

Y Whittlesea

Responding to Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy

1. Purpose:

YMCA Whittlesea (the Y) is dedicated to safeguarding all individuals, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults, from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This policy outlines the responsibility of all Y People to identify, report, and respond to any suspected or actual incidents of abuse or neglect, regardless of the alleged perpetrator's role or relationship within the organisation.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all Y People of Y Whittlesea in relation to all Y Whittlesea operations, inclusive of all alternate work locations.

3. What is the Policy:

The Y has a legal, moral and mission-driven responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, and to ensure that all reports, allegations and concerns of abuse are responded to promptly, appropriately and consistently.

Y Whittlesea is committed to responding promptly, appropriately and compassionately to all abuse reports and allegations, including historical abuse allegations. There is no specific timeframe that determines when an allegation is considered historical. Historical abuse allegations will be taken seriously regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred and will be managed in accordance with the Responding to Abuse Reports and Allegations Procedure and the definitions contained in the Responding to Abuse Terms Appendix.

4. Definitions: [Link](#)

5. Approach to Reporting:

The Y understands the complexity surrounding the disclosure of sensitive information and the potential impact that this may have on staff, children, young people, vulnerable people, volunteers and families. It is for this reason that the Y encourages a consultative approach to reporting in accordance with State based legislation, upholding our duty of care to the child, young or vulnerable person and the duty of care to the reporter.

The intent of this consultative approach will in no way delay or impede the reporting requirements. The Y understands the importance of having ongoing and comprehensive support and management mechanisms in place when dealing with sensitive information regarding protection issues.

Consultation processes relevant to each state/territory are to be followed with particular attention being given to the need for confidentiality regarding such information. Only those managers and staff that fall within the consultative process, those providing a direct service to the individual involved in the report and State Child Protection Department/Department of Human and Health Services or NDIS Commission staff will have access to any documentation of the notification.

The Y will be supportive and cooperative with any State Child Protection Department, Department of Human Services, NDIS and Police requirements and other agencies as required by law. Compliance to any reasonable request will be met in a timely manner. Staff and volunteers will be resourced and supported by management.

Historical abuse allegations will be responded to promptly, appropriately and compassionately, regardless of when the alleged abuse occurred. All historical abuse allegations will be assessed to determine any ongoing risks, legislative reporting obligations and appropriate support for the person making the disclosure, in accordance with the Responding to Abuse Reports and Allegations Procedure.

6. Failure to Disclose / Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

Any person over 16 years of age who forms a reasonable belief that abuse has been committed by an adult against another person, especially a child, young or vulnerable person, has an obligation to report that information. Failure to disclose the information is a criminal offence. Therefore, Y staff and volunteers must report any instance of serious abuse immediately to their Direct Supervisor or the Risk and Safeguarding Lead. As part of our Safeguarding requirements, Duty of Care, and current legislation, staff and volunteers must follow the procedure **Abuse Reporting Procedure** [link](#)

Upon the commencement of interviews and throughout employment, candidates and employees must disclose to the employer any convictions or charges that they have incurred. If at any given stage an employee fails to disclose this information, it could result in the activation of the *Disciplinary and Termination Policy*.

Staff and volunteers also have the right to report any concerns or allegations that they may have to relevant authorities such as the Police.

7. Failure to Protect Responsibilities:

All Y People of Y Whittlesea must act if they know that someone within their organisation poses a risk of committing an offence against another person. The Y is responsible for protecting all people from harm, as far as reasonably possible. Management reserves the right to introduce, change or remove any practices or procedures that do not comply with the requirements to protect individuals from harm.

8. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

9. Consequences of breaching policy: If any Y People fail to report instances, allegations, disclosures or concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a person, especially a child, young or vulnerable person (by personnel within our organization or by others), we view such failure as a serious matter that, depending on the circumstances, may result in disciplinary action or be grounds for dismissal. See *Disciplinary and Termination Policy*.

10. Related Policies, Procedures and Documents:

- [Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#)
- [Y Whittlesea Critical Incident Policy](#)
- [Responding to Abuse Reports and Allegations Procedure](#)
- [Y Whittlesea Critical Incident Procedure](#)
- Disability Worker Regulation Scheme (Scope and Procedure)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme \(Scope and Procedure\)](#)
- [Betrayal of Trust Fact Sheet](#)
- [Failure to disclose offence Fact Sheet](#)
- [Failure to protect offence Fact Sheet](#)
- [Grooming Offence Fact Sheet](#)

11. Consequences of Breaching this Policy: All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

12. Policy Owner: The **Risk and Safeguarding Lead** is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required.

13. Document Control: Review of this policy will be undertaken every second year, or prior as required by law.

Version:	Description of Amendment, Approver and Date:	Amended by:	New Issue Date:
V8	Added information about Historical Abuse Allegations	Nicole Fenollar	26/8/2026
V7	Added to updated template and made updates to all sections of this policy.	Nicole Fenollar	16/05/2025
V6	Break up Policy and Procedure and update supporting online training	Michele Rowse	Aug 2022
V5	Addition of NIDS rules to legislation listing	Annette Jurisch	19/11/19
V4	Updated to include the Reportable Conduct Scheme	Sandra Marson	05/04/18
V3	Updated to include the Vulnerable, YMAC reporting, Department of Human Services, Definitions Table, Supporting Documents.	Geny Zambello	03/11/17
V2	General Review	Geny Zambello	06/08/15
V1	Creation	Geny Zambello	May 2012