premises, and your participation in its programs/activities, including, without limitation, any loss, damage to, or theft of personal property, and any personal injury or death; and
  - 2) agree to release and discharge the YMCA and its representatives, employees, volunteers, and agents, from any and all liability, for any and all losses, damages or expenses, and any claim, demand or suits therefore, on account of injury or death to person or property, arising from your presence on YMCA property, your use of its equipment and facilities, and/or your participation in YMCA programs/activities; and
  - 3) agree not to initiate or commence any claim, suit or cause of action against the YMCA and/or any of its representatives, employees, volunteers or agents, with respect to any losses, damages or expenses which are listed above and are the subject of this waiver and release, and further agree to indemnify and hold harmless said parties from any and all losses, damages or expenses arising out of or in any way connected with you or all individuals' presence on YMCA property, use of its equipment or facilities, and/or participation in its programs/activities.