

Safeguarding Staff Behaviour Policy

This document provides a guide for adults working and volunteering at

YMCA Brunel Group Early Years Settings

regarding acceptable and desirable conduct to safeguard children.

Policy agreed:	Jan 2026		
Policy published:	Jan 2026		
Next review:	Jan 2027		
Key Personnel			
Role	Name	Tel.	Email
Manger	On Site		
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	On Site		
Deputy DSL(s) (DDSL)	On Site		
Designated governor for safeguarding	David Pendle Chair	07850 623574	davidpendle81@gmail.com
Director of Children's Services	Julia Honeywell	07876 598507	juliahoneywell@ymca-bg.org
The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025			
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):	0300 456 0108		
Children's Social Care referrals:			
Integrated Front Door (IFD):	0300 456 0108		
Out of hours:	0300 456 0100		
<p>If you believe a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or injury, you must call the police on 999.</p>			

Introduction

YMCA Brunel is committed to providing positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our children, underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behavior to maintain confidence and respect of the public and colleagues.

The governors will make sure that this policy reflects national and local requirements to protect and support the children and adults in our school.

We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- The procedures of Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP)

This policy:

- is based on the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (2022).
- The aims are to provide a guide for adults about acceptable and desirable conduct to ensure that staff maintain safe working practice and so safeguard both children and adults.
- does not provide a complete checklist of appropriate behavior for staff in every circumstance. Staff must make judgements about their behavior to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

In **very exceptional** circumstances where a member of staff believes it is the best interest of a child to breach these guidelines, that person **must** tell the manager of the justification for any proposed, or action already taken, at the earliest opportunity. The manager will make a written record of that discussion including any areas of disagreement and actions taken.

Scope

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the governors and should be read alongside the **Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and the Staff Code of Conduct** as well as the following documents relevant to the safety and welfare of our children:

- Behavior policy
- SEND policy
- Online/e-safety policy
- Health and safety policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaints policy

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in our settings.

For the purposes of this policy:

- 'Staff' refers to all those working for the YMCA Brunel Group in Early Years, full time or part time, on a temporary basis, or permanent, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity.
- A 'volunteer' is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid in this setting (except for approved expenses).
- A 'position of trust' is one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another, due to their work or the nature of their activity.
- The 'Child' refers to all children up to the age of 18. All adults are in positions of trust in relation to every child (and student over the age of 18) in our settings.

It does not apply to employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract

Expectations

cleaners). Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

All staff:

- are familiar with this policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- are aware that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct in this policy may result in disciplinary action. This includes dismissal, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity.

Mandatory Procedures

Confidentiality

The sorting and processing of personal information is governed by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations 2018) - see Data Protection Policy January 2025

Child records are shared with those who have a professional need to see them. When staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, children or their parents/carers, the staff must treat such information in a sensitive and confidential way, sharing it only in the interests of a child and when legally permitted to do so.

Governors and trustees should not routinely access child records. Exceptions to this would be for the purpose of an investigation in line with the setting's complaint policy and procedures.

Staff, governors and trustees will not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment.

If a member of staff is concerned that a child is being abused, is at risk of being abused or may have been abused in the past, they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'What to do if you are worried about a child', displayed in the staff room/play rooms and offices. See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (January 2025).

If a member of staff is ever in doubt about whether to share information or not, they should get advice from the designated safeguarding lead.

Staff relationships with children and parents

Staff responsibilities

All staff know that:

- They are in positions of trust in relation to all children (and students over the age of 18) on roll. They ensure that the power imbalance is never used for personal advantage or gratification. They avoid behavior which might be interpreted by others as an abuse of the position of trust and report any incident with this potential to the manager. This includes sharing personal contact details with children or families.
- They have a legal duty to protect the interests of children and accept the obligations inherent in that responsibility.
- It is important that they determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication, using professional curiosity, and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child.
They must not establish or seek to establish social contact with children to secure a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.

- They must inform the manager of any pre-existing (prior to the member of staff or child starting at the setting) or new relationship with a child or close family member, which they feel, might compromise the setting or their own professional standing.
- They should disclose any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact the setting's ability to safeguard pupils.
- It is an offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003) for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in **any** form of sexual activity with a child under the age of 18.

Certain behaviors are at odds with a position of trust. These include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment or discrimination based on any characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010
- Loss of personal civility including, personal attacks or insults, displays of temper (such as throwing objects), unwanted physical contact (pushing, shoving, hitting) or the threat of the same.
- Staff must not swear, blaspheme or use offensive language in front of children, nor use language which is discriminatory and demeaning in any way.

Such behaviors are disciplinary offences and may be referred to Local Authority and/or the police.

Communication with children and parents, including social contact outside of the workplace

Staff must use their professional judgement when requesting or accepting any social contact (including through social media). This means that they must:

- Not accept any request from children for contact via any social media platform.
- Make a judgement about whether to maintain the connection in any cases where contacts were made before the child started at the setting (e.g. staff being friends with a parent). Staff must discuss any decision to maintain such contact with the manager.

We acknowledge that staff may have friendships and social contact with parents of children outside of the setting. Staff will not engage in conduct outside work that could damage their professional reputation or the reputation of the setting.

Any contact between staff and children and/or parents that is deemed to bring the setting into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions will always be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action.

Staff must not make sexual innuendos or any comments of a sexual nature to any children or staff, nor make any comments trivializing alcohol or drug abuse.

Staff must inform the manager of any proposed or pre-existing arrangements between them and the families of children on roll that take place outside the setting e.g. baby-sitting, sports coaching, music tuition.

Gifts, rewards, favoritism and exclusion

Staff must:

- Declare any gift they receive from a parent or child. This does not include small tokens of appreciation such as Christmas or the end of the year.
- Do not give gifts to individual children. Any rewards or treats will be given only as part of the setting's agreed behavior policy.
- Advise the manager about the offer of any gift or hospitality, from outside or inside the setting, which might be interpreted as an attempt to influence staff conduct towards children, parents or other employees.

Physical contact including intimate/personal care and behavior management

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Any physical contact will be in response to the child's needs, of limited duration and



appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, background, and any agreed support or care plan.

The use of physical intervention including the use of reasonable force will always be in line with the following policies (Special Needs policy (Jan 2026), Supporting children with medical needs policy (Jan 2026), Behavior policy (Jan 2026), Physical Intervention policy/procedures (Jan 2026).

Staff understand that:

- On a daily basis, it may be entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children and that they do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the child's individual needs.
- Some children are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Whenever possible, adults seek the child's permission before initiating contact and are sensitive to any signs that the child may be uncomfortable *or* embarrassed.
- They have a responsibility to ensure that the way they offer comfort to a distressed child is appropriate for the child's age.
- They must never touch a child in a way which may represent a misuse of authority or considered indecent.
- Physical contact must never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult.
- They should be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to the issues of gender.

If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances will be immediately reported to the manager/DSL and recorded in writing. If appropriate, the manager/DSL will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations (LADO).

Staff understand that a child who has suffered previous abuse or neglect may associate physical contact with such experiences. They recognize that such a child may seek out inappropriate physical contact and know how to deter the child sensitively to help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Staff know that they must never indulge in play that involves rough-and-tumble or fun fights.

Children with disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements are understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Staff always allow/encourage children, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently.

If a child's behavior presents a serious risk to themselves or others, a robust risk assessment and, where relevant, a physical intervention plan is always put in place and reviewed regularly. In all cases where physical intervention takes place, staff record the incident and subsequent actions and report these in line with the school's behavior and safeguarding policies.

First aid

Staff adhere to the Head Office Health and Safety policy, the Health Care Plans for supporting children with medical conditions and for administering first aid or medication. All staff must undertake Pediatric First Aid every three years.

One to one situation

Staff carefully consider the welfare needs of children when with them in a one-to-one situation. All spaces in the setting are set up to allow any activity to be easily observed by other staff in the setting. Windows and doors are kept clear from display materials to allow rooms to be overlooked. Internal doors remain open when practicable. See Lone working procedures/policy (Jan 2026).

Children are provided with age/developmentally appropriate advice about managing distressing feelings that may arise during 1-1 situations in the settings. Staff will record any time a child has appeared upset/angry during a 1-1 session and will report this to their line manager.

Home visits and transporting children

All work with children and parents/carers is whenever possible undertaken in the setting. There are however occasions where it may be necessary to arrange a home visit, e.g. as part of a child's induction program, during changes in operating practice due to a pandemic.

In such situations, these activities will only be undertaken with the knowledge and consent of senior leadership and parents/carers (unless there is a good reason not to, e.g. safeguarding concern). Staff will work in pairs. A risk assessment will be undertaken, and the setting will ensure staff understand the purpose and limitations of their home visit. Any member of staff transporting a child in their own vehicle will:

- have prior written permission from parents and the setting manager
- have the appropriate vehicle insurance for business use
- have the correct ratio of children/adults
- ensure that all passengers wear seat belts
- ensure car seats are used according to the current legislation

Educational Visits and After-School Activities

Staff remain in a position of trust during nursery activities that take place away from the setting. They will ensure that their behavior cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Organizers will conduct risk assessments and adhere to Health and Safety guidelines. Staff/child ratios will be specified.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues aware of their whereabouts, during an activity away from the setting. This means staff will always have another adult present during outings and trips.

Staff appearance (Also applies to online meetings)

Staff must dress in provided uniform

Any staff with tattoos that might be viewed as offensive, provocative or likely to give rise to misunderstanding must ensure those tattoos always remain covered when that adult is working in the setting.

The acceptable use of technologies

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff must be circumspect in their use of **all** social media or any other web-based presence that they may

have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or by association with websites/pages or posts established by others (e.g. 'liking', reposting or forwarding). This includes the use of dating websites where staff could encounter parents or students either with their own profile or acting covertly.



They must consider the long-term implications of any content published by them online, specifically how it might ever have an adverse effect:

- on their reputation as an individual working in an education setting
- their ability to maintain good professional boundaries with parents and with children
- on the reputation of the setting.

Staff must not access any content from the internet on personal device during working hours, at the setting, or on a setting computer or device at any time that could bring the setting into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions

All staff are aware of their part in ensuring the DFE Filtering and monitoring standards, and cyber security standards are upheld. If staff become aware of misuse by another member of staff (in or out of the setting), they must report those concerns using the concerns and allegations against staff procedures. These procedures now include adults from organizations or individuals using the setting premises procedures.

Exceptional operating circumstances

If the setting is required to change the way we offer our provision to children due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. during a pandemic lockdown, staff safeguarding responsibilities to children will continue to apply, in line with the safeguarding policy.

The DSL will ensure staff, children, and families are provided with written:

- temporary changes to procedures for working with children, e.g. online.
- Timescales for such changes so that all children, families and staff understand when such arrangements will end, and arrangements revert to those in place prior to the events leading to the need for temporary changes.

Photography and recording

Staff are not permitted to use their phones, cameras, smart technology, or any device that can be used for photographing or recording children, when on duty for any purpose. The exception to this is using the setting iPads to record children's development to upload to Tapestry. Phones are kept in the designated area.

Staff will not:

- take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse)
- make audio recordings of a child's disclosure.

Concerns and allegations against staff (including, third-party & self-employed staff volunteers and contractors, and adults from organizations or individuals using the school premises)

If a member of staff is concerned about the behavior of a person working or volunteering at the setting (including contractors), they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'Allegation against adults', displayed in the staff room/play rooms/offices and corridors See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Jan 2026).

YMCA Brunel Group operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behavior that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in this policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

All concerns, no matter how small, will be shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately. This will serve our commitment to create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour set out in this policy are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.



'Low-level' concerns could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favorites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualized, intimidating or offensive language.

We also encourage all staff to self-refer to their line manager or DSL where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers are expected and encouraged to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the setting's safeguarding regime. All staff within the setting who wish to raise an issue relating to the organisation with someone in confidence can use the following whistleblowing procedures:

In the first instance, concerns about poor or unsafe practice within must be raised with the DSL.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the DSL or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- Director of Children's Services: Julia Honeywell 07876 598507
- A member of the governing body: David Pendle 07850 623574
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk if:
 - they think the concern will not be dealt with properly or
 - may be covered up or
 - if they raised a concern but it has not been acted upon or if they are worried, they are being treated unfairly.

Training

All members of staff and volunteers have read and signed to confirm they understand this Safeguarding Staff Behavior Policy on PHR.

Induction

The welfare of all children on roll is of paramount importance. All staff including volunteers are informed of this policy at induction and given the chance to question and discuss the expectations set out.

Staff support

Work in Early Years Settings is both rewarding and demanding. We support staff by prioritising time to discuss the challenges of their role linked to any aspect of this Staff Behaviour Policy with their line manager and seek further support as appropriate.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

Signed on behalf of YMCA Brunel Group
(original signed copy held at registered office)



Mike Fairbeard

Role of Signatory

Chief Executive

Date of Review of Policy

January 2027

Approved by trustees

31st January 2026

