

YWCA Youth Education Program: Online Training Manual

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Policies and Procedures: Child Protection

Supervision requirements

A minimum of one adult supervisor (19 years old or older) must be present with the group at all times in each program. This means that a school with two programs (i.e. a boys program and a girls program) will need an adult supervisor in each program space. For example, if a Wisdom Champion is preparing snacks in another part of the school, a 19+ facilitator must stay with the program participants.



If no adult supervisors are present, call your YWCA Coordinator immediately, as he or she can act as the adult supervisor.

Lost Child Preventative Measures

- Take attendance at the beginning and end of programs.
- Do head counts throughout the program. Position yourself to effectively observe the space.
- Secure all entrance/exit areas to ensure children are not able to leave the room unnoticed.
- Ensure children are being picked up by an appropriate caregiver.
- Ensure you have access to a phone at all times.
- Make an announcement when one volunteer is leaving the designated area. This can prevent any child from following them away from the program.

Lost Child Procedures

If a child goes missing during the program session, the Wisdom Champion or a Facilitator should carry out the following while the other volunteers ensure the safety of the remaining children:

- Secure all exits
- Conduct a quick search of the area (e.g. 5 min)
- Have any available school staff help (e.g. Principal, custodian, etc.)
- Notify the YWCA coordinator

If the quick search is successful and the child is found, volunteers should continue with the program session. The Wisdom Champion or a Facilitator should do the following:

- Notify the YWCA Coordinator
- Tell the parents what happened, either at pick-up or prior to dismissal if the child walks home.
- Follow up with an incident report

If the search is unsuccessful and the child is still missing, the Wisdom Champion should:

- Notify the police, the YWCA Coordinator, and the child's parents
- Remain in the area until the police arrive and follow directions given by the police
- Follow up with an incident report

NOTE: In the event the community service project outing/trip is discontinued and the volunteer ratio is appropriate, one volunteer shall wait for the police while the remaining volunteers and children shall return to the school as soon as possible.

Evacuation

Some emergencies such as a fire or natural disaster may require a building evacuation. Because each school is different, talk to your YWCA coordinator about where to meet outside in the unlikely event of an evacuation. If safe to do so, bring the attendance and student information sheet with you during an evacuation. This will help you confirm that all participants have arrived safely outside, and can be used to call parents if necessary.



Allergies


All allergies will be indicated on the attendance and student information sheet. The Wisdom Champion will receive this information on/before the first day – but it's important for all volunteers to be aware of this. We contact the parents to obtain a better understanding of the severity of the allergy, and pass this information along to you.

Medicine

Volunteers are not to administer medicine, except in the case of an emergency. Your YWCA coordinator will tell you if and when a participant is allowed to self-administer medicine. If volunteers see a student taking medicine who doesn't have permission, they can either let their YWCA coordinator know immediately or follow up with the parent to double check that the child has permission to take the medicine.

Photo policy

Volunteer are permitted to take pictures during the program to have as a remembrance or keepsake, but are NEVER to distribute, post online/to social media, or use the pictures for any public purpose.

A small icon of a pair of glasses.

If it's on the Internet, it isn't private.

First Aid

At least one volunteer at each school is trained in First Aid. Make sure you know the location of the First Aid kit in your bin, and which volunteers are trained in emergency First Aid. Fill out an incident/accident report if First Aid is required in the program.



Major Misconduct

Most challenging behaviour can be dealt with quickly using escalating consequences so that the behaviour does not intensify. On occasion behaviour may be recurrent, dangerous or seriously disruptive. Should this occur, notify your YWCA coordinator as soon as possible. We will work with the child's parents, the school, and input from program volunteers to come up with an appropriate solution, which, if necessary, may include the child's removal from the program.

Forms (Incident / Accident Report and Disclosure of Abuse)

Copies of these forms can be found taped to the inside cover of each bin.

Boundaries and Volunteer Conduct

The Rule of Three or More



The Rule of Three or More is that when you are working with children, you should never be alone with a child out of eye sight from other people.

If you need to have a private conversation, you can go into a quiet corner of the room or the hallways. If you do need to be in a room alone with a child, make sure that people can see you either through the doorway or window.

The reason for this is partly to protect the child, but largely to protect you. Even an *accusation* of any kind physical or sexual misconduct with a child would have dramatic repercussions for the YWCA's programs and everyone involved.

Secrets

What do you do if a child says *"I have a secret to tell you"*?

Let them know that you want to hear what they have to say, but that they should know that depending on what the secret is you may not be able to keep it. Tell them that if they tell you about a situation in which they are being hurt, hurting someone else or hurting themselves than you will have to tell other people about it to make sure that they are safe.



Touch

When or what kind of touch is appropriate?

Ideally, if you are initiating any kind of touch, you want to model consent, which means asking first and waiting for a clear positive response before proceeding. We need to be aware that touch can be misinterpreted and that we don't know what anyone's past experience with touch is. What can seem like very clean "buddy" contact to you can be misinterpreted.

Generally, a touch on the shoulder is among the safest kinds of touch. The "side-hug" is also a useful tool when a child initiates contact. It is essential to avoid any inappropriate touch (e.g. lap-sitting, long "full frontal" hugs, etc.)



Boundaries on Sharing Personal Information

Part of your role here is to share of your life experience and the knowledge and wisdom you have gained. As facilitators, personal stories can be very powerful. However, we need to also be careful about what and how much we share. So please don't share anything about:

- Intimate relationships
- The use of drugs or alcohol
- Situations that are still emotionally charged. You want to make sure that you have already thoroughly processed any story you tell yourself so that you are not doing that processing with or in front of the children.

Informal Monitoring

Finally, for the safety of the program and its participants, we need to give feedback to one another around boundary issues. If you feel another staff member is crossing boundaries, or even like some people might be misinterpreting their actions that way, please speak with them or your YWCA coordinator right away.

Don't stress too much

Having said all of this, we have never had any issues with this stuff in our programs, so don't get too stressed about it. The purpose of sharing this information is more so to make you aware and to help ensure both you and the participants have a positive experience in the programs.

Vancouver Board of Education Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students

Statement of Purpose

The Vancouver Board of Education is committed to creating a safe and respectful learning environment for students. The purpose of these Guidelines is to clarify and affirm the Vancouver Board of Education's expectations of all adults in interactions with students of the Vancouver school district. For the purpose of this document, "adult" refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with students on school grounds or at school activities.

It is expressly recognized that all employee groups are subject to collective agreements, terms and conditions of employment, professional and/or union codes as well as legislation. For example, teachers are regulated by the *School Act*, their Collective Agreement, the BC College of Teachers' Professional Standards and the BC Teachers' Federation Code of Ethics. These Guidelines do not supersede nor replace such codes/documents and statutory requirements, but rather provide a set of common expectations for adult-student interactions applicable to all employee groups and other adults (i.e. parents and volunteers) who interact and engage with Vancouver school district students.

This document does not address every possible situation or provide an exhaustive review of acceptable and unacceptable conduct. It provides a framework within which the Board expects adults to exercise common sense and good judgment when interacting with students. It endeavours to find a balance between encouraging positive and appropriate interactions between adults and students, and discouraging inappropriate and harmful interactions. Awareness and understanding of these Guidelines will strengthen a working culture in the Vancouver school district which is already deeply committed to student safety, security and wellbeing.

Rationale

Students have the right to a safe, caring, orderly school environment, free from discrimination and harm. Students also have the right to a learning environment in which clear expectations of acceptable adult behaviour are held and met. The "Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students" seek to establish an environment where anyone in the school community feels safe to come forward with concerns of adult misconduct towards students. Strong well-publicized Guidelines will discourage the formation of a code of silence that can become entrenched in school culture, and inform adults, volunteers, parents and students of the behavioural expectations for all adults within the Vancouver school district.

The Adult's Position of Trust and Authority

An adult is not a peer of the students. Adults are in a position of trust and authority in relationship to students and therefore their interactions with students must focus on meeting the needs of the student.

In working with students, adults must take great care that their actions and motivations will not be misinterpreted. The burden of responsibility and accountability rests with the adult. The onus is on the adult to remove him/herself from any physical or verbal contact with students that could lead to the initiation or perception of any form of abuse or harassment.

Personal and Professional Boundaries

Adults must respect each student's right to personal boundaries in all interactions. Some students may be able to tell the adult if they are uncomfortable with the comments or conduct of the adult. Other students may be reluctant to communicate their discomfort due to the adult's position of authority over them. It is the responsibility of the adult to be sensitive to, and respectful of, the personal boundaries of all students whether or not the student communicates discomfort with the interaction.

When interacting with a student, an adult is advised to consider the appropriateness of her/his conduct in relation to such factors as the student's age, developmental level, cultural and educational background.

If a student's behaviour toward an adult is, or appears to be, of a sexual nature, the adult must let the student know the behaviour is inappropriate and not allow it to continue. If an adult has an interaction with a student which is cause for concern he/she should discuss the situation immediately with an administrator, his/her supervisor or associate superintendent. Adults are expected to refer matters beyond their expertise or role to the appropriate district or community resource person.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

Adults are expected to behave in a manner that maintains and enhances public trust in the school district and models appropriate behaviours to students. The following examples are not exhaustive but illustrative.

Examples of Acceptable Behaviour are:

- Respectful language, tone and attitude towards students;
- Respect for students' personal/physical boundaries;
- Age-appropriate forms of touching such as comforting a hurt or upset child with a side by side hug or pats on the shoulder or back as positive reinforcement;
- School-related communication with students through the use of VSB email with a copy to the student's parent/guardian, or by telephone through the student's family phone;
- Supporting diversity within the school population (e.g. ethnic groups, gay and lesbian students/families).

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour are:

- Humiliation of students (e.g. demeaning comments, intimidation);
- Inappropriate touching of students (e.g. massaging, stroking, caressing);
- Physical or corporal discipline of students (e.g. shoving, hitting);
- Discrimination or harassment prohibited under the B.C. *Human Rights Code* including that based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, socio-economic status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation;
- Being under the influence of recreational drugs and alcohol while supervising or interacting with students;
- Disrespectful language towards students;
- Sharing or soliciting overly personal/private information;
- Texting or online communication with students on the adult's personal email, or being "friends" on a social networking site;
- Engaging in any sexual behaviour with a student, with or without consent;
- Exposing students to, or involving students in, any activities involving staff, volunteer or student nudity;
- Inappropriately disclosing confidential student-related information (beyond a "need-to-know" basis);
- Asking students to keep secrets.

Off-Campus Supervision

An adult must inform an administrator or supervisor of any off-campus outing with an individual or group of students. Volunteers shall be advised of expectations for their roles as supervisors and should understand the regulations outlined in VBE policy.

An adult must be particularly aware of maintaining professional boundaries with students when in more informal settings, such as on field trips. Social activities with students should be confined to school-related activities.

Considerations when Working with Very Young or Special Needs Students

Students with disabilities and very young students are particularly dependent on adults for their safety and well-being. Where possible, an adult should inform a staff member when he/she is going to be alone with a student. In the course of their work with students who are dependently disabled or physically challenged, adults may be involved in lifting, toileting, assisting in physiotherapy programs, and taking care of students' personal hygiene needs. These activities should be carried out with the utmost respect for the dignity of the student.

Concerns

The "Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students" are intended to support students, staff, parents and volunteers to safely inform supervisory staff if they have concerns about the safety or security of students and/or witness adult behaviour contrary to these Guidelines.

Where there is concern about adult behaviour or conduct that is inconsistent with these

Guidelines, this should be reported to an administrator or associate superintendent. Such reports shall be treated in a confidential manner (with information restricted to a need-to-know basis). Every adult has a legal responsibility to report suspected or disclosed cases of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect of a student following the VBE Protocols and Procedures.