



# Y YOUTH & TEEN SAFETY COMMITMENT

At the Y, youth and teen safety is our number one priority. All employees and volunteers of the YMCA (Y), regardless of role, work for a youth and teen serving association. Any individual under the age of 18 who is a program participant, member, volunteer, and/or Y employee are considered a youth or teen. The Y's Youth and Teen Safety Policy commitment promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth and teens, and those who work and volunteer with them.

## To keep all youth and teens safe at the Y, we ask employees and volunteers to:

- Always wear Y branded shirts or name tags (employees only).
- Respond and treat youth and teens equally, and with caring and respect.
- Present themselves as a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of inclusion, patience, courtesy, and maturity.
- Adhere to active supervision requirements: never leave a youth or teen unsupervised, never be alone with a youth or teen, practice the Y's "Rule of Three", and follow restroom supervision protocols
- Refrain from interactions with Y program participants under the age of 18 when they're outside of Y program activities (i.e. Coaching, Babysitting, and Tutoring is not permitted outside a Y-sanctioned activity).
- Never release a youth or teen to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian. They must follow the sign-in/sign-out procedures as appropriate to the applicable program and confirm authorized pickup via the program registration system.
- Never transport youth and teens who are Y program participants in their own vehicles. When transporting youth and teens in Y vehicles, two staff members must always be present ("Rule of Three").
- Refrain from contacting youth and teens through online forums, personal email, or social networking sites. For example, staff members may not "friend" or accept friend requests from youth and teen program participants.
- Use the "Rule of Three" when communicating with youth employees via text messaging and/or social media systems and they must always be work-related messages that include a supervisor-level staff member.
- Pass background and reference checks, agree to Code of Conduct and Y policies, and complete all mandatory trainings.

## The Y's requirements and protocols for responding to allegations of child abuse or neglect:

- All employees and high-access volunteers must attend required training in reporting child abuse/neglect and are considered mandated reporters. This means that when a youth or teen comes to employees and volunteers with a report of abuse or if an employee or volunteer suspects that a youth or teen is the victim of abuse, they must work with Y leadership to review the situation and determine appropriate next steps.
- Report any suspicions of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations:
  - to the staff at the Y location, and/or
  - by completing the reporting form on our website <https://ymcaatlanta.org/youthsafety>

Additional resources around youth safety can be found on our website at [www.ymcaatlanta.org/youthsafety](http://www.ymcaatlanta.org/youthsafety)

Resources for Members and Program Participants, such as member handbooks, can be found on our website at [www.ymcaatlanta.org](http://www.ymcaatlanta.org) and on the YMCA of the USA website at [Child Protection - YMCA](#)

## Other Resources:

- **Safe Place:** All Ys are designated as a Safe Place and provide access to immediate help and supportive resources for youth in need <https://www.nationalsafeplace.org>
- **DFCS / Bright from the Start:** <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/services/child-abuse-neglect> or call Childhelp 855-422-4453
- **International Human Trafficking Institute:** [www.ihtinstitute.org](http://www.ihtinstitute.org)