



Ridgewood YMCA

Volunteer Code of Conduct & Child Protection Policy



The Ridgewood YMCA has established the following Conduct Policy for all Ridgewood YMCA volunteers:

1. At all times staff/volunteers are required to adhere and comply with all written and stated policies of the Ridgewood YMCA. This includes the Mission and Character Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.
2. Although the Ridgewood YMCA does not discriminate or interfere with the lifestyle of its volunteers, it does require that in the performance of their volunteer position they will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA.
3. To have regular attendance (*i.e.*, to be at the branch when scheduled); to be on time for volunteering (*i.e.*, to be at his or her station, ready to begin volunteering, at the scheduled starting time); to be physically and mentally prepared for the task to be done; to put in a full day's volunteering; to recognize and respond positively to supervision; to learn the task at hand, as well as new volunteer positions; to modify volunteer habits and schedules (as required); to respond to the operational needs of the Ridgewood YMCA and the needs of its clients; and to cooperate with fellow volunteers and all others with whom volunteer related interactions occur.
4. Volunteers must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.
5. The YMCA reserves the right to review a volunteer's public My Space/Blog/Facebook, etc. sites. Volunteers may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of volunteer services, if the sites are deemed inappropriate and do not meet YMCA values.
6. The Ridgewood YMCA reserves the right to take any corrective action it deems appropriate where, in its opinion, a volunteer fails to adhere to the Standard of Conduct, or in any other way acts in contradiction of the interests of the Ridgewood YMCA or its clients, or interferes with the relationships between the Ridgewood YMCA and its clients, its employees, volunteers and the public-at-large. Corrective action will generally take the form of progressive discipline (*i.e.*, reprimand/suspension/termination of volunteer services). However, the seriousness of a volunteer's conduct -- as determined exclusively by Ridgewood YMCA -- will determine the severity of any disciplinary action. The YMCA maintains a "zero tolerance" policy for child abuse and/or substance abuse.

The following list identifies -- by way of examples, but not limitation -- a number of *typical* types of conduct for which the more severe penalties of suspension or discharge of volunteer services may be imposed by the Ridgewood YMCA:

- a. Falsification of volunteer application or other record.
- b. Violation of Ridgewood YMCA's policies prohibiting unauthorized disclosure of confidential and proprietary information and recruiting YMCA participants to another competitive business or activity.
- c. Theft and other forms of dishonesty, including (but not limited to) the unauthorized use of Ridgewood YMCA's time, material, equipment, or property.
- d. Inappropriate language and jokes, sarcasm, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of YMCA members, children or parents is prohibited.
- e. Any conduct that is deemed to be physically, emotionally, verbally or sexually abusive

- f. The carrying, use or threatening to use any weapon while volunteering or on the premises
- g. Discrimination against or harassment of another volunteer, staff member, supervisor or participant/member because of race, color, age, creed, sex, sexual preference, national origin or handicap.
- h. Violation of safety and security procedures.
- i. Obtaining a volunteer position through the use of false statements.
- j. Defaming a YMCA representative or a fellow volunteer or staff member.
- k. Insubordination in any form.
- l. Violation of Ridgewood YMCA's "zero tolerance" drug and alcohol policy when on-duty or interacting with YMCA participants.
- m. Use of threatening, intimidating, coercive, harassing, abusive, or vulgar language, or engaging in any actual or threatened inappropriate conduct directed toward any Ridgewood YMCA client, employee, or others with whom volunteer related interactions occur, regardless of where or when the use of such language or conduct occurs.
- n. Fighting, horseplay, practical jokes, or other disorderly conduct which either does, or has the potential to, result in property damage or injury to a Ridgewood YMCA volunteer, staff member or others.
- o. Sleeping on the job or otherwise neglecting job duties.
- p. Engaging in any other conduct which -- in Ridgewood YMCA's sole discretion -- has a detrimental effect on Ridgewood YMCA or its clients.

Your volunteer position with the YMCA may not involve working directly with children, but it is important to the YMCA that ALL volunteers are aware of the expectations and approved conduct for staff and volunteers who interact with youth. It is likely that you will encounter children and/or youth programs throughout your role at the YMCA, and as a YMCA staff/volunteer you are a crucial component of creating an abuse-free zone at the YMCA. Be aware of the following standards regarding conduct with children:

- 7. In order to protect the Ridgewood YMCA staff, volunteers and program participants, at no time, during a structured YMCA program may a volunteer be alone with a single child where others cannot observe them. As a volunteer supervises children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff/volunteers can see them.
- 8. Within a YMCA program, a volunteer shall never leave a child unsupervised. Volunteers will utilize face counts (formally head counts) attendance and the "rule of three" (*where a volunteer is one of the three*) during all transitions. During YMCA programs, all children must be supervised at all times in order to prevent sexual contact and aggression.
 - a. The "rule of three" specifies that there should always be at least three people present – i.e., one volunteer and two children or two staff/volunteers and one child, NOT three or more children unsupervised.
 - b. Resident camps will follow state guidelines, at minimum.
 - c. All staff/volunteers will complete a Child Abuse Prevention training (degree of training depending upon position/department) as required by the Ridgewood YMCA within the approved time period.
- 9. Parental permission must be given to take photos of YMCA participants. The use of personal cell phones to photograph YMCA participants is prohibited. Volunteers cannot use photographs taken at YMCA programs and/or of YMCA participants for any personal use. Such photographs may only be used by the YMCA for purposes directly related to the program or to the YMCA.

- 10.** Staff and volunteers should not have outside contact with children they meet in YMCA programs or at the YMCA and should never be alone with children they meet at the YMCA outside the YMCA. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, inviting children to your home and any contact via electronic means. Staff and volunteers are expected to notify the YMCA if a pre-existing relationship with a child or family exists.
- 11.** Volunteers are not allowed to contact any youth members or program participants for non-related YMCA communication via personal contacts, including, but not limited to email, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular/regular phone, social networking pages or other communication vehicles. Volunteers will not share their personal contact information with any children participating in YMCA programs.
- 12.** Any and all contact made by the YMCA shall be directed to a responsible adult and made ONLY via approved YMCA issued communication accounts, such as, but not limited to, phone/cell phone, YMCA email account, YMCA approved/sanctioned social networking page or web site.
- 13.** Restroom supervision for programs: When multiple children are in the bathroom or locker room, YMCA volunteers will be standing in the doorway so they can have at least auditory supervision of the children. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the volunteer (not being alone with a child). The same bathroom supervision standards apply to off-site locations as well.
- 14.** Volunteers will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say "no". Other than diapering or safe instructional methods, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- 15.** Volunteers are not allowed to transport children in their own vehicles.
- 16.** Volunteers will not give gifts (even small gifts), ask children to keep secrets, or show favoritism to certain children. All will abide by the YMCA's approved physical and verbal guidelines set forth for interactions with youth (regarding sitting on laps, frontal hugs, secrets, tickling, etc).
- 17.** Under no circumstances should volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the YMCA). Drop-off and pick-up procedures must always be followed and IDs must be verified.
- 18.** Volunteers may not date other volunteers, employees, members or program participants under the age of 18.
- 19.** Volunteers should not abuse children, including:
 - Physical abuse: strike, shake, slap
 - Verbal abuse: humiliate, degrade, threaten
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriate touch, exploitation, verbal exchange
 - Mental abuse: shaming, withholding love, cruelty
 - Neglect: withholding/forcing food, water, basic care, etc.
- 20.** Volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism.
- 21.** Volunteers will have age appropriate expectations and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline.
- 22.** Physical restraint (supportively holding a child in the least restrictive way) is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from imminent danger). All incidents must be immediately reported to your supervisor (always maintaining confidentiality) and documented.
- 23.** Volunteers should report any concerns about a child's physical condition, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. to the YMCA management. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in an open-ended, non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented and reported to the YMCA management.

24. Volunteers shall respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture or marital status.
25. Volunteers will be a positive role model for youth by exhibiting professionalism in all interactions, portray an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, maturity and always maintain confidentiality to children and families.
26. Volunteers are required to read and sign all policies related to preventing, recognizing, responding, and documenting and reporting child abuse and attend trainings on the subject, as instructed by a supervisor.
27. All YMCA volunteers are mandated by law to report all incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children under the age of 18. YMCA volunteers will report to their supervisor any indication of or warning signs concerning abuse involving a child, inappropriate behavior by a staff member/volunteer, AND any instances of volunteer/staff **violating this Code of Conduct**. YMCA volunteers who identify suspicious behavior or a violation of policy by a fellow volunteer/staff person must report the event to their supervisor or next/lateral chain of command and/or to the Human Resource Department immediately.
28. Volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
29. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.

I have read and understand the above as explained to me; I agree to abide by all of its conditions. I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Volunteer Name Printed