

YMCA of Greater Cleveland Parent's Child Safety Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

On behalf of the YMCA of Greater Cleveland, thank you for choosing to enroll your child in a YMCA program. As a provider of child care, day camp, aquatics, youth sports, Y-guides and community youth development programming, the YMCA strives to effectively screen and train all staff and volunteers. Our quality programs enrich the lives of thousands of children each year, and the safety of every child is a priority for us.

The YMCA maintains a "Zero Tolerance for Abuse" philosophy. We make an active effort to prevent child abuse including but not limited to:

- Conducting criminal background checks, and staff and volunteer background checks, including but not limited to references from past employers, personal acquaintances, military, educational institutions, volunteer organizations, civic groups, character verifications, health and personal activities and involvements.
- Taking allegations or suspicions of child abuse seriously and reporting to the police and state agencies for investigations.
- Structuring and observing programs so that staff and volunteers meet or exceed state licensing standards of adult to child ratio, or meet or exceed American Camping Association guidelines. Conducting periodic formal and informal interviews/evaluations with children and parents regarding day-to-day experiences, encouraging reports of any event out of the ordinary.

To make sure your child remains safe outside of the YMCA supervision and to protect our staff members and volunteers, the YMCA of Greater Cleveland encourages your cooperation in the following areas:

1. It is a violation of YMCA policy for a YMCA employee or volunteers to baby-sit, host sleepovers, or spend time one-on-one with your child outside of the YMCA programs. **See attached Staff/Volunteer Code of Conduct.**
2. Please do not leave your child at a YMCA facility, school site or playing field unless YMCA staff members/volunteers are there to receive and supervise your child.
3. Talk to your child about the importance of telling you if someone does or says something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Emphasize that adults should not ask them to keep secrets from you.
4. Explain to your child that he/she has a basic right to privacy and that no one should touch them inappropriately or compel them to touch someone else inappropriately.
5. Instruct your child to always remain a part of the group. Stress safety in numbers.
6. Be concerned if your child suddenly becomes withdrawn or balks at attending certain activities or being around a particular person, and seek, gently, to find out why.
7. Report any actions by YMCA staff or volunteers, which you deem to be inappropriate to the Executive Director of your local YMCA branch. If you suspect abuse, please call the numbers below immediately.

For more information, please contact Amanda Showman, Director of Operations Child Care Services (216) 263-6871; ashowman@clevelandymca.org or Sue Smith (216) 263-6856; ssmith@clevelandymca.org

Thank you for your help in protecting children.