YMCA IRELAND
CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT (NI)

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SECTION 1: YMCA CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The YMCA is committed to taking every appropriate step to ensure the safety and well-being of the young people with whom it works, regardless of class, gender, race, or creed. This policy applies to all children and young people with whom the YMCA is involved regardless of age.

While the association recognises that the primary responsibility for the care of children and young people rests with parents and guardians, the community as a whole has responsibility for their well being and protecting them.

When working with young adults (aged 18+), please refer to the good practice guidelines within the **YMCA Guidelines for Working with Young Adults**.

All YMCA staff or volunteers must be aware of this policy and they must guarantee its implementation.

The policy states:

"All children and young people should enjoy YMCA facilities and activities without fear of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. The welfare of children using YMCA services is of paramount importance"

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm to children and young people and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. We are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures, and practice regularly. We will endeavour to safeguard children by

- Following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Reporting concerns to statutory agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately;
- Adopting safeguarding children guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers;
- Sharing information about safeguarding children and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- Ensuring safety procedures are adhered to.

YMCA Ireland is truly committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members, staff, and volunteers, who should at all times show, and be shown, respect and understanding regarding well-being, safety, and welfare.

Please refer to the **Welfare Reporting Form** to record and report child/adult protection or welfare concerns or allegations to the Designated Officer/Designated Liaison Person.

REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

YMCA Ireland will review this policy on an annual basis.

The Executive Committee will endorse any amendments to the Child Safeguarding policy on an annual basis at Executive Committee meetings.

Policy reviewed on:	**14 May 2025**
Approved by:	**Executive Committee**
Chairperson	**Jonny Currie**
Effective from	**14 May 2025**
For the attention of and action by:	**All staff and volunteers, management committees, children, young people and their parents/guardians**
Review due on:	**January 2026**

Designated Officers: YMCA Ireland DCPO DCPO (Greenhill YMCA) Deputy DCPO (Greenhill YMCA) DCPO (Newcastle YMCA) DCPO (Portadown YMCA) Deputy DCPO (Portadown YMCA)	 Andrea Spence Victoria Fyfe Mark Arthur Jim McDowell Matthew Matchett Megan Turkington
Safeguarding Vetting and Advice Panel:	Jade Irwin and the appropriate designated officer

SECTION 2: LEGAL & POLICY CONTEXT

This policy seeks to lay out the value base, procedures, and guidelines required for YMCA staff & volunteers to ensure effective child protection. It can and should be added to where circumstances and programmes require it e.g. residential centers.

For this document:

'General Secretary' refers to the person who heads the National Department or Association

'Worker' refers to a person (18 years or over) who is involved in the leadership of any organisation or group.

'D.C.P.O' refers to Designated Child Protection Officer

Child – when reference is made to child/children/young people, all children up to the age of 18 are included.

Parent – where reference is made to parent(s), carers are also included. It is assumed this is the person with parental responsibility for the child.

Parental Responsibility – the natural mother always has parental responsibility and the natural father has parental responsibility in the following circumstances:

- If married to the mother at the time of the birth;
- Has gained it through an agreement witnessed by a solicitor;
- Through a Parental Responsibility Order;
- Post 15 Post 2002, if the birth is jointly registered with the natural mother;
- Through re-registering the child's birth.

LEGISLATION

The key legislation upon which this policy is based is as follows:

- Children (N.I.) Order 1995
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (N.I.) Order 2003

- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults 2007
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- Domestic abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021
- Protection from Stalking Act (NI) 2022 - Factsheet

POLICY CONTEXT

- "Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" (Department of Health, August 2017

DEFINITION OF A CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON

A child is a child until they have reached their 18th birthday (Children NI Order 1995)

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy statement outlines YMCA Ireland's Child Safeguarding Policy, under the Children (NI) Order 1995 dealing with the care and protection of children and young people and is drafted with particular reference to the unique nature and structure of the organization.

YMCA Ireland recognizes that young people attend YMCA Programmes for enjoyment, social contact, and personal development. They should not suffer from abuse wherever or however it occurs.

Staff and volunteers who are selected, or appointed to work with children and young people in local Associations, should enjoy their involvement, be confident in the knowledge of existing clear guidelines and if required, have access to good support and advice.

The Appropriate Statutory Agencies are as follows:

1. GatewayTeams - Reporting child abuse and neglect | nidirect
2. Search Results in Child Protection Category
3. NSPCC - NSPCC Reporting Abuse

See APPENDIX 1 for further Statutory Contact Details

See APPENDIX 2 for YMCA Ireland Designated Contact Details

SECTION 3: PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

YMCA Ireland is committed to best practices in child safeguarding and to keeping children and young people safe from harm. In adhering to best practice, YMCA Ireland will comply with national

policy, current legislation and guidance.
The following is a summary of the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people.

All YMCAs working with children and young people should...

- Promote the general welfare, health, and personal development of children and protect them from harm of all kinds.

- Recognise that children have rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect.

- Raise awareness about what children are entitled to be protected from.

- Adopt and consistently apply a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.

- Plan an appropriate response procedure about accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

- Establish links with parents and other relevant organizations.

YMCA Ireland supports the Ethical Conduct of Youth Workers as highlighted in the **Ethical Code in Youth Work Document (APPENDIX 3)**

YMCA Ireland fully accepts young people's rights to self-protection and:

- *To be safe*
- *To protect their own bodies*
- *To say NO –*
- *To get help against bullies –*
- *To tell*
- *To be believed*
- *Not to keep secrets*

SECTION 4: SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

YMCA Ireland consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

1. There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers, and personnel/volunteer specification outlining key skills and abilities required
2. There is an open recruitment process
3. There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering.
4. There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions which are not protected, and investigations if any.
5. A consent form for an AccessNI check is completed, if required
6. There is an interview process suitable for the post/role and task.
7. Written references are sought (and followed up orally when necessary).

8. Where required, an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check is carried out.
9. The post is approved by management.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

When involving international volunteers, two references, as well as a police check from their town of origin, are required before service. If necessary, independent translations of these documents must be sought, as well as evidence confirming the volunteer's identity. International Volunteers are also required to complete the Declaration in Reference form and International Volunteers Declaration as well as undergo an Access NI Check.

All appointments should be sanctioned by the Chairperson of the National Executive Committee or National Secretary or in the case of locally managed centers, appointments should be sanctioned by the chair of the local standing committee or the General Secretary or equivalent staff member.

Notes should be taken and filed appropriately by the YMCA Recruitment and Staff management procedures about appointments, probation, and work review.

VETTING PROCEDURES

In Northern Ireland, for recruitment within the YMCA, a person deemed to hold a 'Regulated Position' will be vetted under the ACCESS NI registers and online vetting procedures. YMCA Ireland's Access NI procedures are outlined in the **YMCA Ireland Access NI Policy**.

As a registered body for ACCESS NI, YMCA Ireland follows all best practice policies and guidelines expected by ACCESS NI including the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders. Please see **YMCA Ireland Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy**.

Because of the nature of our work, youth work employees and volunteers and anyone employed or volunteering in a regulated position are vetted under enhanced disclosure procedures. Best practice guidelines for vetting as expected by Access NI and as set out in the **YMCA Ireland Access NI Policy.**

In the case of an Access NI Certificate being returned with sensitive information about criminal

The National Executive requires that ACCESS NI certificates are reissued if a current staff member takes on a substantive new position/role or if an unpaid volunteer takes on a paid staff position. Should a staff member or volunteer be absent for more than 6 months, an updated access NI certificate will again be required before recommencing volunteering or employment with YMCA Ireland.

DISCLOSURE and BARRING SERVICE (NI)

YMCA Ireland will follow any future guidelines issued by Access NI and the Disclosure and Barring Service about the future registration of any staff and volunteers who have access to young people.

Effective Management of Staff and Volunteers

YMCA Ireland recognises that the effective management of staff and volunteers will contribute to an organisation providing activities for children and young people safely. Good management will also require making sure that everyone in the organisation is clear about roles, responsibilities, and work plans, and ensuring they are adequately supported in carrying out their role.

There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, and supervision of YMCA staff and volunteers:

1. There is an induction process for staff and volunteers.

2. There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers

3. Relevant training is provided, appropriate to the post/role.

4. There is a robust structure and process for support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role.

5. There is an annual appraisal for staff and a review for volunteers.

6. Comprehensive written records are kept of: training completed, support and supervision, annual appraisals/reviews.and training of staff and volunteers.

INDUCTION

Each appointee will receive a copy of the **Child Safeguarding Policy**, confirming having read and understood the document, with Safeguarding training being provided as part of the induction process.

PROBATIONARY/TRIAL PERIOD

A probation period of no less than 6 months will apply to all new appointees to ensure their suitability for the post, following which the line manager should review their suitability for the post.

TRAINING

As part of its personnel policies YMCA Ireland is committed to ensuring that each staff member receives adequate training around Child Safeguarding issues.

This shall take place in three ways.

- Firstly, every new staff member will receive access to a copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy and will be informed of their responsibility to this. Within YMCA Ireland, this will be carried out by the Designated Child Protection Officer in that department.
- Secondly, YMCA Ireland will facilitate on an annual basis, recognised Child Safeguarding Training (including CSE Awareness). Refresher training will be offered to both YMCA Ireland staff as well as to Local Association Staff every 3 years.
- Thirdly, bespoke training will be provided around specific child protection needs as they arise, either as a result of incidents or identified staff needs.

SUPPORT, SUPERVISION, AND ANNUAL REVIEW

All staff and volunteers will have appropriate support structures in place. This will include regular supervision either as an individual or as part of a team, as well as an annual review of duties known as a work review or job appraisal (Please refer to the YMCA Ireland Employee Handbook, and Supervision Policy.). As part of this process staff will be allowed to voice any concerns they may have about child safeguarding issues.

Comprehensive, written records are kept of training completed; support and supervision; and annual appraisals/reviews.

Written records will be kept of all training completed by staff and volunteers, support and supervision meetings held, and all annual appraisals/reviews. Both parties should agree on the content of the records and each should have a copy. These records should be stored confidentially and in line with the organisation's data protection policy.

SECTION 5: REPORTING CONCERNS, DISCLOSURES AND ALLEGATIONS

The YMCA has clearly defined procedures for raising awareness of, responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse. It is imperative that all staff and volunteers implement the following procedures to report a concern, disclosure, or an allegation of child abuse.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

The following are considered forms of Child Abuse:
Physical - the deliberate physical injury to a child
Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional, and/or psychological needs
Emotional - persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
Sexual - involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual behaviours.

Within the youth work setting, staff and volunteers also need to be aware of the potential of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as a form of Sexual Abuse. CSE is when a person(s) exploits, coerces, and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some type of sexual activity in return for something the child needs. This takes into consideration online grooming, peer exploitation, and child sex trafficking. Abuse involving CSE should also be reported using the following guidelines.

What is a concern?
Inappropriate or unacceptable behavior or communication, favoritism or negligence are all examples of what may constitute a concern.

What is a disclosure?
A disclosure is when a child/young person tells someone that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may be physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, or bullying.

What is an allegation?
An allegation occurs when a child, parent, or other person reports specific unacceptable behavior where a child/young person has been harmed or abused in some way. Allegations must be reported to one of the organisation's Designated Child Protection officers.

Reporting Procedures
Any disclosure, allegation, or suspicion of abuse must be taken seriously, recorded, and reported to the DCPO who will decide the appropriate further action. The following Safeguarding Reporting Form may be used:

YMCA Ireland Safegaurding and Welfare Report form.docx

This is a template for internal purposes but when a formal referral is being made by the DCPO then the appropriate **UNOCINI** referral form must be used.

If any member of staff or volunteer is concerned or suspects that a child or young person has been abused it is important that evidence is given to the situation and followed up with immediate action.

In the first instance listen to the young person, collect relevant information, record and immediately inform the Designated member of staff.

Where staff or volunteers employed in YMCA Ireland have cause for concern regarding possible abuse or neglect, or if a child or young person has made a disclosure to them, the following action should be taken:

The member of staff concerned should

- Maintain detailed and dated written records of all available information relating to the cause for concern or the disclosure and any subsequent action.
- Immediately notify in person the DCPO. This notification is to be followed by written confirmation of the incident and details of all actions taken.
- The DCPO should then decide whether or not to report the incident to the Health and Social Services Gateway teams. This reporting may in the first instance be an informal inquiry to the appropriate Gateway Team asking for advice on a situation before a decision is made with regard to a formal UNOCINI report being submitted.
- In the case of a disclosure a UNOCINI Standard Reporting Form report should always be made to the appropriate Gateway Team.

Responding to incidents of alleged abuse is based upon clearly defined procedures within YMCA Ireland which must be followed.

Talking to parents/guardians about child protection or welfare concerns

Workers/volunteers may feel uncomfortable approaching a parent about a concern. You may have to discuss a concern about the welfare or protection of a child/young person or an issue that relates to the child/young person's developmental needs. The following best practice tips may be useful: Talking to parents/guardians about child protection or welfare concerns NI

ROLE OF DESIGNATED OFFICERS

Key responsibilities of the Designated Officers is to:

- Be responsible to the National Executive
- Have a responsibility to the Office Bearers to encourage Local Associations within the YMCA to comply with the standards and practices outlined in this document.
- Has responsibility for updating information on relevant issues and monitoring the effectiveness of the Child Safeguarding policy.
- Maintains a network of contacts within outside authorities such as local Gateway teams/police/fire authorities/education & library boards/health services, ascertaining contact names and phone numbers and seeking appropriate advice when necessary from the appropriate Gateway team
- Has responsibility for ensuring that all new workers receive a copy of and understand the

organisation's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure that appropriate training and support are provided.
- Receive and deal with all concerns of a child protection nature.
- Make formal reports if necessary
- Keep appropriate records and store them in a safe and confidential manner.
- Has a responsibility to carry out an Annual Audit of procedures.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

YMCA Ireland has a legal obligation to report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

- Any person who has applied for a regulated position when they are disqualified from doing so
- Any person whom they have removed from a regulated position following knowledge of their disqualification

Under their Duty of Care, YMCA Ireland also has an obligation to report any concerns, disclosures or allegations about any individual, child or young person which has been brought to their attention. The organization has a legal obligation to report any individual who leaves the YMCA or is asked to leave the YMCA as a result of concerns based on child protection issues.

Making a Protected Notice/Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing occurs when a staff member or volunteer raises a concern about misconduct or abusive practices by individuals and/or an organisation, where such practices cause harm or risk of harm. This will include situations where a staff member or volunteer's concerns are not acted upon by the Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer

SECTION 6: YMCA IRELAND CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Code of Behaviour/Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been drawn up in order to support YMCA Ireland **Staff and Volunteers** to inform their youth work and protect them, especially when working in isolation and vulnerable situations. The code of behaviour outlines the behaviour expected of all involved in the organisation.

Staff and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to Equal Opportunities and to young people

- By being honest with, and showing respect for young people.
- By respecting the confidentiality of the young person and by being clear and open when confidentiality cannot be maintained.
- By offering challenging and exciting experiences undertaken responsibly in a safe environment
- By recognising unacceptable behaviour and taking action, enables change to take place.

Staff and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to themselves and colleagues

- By being honest with, and showing respect for colleagues
- By respecting and keeping appropriate levels of confidentiality.
- By working and planning to the best of their ability within the constraints of their association,

or allocated responsibilities.
- By only working alone when immediate support is available and /or the Health & Safety of the Young People is at Risk.
- By offering support to colleagues and seeking it when necessary.

Staff and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to educating members, volunteers and staff

- By leading by example and setting good, positive role models:
- Not using language, which is racist, sectarian, sexist or abusive.
- Dressing appropriately to the occasion task, and company present.
- Not smoking, drinking alcohol, or using other illegal substances whilst on duty and working with young people.
- By creating an environment within which young people can feel safe and learn.
- By enthusiastically seizing all learning opportunities either programmed or otherwise.
- By fully implementing the aims and objectives of YMCA Ireland.

Recommendations

All staff and volunteers need to be aware of the impact that their behaviour has on young people. The trust required between adults and young people is fundamental to the work of the YMCA and should never be jeopardized.

In recognising the issues highlighted in the Code of Conduct, it is expected that all staff and volunteers will

- Respect everyone as an individual
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour
- Respect young people's rights to privacy
- Be available to listen and, if necessary, refer to more appropriate help
- Try to ensure that your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence and are acceptable within a relationship of Trust
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues
- Plan not to put yourself in a situation where you are alone with a child or young person
- Adhere to YMCA Ireland policies which can be found online on the Shared Policy Folder
- Be aware that you are accountable for your actions to the young people, their parents and YMCA Ireland.

Staff and volunteers should **never**:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone on car journeys no matter how short.
- Take children to their home.
- Engage in inappropriate physical contact
- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay – apart from structured sports activities.
- Engage in sexually provocative games.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- On residentials, sleep in a room with children, enter young people's bedrooms, or allow young people to enter staff bedrooms.

- Establish relationships with participants that may have sexual overtones
- Deliberately place yourself or others in a compromising situation.

Please note the YMCA expects staff and volunteers to act with sensitivity and self-control when working with all age groups. Those engaged in YMCA work need to recognise the issues of power and responsibility. It is YMCA practice that staff and volunteers do not misuse their role by taking advantage of participants of any age and establishing 'personal relationships'. The behaviour of all Staff, and Volunteers whilst on duty must, of course, be within the Law.

SANCTIONS

Should a staff member or volunteer be in breach of this Code of Conduct, YMCA Ireland's disciplinary procedures, as outlined in the Staff Handbook will be activated and followed.

COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS AND OTHERS

Use of Mobile Phones/Email:
It is not appropriate for staff to hold the personal mobile phone numbers of young people, unless for Health and Safety reasons, for example, when on residentials. After such residentials, these contact numbers must be removed from any mobile phone used for work purposes.

Parental permission must be given to communicate directly with a young person via mobile phone or email. Texting or emailing young people directly should always take the form of a group text/email to all of the group members; however, in circumstances where there may need to be an individual response, the communication must always be copied into another staff member and appropriate language should be used.

Sharing Photos and/or Videos
Parental permission must be sought before sharing photos or videos of young people on websites, social media networking sites, or PR Materials.
Youth workers are advised to pay particular attention to the use of cameras and picture mobile phones and in some cases, their use will not be permitted. Under no circumstances must photographs be taken without the consent of the group or on personal media/mobile devices.

Use of Social Media
With regard to the use of Social Media, YMCA Ireland has developed Social Media Guidelines that all staff and volunteers must adhere to when using social media as part of programme delivery or as a communication method with young people.

Physical Contact and Additional Needs
In circumstances where physical contact with a member is unavoidable, it must be predetermined and take place with the member's permission. This means that:

- The way it is going to be done must be thought through, explained, and understood.
- The member's permission must be obtained to allow the physical contact to be carried out in the agreed way.

NOTE: It may be sometimes necessary for staff and volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people in a local Association, particularly if they are young people with disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the young

person and the parents. In an emergency, parents should be fully informed.

In such circumstances, it is important that you ensure that all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Sharing Information

- Where child protection concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child.
- Sharing information regarding child protection concerns with the appropriate person is not a breach of confidentiality
- Parents/guardians and children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and or a report is being made unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.

Written Information sought from parents

It is essential that YMCA gain information relating to children in relation to membership and consent for activities, day trips, residentials, and emergency situations. Any consent that is provided must be from someone with parental responsibility and all YMCAs must inform those giving consent that it must be obtained from those with parental responsibility.

Parents should always be informed of the limits of confidentiality around their contact details and any information they provide to the YMCA.

Confidentiality

On the premise that the welfare of the child is paramount, considerations of confidentiality must not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm.

Staff, volunteers, and participants must be aware that there are circumstances in which confidentiality must be broken, specifically if it is suspected that abuse has occurred and an offense committed.

On receipt of both a verbal and a written report on suspected abuse, the Designated Child Protection Officer will refer to the appropriate authorities.

All staff and volunteers must be clear about the referral procedure.

Record Keeping

All staff and volunteers need to be aware of and follow the written procedures for keeping records such as:

- Attendance register
- Accident and incident books
- Consent forms
- Cause of concern forms

All records will be kept in compliance with the YMCA Ireland Data Protection policy and procedures.

Complaints and Grievances

All staff, volunteers, and participants must be aware of the organisation's complaints Procedures.

Everyone has a right to complain or report a grievance, regardless of whether they are children, parents, or staff/volunteers.

General Safety and Management of Activities
This Safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety policy which will outline in greater detail the processes and responsibilities with regard to Health and Safety matters in the organisation

General Safety
When an accident occurs, the danger must be removed immediately, the injured person treated, and the accident recorded on the agreed form.

- A phone should be accessible wherever a group meets. .
- Emergency telephone numbers should be displayed prominently.
- It is desirable that a trained First Aider be available within the staff team.
- Professional help should be sought if and when the trained First Aider cannot help or if further assistance is required when the First Aider can do no more.
- A first aid box should be provided at each location.
- The worker in charge of the group must inform the General Secretary and/or the D.C.P.O of any accidents at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The worker in charge of the group must ensure that the child's parent/guardian is immediately informed of the accident.
- The worker in charge of the group must record all details of accidents in the Accident Book/Form and also obtain witness statements within 24 hrs.
- Identify the cause of the incident and prevent reoccurrence.
- If an accident is serious, the D.C.P.O or the manager should inform the insurance company named in the Accident Book as soon as possible.

Including Children and Young People with Additional Needs
The following points should be considered in order to successfully include children with disabilities in your organisation:

- Work in partnership with the child, parents and any professionals to establish how the child can be included;
- Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child or young person into the scheme;
- Make reasonable adjustments – e.g. if your group has a requirement for children to be toilet trained, can this be waived in the case of a child who is not?; • Be interested in the child – build rapport;
- Gather some information about the child's impairment but remember you are working with a child/young person and not a condition;
- If the child/young person has a communication impairment, acquiring some key skills in the child/young person's communication method will be useful e.g. it is quite easy to learn some simple signs;
- Some disability specific training may be useful or required – e.g. on autism or epilepsy; • Risk assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children/young people with additional needs;
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child/young person has additional needs or behavioural problems;
- Written consent will be required if the child needs intimate care – e.g. help with toileting;
- Be open in explaining your policy of inclusion to all children/young people;
- Use existing policies if bullying occurs;
- Help parents of non-disabled children and young people understand your organisation's

commitment to inclusion.

Insurance
All children's and youth work activities should have professionally advised and adequate insurance cover to include key areas of:

- Personal Accident
- Public Liability
- Property and Contents Insurance
- Vehicle Insurance

It is the responsibility of the activity organizer and YMCA General Secretary to ensure that all relevant insurance policies are currently valid.

In the case of activities or events which are considered 'high risk', the worker should consult with the D.C.P.O and/or the YMCA General Secretary who will decide on the appropriateness and adequacy of the cover available.

No high-risk activity should be engaged in without first following the above procedure to ensure that the insurance cover provided is adequate.

Insurance cover for transportation of children/youths should be adhered to at all times

Premises
Staff and Volunteers can help ensure that activities and the environment that is being used for activities and programmes are safe, by identifying potential hazards and concerns

The premises used for all children's and youth work should be suitable and safe.

- Adequate provision of toileting facilities.
- Appropriate and adequate lighting. (Torches/night lights should be available for emergencies)
- Appropriate and adequate heating systems.
- Adequate provision of security and safety appliances.
- All fire exits and entrance and exit routes should be kept clear and marked for any situation.
- All keys to entrance/exit doors should be easily accessed for emergency situations.
- All fire alarms and appliances should be installed following professional advice and maintained as advised. Workers should be trained in their use.
- All work/meeting areas should be marked with an 'Assembly Point' in the case of an emergency.
- No heating/cooking items, electrical appliances, or naked flames other than those tested and fitted to the venue by a professional should be used.

It is the responsibility of the YMCA to maintain the upkeep of the premises to a safe and suitable standard. However, the worker in charge has a responsibility to ensure that the procedures outlined in the YMCA Ireland Health and Safety policy are fulfilled.

Competency of Leaders
It is vital that all staff involved in activities and programmes have adequate training. All staff, volunteers, and external trainers/facilitators will be expected to provide written documentation as proof of their required or necessary qualifications.

Safety of Equipment
All equipment used by a youth or children's group must be safe and suitable for use by the age range of the young people participating. Where a National Standard is applicable, the equipment should conform to it.
In addition

- All equipment should be thoroughly checked for defects before use.
- If there are defects the equipment should not be used.
- All defects must be reported to the activity organizer.
- All workers should be fully conversant with assembly and use of equipment.
- No child is to assist with the assembly of equipment.
- Use of all equipment must be monitored by a worker.
- Care should be taken that all paint, glue, felt tips, etc. are non-toxic.
- Safe storage should be provided for all equipment.

Supervision Ratios
The level of supervision must be adequate and decided upon depending on the nature and venue of the activity as well as the age range of the children involved. Therefore when deciding how many staff and volunteers are required to supervise, leaders must take into consideration a range of practical measures.

- The number of participants in the group.
- The nature of the site /venue.
- The activities to be undertaken – if the activity is one of a hazardous nature e.g. mountain climbing
- It is important that each supervisor knows the responsibilities that they are expected to bear.
- It is recommended that no journeys/visits should be undertaken without a minimum of two volunteers in attendance.
- It is for the leader in charge to exercise their professional judgment in deciding the level of supervision, taking into account the guidance as stated above.
- Where a party consists of children of both sexes, males and females supervision should be provided unless otherwise agreed.

Off–site Activities
All trips, camps, and residentials must be thoroughly planned and documented well in advance and relevant information made accessible to all parties involved. The following procedures must be followed:

- Parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the arrangements for any trip to be taken outside of the normal venue.
- The worker in charge must obtain from parents their written consent to the participation of their child and a completed copy of the health form prior to departure.
- A copy of the trip information form should be forwarded to the D.C.P.O and/or the General Secretary.
- Copies of the consent and health forms must be forwarded to the D.C.P.O or held in the Local Association by an appropriate contact person.
- A detailed itinerary of the trip should be given to all the parents/guardians, workers, and the D.C.P.O and/or the General Secretary at least 2 weeks in advance of departure (a pre-trip information night for all concerned would be an appropriate opportunity to present this information).

Residentials
When on residential the following recommendations should be adhered to alongside the procedures and recommendations outlined throughout this policy

- Each residential should have at least two leaders-in-charge, preferably 1 male and 1 female with appropriate ratios having been considered as outlined previously.
- Leaders must ensure that males and females have different sleeping rooms. In exceptional circumstances, workers must be sensitive to the needs of individuals and monitor the situation carefully.
- Young people participating should have their privacy respected by other participants e.g. rooms, changing rooms, showers, etc.
- Staff members (workers) must always use common sense and sensitivity and not leave themselves open to allegations of sexual misconduct. For example:
    - Do not enter rooms without permission
    - Do not enter changing rooms without permission
    - Do not enter showers without permission.
- Always knock or call out and ask permission to enter areas where people may be changing.
- Never put yourself in a position of being alone with vulnerable individuals e.g. cars, closed rooms, or out of public view.
- Staff members (workers) should, when possible, ask another staff member (worker) to accompany them when entering rooms, etc.
- Staff members or volunteers should not sleep alone in dorms with young people.
- When changing or when with a group that is changing - be discreet.
- If behaviour by one of the young people causes offense or is deemed inappropriate, it is the leaders' responsibility to discuss and deal with this as soon as possible.
- Parental permission slips for those under 18's and medical forms must be completed by all young people attending residentials.
- Staff members and volunteers should use common sense and sensitivity around the areas of touching, hugging, etc.
- All staff and volunteers on residentials will have undergone routine vetting.
- Prior to each residential, staff should meet as a group to discuss the implementation of these guidelines on the residential.

Review
This will include an Annual review and checklist of Safeguarding, as well as an action plan for the year ahead.

Policies, procedures and Guidelines listed and are available upon request.

Implementation: We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the policies, procedures and guidelines that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed at the National Executive meeting on an annual basis, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

APPENDIX 1: USEFUL CONTACTS (NI)

NSPCC

Helpline numbers and webpage - **Dedicated contact numbers**

Gateway Teams

Gateway teams deal with child protection referrals throughout NI. They replace the previous arrangements for making referrals to Social Services in relation to Family and Child Care matters.

Northern Trust - **Northern Trust Gateway**

Gateway Service (0300 1234 333) gives options to contact the appropriate Team.

Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service: 028 9446 8833

Northern Sector: (Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush & Coleraine)
Coleraine Child Care Team,7a Castlerock Road,**Coleraine**,BT51 3HP
Email: northern.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 7032 5462

Central Sector: (Ballymena, Magherafelt & Cookstown)
Unit 5A Toome Business Park,Hillhead Road,**Toomebridge** BT41 3SF
email: central.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 7965 1020

South Eastern Sector: (Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey & Larne)
The Beeches, 76 Avondale Drive **Ballyclare** BT39 9DB
Email: southeastern.gateway@northerntrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 9334 0165

Southern Trust - Southern Trust Gateway website

Central Phone number- 028 3741 5285 or 0800 783 7745

Craigavon and Banbridge Gateway Team
Brownlow Health and Social Services Centre, 1 Legahory , **Craigavon** BT65 5BE
028 38343011

Armagh and Dungannon Gateway Team
E Floor, South Tyrone Hospital, Carland Road, **Dungannon** Co. Tyrone BT71 4AU
028 87723101

Newry and Mourne Gateway Team
Dromalane House, Dromalane Road, **Newry,** BT35 8AP
028 30825000 Option 1

South Eastern Trust - SE Trust Gateway website

One number: 0300 1000 300 or Out of hours number: 028 90565444

Or in person by calling into any of the three Gateway Teams based at:

Greater Lisburn Gateway Team
Stewartstown Road Health Centre (Dunmurry & Greater Lisburn)
212 Stewartstown Road, Dunmurry
Belfast BT17 0FB

Down Gateway Team
Children's services
81 Market Street, Downpatrick BT30 6LZ

North Down Gateway Team
Family Resource Centre, James Street, Newtownards, BT23 4EP

Western Trust - Western Trust Gateway website

The Gateway Team can be contacted for help in the Derry, Limavady, Strabane, Omagh and Enniskillen areas by calling the following centralised number: 028 7131 4090

The Gateway team have three bases:

- Derry Office - Whitehill, 106 Irish Street, Derry - Londonderry BT47 2ND
- Omagh Office -Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT79 0NS
- Enniskillen Office - 2 Coleshill Road, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 7HG

Belfast Trust - **Belfast Trust Gateway Website**

Telephone:: 028 90507000 or Out of hours number: 028 95049999

In person to Duty Social Worker at:
Gateway Services
110 Saintfield Road
Belfast
BT8 6HD

APPENDIX 2: DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION TEAM CONTACT DETAILS YMCA IRELAND (NI)

In the event of disclosure or suspecting child abuse YMCA Ireland staff and volunteers must:

- Make a clear Confidential note (without showing it to others) of the incident or concerns noting the date and time on the **Safeguarding and Welfare Report form**.
- The above Safeguarding and Welfare reporting form must then be forwarded immediately to the appropriate Designated person
- Take no further action or discuss the situation with anyone else.

YMCA Designated Officers Contact Details (NI)

LOCATION	ROLE	NAME	EMAIL	MOBILE
YMCA Ireland	DCPO	Andrea Spence	andrea.spence@ymca-ireland.net	07498281166
YMCA Ireland	DCPO	Jade Irwin (Liaison to Executive)	jade.irwin@hotmail.com	07896694548
Greenhill	DCPO Deputy DCPO	Victoria Fyfe Mark Arthur	victoria.fyfe@greenhill-ymca.org mark.arthur@greenhill-ymca.org	02843723172 02843723172
Portadown	DCPO Deputy DCPO	Matthew Matchett Megan Turkington	matthew.matchett@ymca-ireland.net megan.turkington@ymca-ireland.net	028 38332321 028 38332321
Newcastle	DCPO	Jim McDowell	jim.mcdowell@ymca-ireland.net	07740300121

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CONDUCT IN YOUTH WORK TAKEN FROM THE NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

1. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF YOUTH WORK

1.1. The purpose of youth work is to facilitate and support young people's growth through dependence to interdependence, by encouraging their personal and social development and enabling them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society.

1.2. Youth work is informed by a set of beliefs which include a commitment to equal opportunity, to young people as partners in learning and decision-making and to helping young people to develop their own sets of values. We recognise youth work by these qualities (based on Davies 1963):

- it offers its services in places where young people can choose to participate;
- it encourages young people to be critical in their responses to their own experience and to the world around them;
- it works with young people to help them make informed choices about their personal responsibilities within their communities;
- it works alongside school and college-based education to encourage young people to achieve and fulfil their potential; and
- it works with other agencies to encourage society to be responsive to young people's needs.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS IN YOUTH WORK

2.1. Ethics is generally regarded as being about the norms of behaviour people follow regarding what is good or bad, right or wrong. Usually ethical issues are about matters of human (and animal) wellbeing or welfare.

2.2. Ethics in the context of professional practice is about:

- developing the ability of practitioners to see the ethical dimensions of problems, to reflect on issues, to take difficult decisions and to be able to justify these decisions;
- acting with integrity according to one's responsibilities and duties (this may entail behaving in accordance with professional principles, guidelines or agency rules).

2.3. The behaviour of everyone involved in youth work and youth services —political and managerial leaders, managers, trustees, employees, volunteers and participants — must be of a standard that makes it the basis of:

- the effective delivery of services;
- modelling appropriate behaviour to young people;
- trust between workers and young people;
- trust between organisations and services and parents and young people;
- a willingness of various parties to commit resources; and
- a belief in the capacity of youth work to help young people themselves learn to make moral decisions and take effective action.

2.4. This requires all involved to be capable of appropriate thinking about ethics in practical situations.

3 PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

3.1. The statement in section 5 outlines the basic principles underpinning the work with the aim of guiding the conduct of youth workers and managers and to serve as a focus for debate and discussion about ethical issues in practice. It is not a rulebook prescribing exactly what youth workers should do in every situation. This would be impossible to achieve, due to the variety of practice settings, age groups and types of work Rather the statement is intended to be used as a starting point for outlining the broad principles of ethical conduct; raising awareness of the multiple responsibilities of youth workers (paid and voluntary) and their managers and the potential for conflict or at least tension between these responsibilities; and for encouraging and stimulating ethical reflection and debate.

3.2. The first part of the statement covers 'ethical principles' which include the way that youth workers should treat the young people they work with (for example, with respect for their rights to make choices, without discrimination) and the kinds of values that youth workers are working towards (such a just society).The second part of the statement covers 'professional principles' which relate more particularly to how the youth worker should act in the role of a practitioner with certain types of responsibility and accountability. The practice principles listed under each general principle are more specific, suggesting how youth workers would apply the broader ethical and professional principles. They are not exhaustive.

NOTE: the term 'youth worker' in this statement is intended to include those who work in youth work directly with young people and people who manage those working directly with young people. The phrase 'professional' is to denote acceptance of a particular role within the 'profession' of youth work, not necessarily the employment status of the individual who may well, for example, be a volunteer.

4. SUMMARY OF THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR YOUTH WORK

Ethical principles - Youth workers have a commitment to:

1. **Treat young people with** respect, valuing each individual and avoiding **negative discrimination.**

2. **Respect** and **promote young people's** rights **to** make **their own decisions** and **choices, unless** the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or others are seriously threatened.

3. **Promote and ensure the welfare** and **safety of young people, while** permitting them to learn through undertaking challenging educational activities.

4. Contribute towards **the promotion of social justice for young people** and in society generall~ through encouraging respect for difference and diversity and challenging discrimination.

Professional principles - Youth workers have a commitment to:

5. **Recognise the boundaries between personal and professional life** and be aware of the need to balance a caring and supportive relationship with young people with appropriate

professional distance.

6. **Recognise the need to be accountable** to young people, their parents or guardians, colleagues, funders, wider society and others with a relevant interest in the work, and that these accountabilities may be in conflict.

7. **Develop and maintain the required skills and competence** to do the job.

8. Work for conditions in employing agencies where these principles are discussed, evaluated and upheld.

5. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR YOUTH WORK

5.1. Ethical Principles - Youth workers have a commitment to:

5.1.1. Treat young people with respect

Practice principles would include:

- valuing each young person and acting in a way that does not exploit or negatively discriminate against certain young people on irrelevant grounds such as 'race', religion, gender, ability or sexual orientation; and
- explaining the nature and limits of confidentiality and recognising that confidential information clearly entrusted for one purpose should not be used for another purpose without the agreement of the young person — except where there is clear evidence of danger to the young person, worker, other persons or the community.

5.1.2. Respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices

Practice principles would include:

- raising young people's awareness of the range of decisions and choices open to them and offering opportunities for discussion and debate on the implications of particular choices; offering learning opportunities for young people to develop their capacities and confidence in making decisions and choices through participation in decision-making bodies and working in partnership with youth workers in planning activities; and
- respecting young people's own choices and views, unless the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or other people are seriously threatened.

5.1.3. Promote and ensure the welfare and safety of young people

Practice principles would include:

- taking responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of work and activities involving young people;
- ensuring their own competence, and that of employees and volunteers for whom they are responsible, to undertake areas of work and activities;
- warning the appropriate authority, and taking action, if there are thought to be risks or dangers attached to the work;
- drawing to the attention of their employer and, if this proves ineffective, bringing to the

attention of those ip power or, finally. the general public, ways in which activities or policies of employers may be seriously harmful to the interests and safety of young people; and

- being aware of the need to strike a balance between avoiding unnecessary risk and permitting and encouraging young people to partake in challenging educational activities.

5.1.4. Contribute towards the promotion of social justice for young people and in society generally

Practice principles would include:

- promoting just and fair behaviour, and challenging discriminatory actions and attitudes on the part of young people. colleagues and others;
- encouraging young people to respect and value difference and diversity; particularly in the context of a multi-cultural society;
- drawing attention to unjust policies and practices and actively seeking to change them;
- promoting the participation of all young people, and particularly those who have traditionally been discriminated against, in youth work, in public structures and in society generally; and
- encouraging young people and others to work together collectively on issues of common concern.

5.2. Professlonal principles - Youth workers have a commitment to:

5.2.1. Recognlse the boundaries between personal and professional life

Practice principles would include:

- recognising the tensions between developing supportive and caring relationships with young people and the need to maintain an appropriate professional distance;
- taking care not to develop close personal, particularly sexual, relationships with the young people they are working with as this may be against the law, exploitative or result in preferential treatment. If such a relationship does develop, the youth worker concerned should report this to the line manager to decide on appropriate action;
- not engaging in work-related activities for personal gain, or accepting gifts or favours from young people or local people that may compromise the professional integrity of the work; and
- taking care that behaviour outside work does not undermine the confidence of young people and the public in youth work

5.2.2. Recognise the need to be accountable to young people, their parents or guardians, employers, funders, wider society and other people with a relevant interest in the work

Practice principles would include:

- recognising that accountabilities to different groups may conflict and taking responsibility for seeking appropriate advice and making decisions in cases of conflict
- being open and honest in all dealings with young people, enabling them to access information to make choices and decisions in their lives generally and in relation to participation in youth work activities;
- ensuring that actions as a youth worker are in accordance with the law
- ensuring that resources under youth workers' control are distributed fairly, according to criteria for which youth workers are accountable, and that work undertaken is as effective as possible;
- reporting to the appropriate authority any suspicions relating to a young person being at risk of serious harm or danger, particularly of sexual or physical abuse; and

- actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and professionals from other agencies.

5.2.3. Develop and maintain the skills and competence required to do the job

Practice principles would include:
- only undertaking work or taking on responsibilities for which workers have the necessary skills, knowledge and support;
- seeking feedback from service users and colleagues on the quality of their work and constantly updating skills and knowledge; and recognising when new skills and knowledge are required and seeking relevant education and training.

5.2.4. Foster and engage **in ethical debate In youth work**

Practice principles would include:
- developing awareness of youth workers' own personal values and how these relate to the ethical principles of youth work as stated in section 5.1;
- re-examining these principles, engaging in reflection and discussion with colleagues and contributing to the learning of the organisation where they work;
- developing awareness of the potential for conflict between personal and professional values, as well as between the interests and rights of different individuals and between the ethical principles in this Statement; and
- recognising the importance of continuing reflection and debate and seeing this statement of ethical principles as a working document which should be constantly under discussion.

5.2.5. Work for conditions in employing agencies where these principles are discussed, evaluated and upheld

Practice principles would include:
- ensuring that colleagues, employers and young people are aware of the statement of principles;
- being prepared to discuss difficult ethical issues in the light of these principles and contributing towards interpreting and elaborating on the practice principles; and
- being prepared to challenge colleagues or employing agencies whose actions or policies are contrary to the principles in this statement.