



YMCA of Greater New York

CHILD ABUSE OVERVIEW

Child abuse is damage to a child for which there is no “reasonable” explanation and includes non-accidental physical injury, neglect, sexual molestation and emotional abuse. When perpetrated by a parent, guardian or any other person acting in a custodial or supervisory position with the child (i.e. child care staff, coach, swim instructor, etc.), it is deemed child abuse; when committed by unrelated individuals or strangers, they are considered criminal offenses and should be reported to the police.

The YMCA of Greater New York is a state-mandated reporter of child abuse and is required to immediately report suspected abuse. A change to the New York State Law in October 2007 requires mandated reporters who have direct knowledge of any allegation(s) of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to personally make a report to the SCR (ACS) and then notify the person in charge of the institution or his/her designated agent that a report has been made.

All YMCA staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information and therefore should only discuss the incident with the persons named in No. 1 below. At any time that an employee or volunteer observes an act of child abuse by a parent, co-worker or volunteer, or notices any indicators of abuse, or learns of a violation of any YMCA policies dealing with child abuse, the following procedures must be followed.

Child Supervision Quick Reference

1. Never bring a child to their home
2. Never bring a child to your home
3. Never drive any of the children anywhere in your own vehicle or anyone else's
4. Do not hug or kiss the children
5. Do not swear or use derogatory terms in front of the children
6. Do not find yourself alone with any one child
7. With regard to using the bathroom:
 - Always escort a group of children to the bathroom, children should not go unescorted
 - Check the bathroom to be sure no one is inside
 - Count the number of stalls inside the bathroom
 - Station yourself at the doorway with the door open
 - Send one child to each stall, have the others line up outside
 - As they wash up and exit send another child in
 - Monitor the entire time with constant head counts
 - Do a headcount before leaving the bathroom area and returning to the program area

Child Abuse Incident Procedures

In the Event a Child Reports Abuse by a YMCA Employee

Step 1 – Incident Occurs

State mandated reporter must report to SCR (ACS).

Answer the following questions:

- ✓ Should the police be called?
- ✓ Should EMS be called?
- ✓ Is the victim in pain?
- ✓ In need of first aid?

Step 2 – Protect the Safety of the Victim

If the child is in obvious pain or in need of immediate medical attention, call 911. If possible, try to get the assistance of a professional rescuer (staff trained in First Aid and CPR)

Step 3 – Gather Facts/Make a Determination

Staff person receiving the information should notify their immediate supervisor, who will inform the branch Executive Director and VP of Youth & Family Services. The Executive Director will contact the Supervising VP of Operations who will, if needed, immediately contact the Chief Operating Officer.

Supervisor and the same staff person (as above) should meet with the child and have the child report what happened in his/her own words. Be sure to document what is being reported. If the facts are inconsistent or the story changes, continue to ask questions until the interviewer is clear about what happened. *Please note that staff should assume that children are telling the truth and take steps to protect their safety.*

Meet with the accused. Get his/her side of the story. If there is an indication that the allegation is true, senior staff will suspend the individual with pay pending the completion of the investigation of the incident. The investigation will be led by the Branch Executive Director, in consultation with his/her supervisor, the VP of Human Resources, and the VP of Youth & Family Services.

If there were witnesses, the Supervisor will ask them to document their observations of the incident in writing.

Step 4 – ACS Investigation

Staff should cooperate fully with the ACS investigation.

Step 5 – Report

The staff person documenting the incident shall complete an online incident report on YNet within 24 hours of the incident and submit it to both the branch and AO Risk Manager.

The supervisor will report the incident, via email to the VP of Human Resources and VP of Youth & Family Services, and the AO Risk Manager. If the incident occurred in a government-contracted program, the report should be emailed to the Senior Executive Director of Government Contracts and to the Agency's Program Manager.

Step 6 – Follow-up

ACS is the government agency that investigates allegations of suspected child abuse or maltreatment. If ACS does not call back by the end of the business day, staff will call them back. If ACS does not respond within two hours from the second call, the supervisor or his/her designee will call the local police precinct and follow their instructions.

If, ultimately, ACS and/or the police feel there is no need for follow-up, staff should not pursue it further but monitor the situation. If ACS does not follow up and the police feel there is no need to act further, the child should be released as normal.

Regarding parents of the child, the YMCA is not obligated to tell the parents about any reports made; ACS recommends the YMCA does not tell parents of a report of alleged sexual abuse. If you have any questions, please contact the VP of Youth & Family Services. The AO Risk Manager will report the incident to the insurer and follow up per their instructions.

Reinstatement of the volunteer or staff person will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the YMCA senior staff. All media inquiries are to be referred to the Communications Department at the AO.

Child Abuse Incident Procedures

In the Event a Child Reports Abuse from outside the YMCA

Step 1 – Incident Occurs

State mandated reporter must report to SCR (ACS)

Answer the following questions:

- ✓ Should the police be called?
- ✓ Should EMS be called?
- ✓ Is the victim in pain?
- ✓ In need of first aid?

Step 2 – Protect the Safety of the Victim

If the child is in obvious pain or in need of immediate medical attention, staff should call 911. If possible, they should try to get the assistance of a professional rescuer (staff trained in First Aid and CPR.)

Step 3 – Gather Facts/Make a Determination

Staff person receiving the information should notify their immediate supervisor, who will inform the branch Executive Director and VP of Youth & Family Services. The Executive Director will contact the supervising VP of Operations who will, if needed, immediately contact the Chief Operating Officer.

The supervisor and the same staff person (as above) should meet with the accuser and have the child report what happened in his/her own words. Staff must be sure to document what has been reported. If the report appears false (i.e., facts are inconsistent, story changes) staff should let the child know and continue to ask questions until all of the facts are clear. *Please note that staff should assume that children are telling the truth and take steps to protect their safety.*

The Executive Director or his/her designee will notify the child's family of the incident only after discussing the case with ACS. If the parent is the suspected abuser the notification may be delayed.

Step 4 – ACS Investigation

Staff should cooperate fully with the ACS investigation.

Step 5 – Report

The staff person investigating the incident shall complete an online incident report on YNet within 24 hours of the incident and submit it to both the branch and AO risk managers.

The supervisor will report the incident, via email to the VP of Youth & Family Services, the AO Risk Manager. If the incident occurred in a government-contracted program, the report should be emailed to the Senior Executive Director of Government Contracts and the Agency's Program Manager.

Step 6 – Follow-up

ACS is the government agency that investigates allegations of suspected child abuse or maltreatment. If ACS does not call back by the end of the business day, staff will call them back. If ACS does not respond within two hours from the second call, the supervisor or his/her designee will call the local police precinct and follow their instructions.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD STAFF BRING THE CHILD HOME OR PERSONALLY BRING THE CHILD TO THEIR HOME ALONE.

If, ultimately, ACS and/or the police feel there is no need for follow-up, staff should not pursue it further but monitor the situation. If ACS does not follow up and the police feel there is no need to act further, the child should be released as normal.

Regarding parents of the child, the YMCA is not obligated to tell the parents about any reports made; ACS recommends the YMCA does not tell parents of a report of alleged sexual abuse. If you have any questions, please contact the VP of Youth & Family Services.

The AO Risk Manager will report the incident to the insurer and follow up per their instructions.

All media inquiries are to be referred to the Communications Department at the AO.

Child Abuse Incident Procedures

In the Event a Child Reports Abuse by Another Child at YMCA

Step 1 – Incident Occurs

State mandated reporter must report to SCR (ACS)

Answer the following questions

- ✓ Should the police be called?
- ✓ Should EMS be called?
- ✓ Is the victim in pain?
- ✓ In need of first aid?

Step 2 – Protect the Safety of the Victim

If the child is in obvious pain or in need of immediate medical attention, staff should call 911. If possible, try to get the assistance of a professional rescuer (staff trained in First Aid and CPR.)

Step 3 – Gather Facts/Make a Determination

Staff person receiving the information should notify their immediate supervisor, who will inform the branch Executive Director and VP of Youth & Family Services. The Executive Director will contact the supervising VP of Operations who will, if needed, immediately contact the Chief Operating Officer.

The supervisor and the same staff person (as above) should meet with accuser and have the child report what happened in their own words. The testimony should be documented immediately. If the report appears false (i.e., facts are inconsistent, story changes) staff should continue to ask questions until the facts are clear enough to report them to the authorities. *Staff should always assume that children are telling the truth and take steps to protect their safety.*

If the incident warrants an investigation, the supervisor will notify the child's family. Senior staff will determine whether the child should be brought back to the program or should be removed, either temporarily or permanently from Y programs after the investigation is complete.

Step 4 – ACS Investigation

Staff should cooperate fully with the ACS investigation.

Step 5 – Report

The staff person investigating the incident shall complete an online incident report on YNet within 24 hours of the incident and submit it to both the branch and AO risk managers.

The supervisor will report the incident, via email to the VP's of Human Resources and Youth & Family Services, the AO Risk Manager, and the Director of Educational Services. If the incident occurred in a government-contracted program, the report should be emailed to the Senior Executive of Government Contracts and the Agency's Program Manager.

Step 6 – Follow-up

The Executive Director or his/her designee will notify the parents of the decision regarding the child's participation in Y programs.

The AO Risk Manager will report the incident to the insurer and follow up per their instructions.

All media inquiries are to be referred to the Communications Department at the AO.