PARIS-BOURBON COUNTY YMCA

ABUSE PREVENTION HANDBOOK

Keeping every child, member, and community safe.

For Employees · Volunteers · Members · Families

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Welcome & Our Commitment

The Paris-Bourbon County YMCA (PBYMCA) provides youth, members, and families with the highest quality programs available. We are committed to a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment that promotes growth and success for everyone we serve.

No form of abuse will be tolerated. Every report of suspicious or inappropriate behavior, and every allegation of abuse, is taken seriously and handled according to the procedures in this handbook. PBYMCA fully cooperates with law enforcement and child-protective authorities whenever an allegation requires investigation.

Abuse prevention is a shared responsibility. Our Board of Directors and leadership set the tone from the top; every employee, volunteer, member, and family plays a part in keeping our Y safe.

Who This Handbook Is For

This handbook applies to everyone connected to PBYMCA: full- and part-time employees, volunteers of every access level, members, program participants, and the parents and guardians of the youth we serve. Employees and volunteers are expected to know and follow every policy in this handbook. Members and families should use it to understand what to expect from our staff, how we keep programs safe, and how to raise a concern.

How We Keep This Handbook Current

PBYMCA reviews this handbook and its underlying policies at least annually — considering incident trends, program changes, staff and family feedback, and changes in the law — and updates it as needed. Employees and volunteers sign an acknowledgment of these policies at hire and again every year (see the acknowledgment page at the end of this handbook).

I. General Definitions of Abuse

Understanding what abuse looks like is the first step in preventing it. PBYMCA defines abuse using four categories:

- **Physical abuse** — injury intentionally inflicted on a youth, including hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, or unnecessary restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** — any contact of a sexual nature between a youth and an adult, or between two youth, including any activity meant to arouse or gratify sexual desire.
- **Emotional abuse** — mental or emotional injury that results in an observable, material impairment in a youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning (shaming, humiliation, cruelty).
- **Neglect** — failing to provide for a youth's basic needs (food, water, shelter, supervision) or failing to protect a youth from harm.

Bullying

PBYMCA does not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth by another, including bullying. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power. It takes several forms:

- **Physical bullying** — hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another person.
- **Verbal bullying** — belittling or calling another person hurtful names.
- **Nonverbal / relational bullying** — manipulating a relationship to harm another person: social exclusion, friendship manipulation, gossip, or intimidating gestures.
- **Cyberbullying** — using email, text, images, or online postings to send mean or threatening messages, post private information, impersonate someone, or exclude someone online.
- **Hazing** — an activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them, regardless of willingness to participate.
- **Sexualized bullying** — bullying that is sexual in nature, such as sexting, exposure of private body parts, or sexualized language.

Anyone who witnesses bullying and encourages it is also considered to be engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth, employees, and volunteers.

Mandatory Reporting

All PBYMCA employees and volunteers are mandated reporters under Kentucky law. Staff are trained to recognize the signs of physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse and neglect; to know and follow PBYMCA's policies that protect youth against abuse; to report suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and to follow up to confirm that appropriate action was taken. A person who reports suspected abuse in good faith and without malice is immune from civil or criminal liability, even if the report turns out to be mistaken.

II

Code of Conduct

Every PBYMCA employee and volunteer commits to the highest standard of personal and ethical conduct. This Code of Conduct sets the baseline for every interaction with a youth, member, or fellow staff member — the specific policies in Chapter III explain how each rule applies in practice.

Our Commitments

- Treat every consumer with respect at all times, and fairly regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, abilities, or ethnicity.
- Follow PBYMCA's standards for displaying affection, and avoid affection with a youth that cannot be observed by others.
- Follow PBYMCA's standards for verbal interaction; never stare at or comment on a youth's body.
- Never date or become romantically involved with a consumer.
- Never use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while responsible for youth.
- Never possess sexually oriented materials, printed or online, on YMCA property.
- Never keep secrets with a consumer, and only give gifts according to the Gift-Giving policy (Chapter III).
- Follow PBYMCA's policies on outside contact, electronic communication, and one-on-one interaction (Chapter III).
- Report any concern about the behavior of another employee, volunteer, adult, or youth to a supervisor.
- Cooperate fully with any internal or external investigation of an allegation of abuse.

Employees and volunteers may never abuse a consumer in any way, including but not limited to: physical abuse (hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraint); verbal abuse (degrading, threatening, cursing); sexual abuse (inappropriate touching, exposure, sexually oriented conversation); mental abuse (shaming, humiliation, cruelty); or neglect (withholding food, water, or shelter). No one who has engaged in, been accused of, or been convicted of abuse, indecency, or injury to a youth may serve as a PBYMCA employee or volunteer.

Abuse or Mistreatment of One Youth by Another

PBYMCA has zero tolerance for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity between consumers. Conduct that rises to this level results in intervention or discipline, up to and including dismissal from the program. Staff and volunteers are expected to interrupt and report bullying, hazing, name-calling, games of “truth or dare,” singling out a child for different treatment, and ridicule or humiliation — these behaviors often precede more serious incidents of youth-to-youth abuse and must be stopped early.

Everyone Follows the Same Rules

Policies define the line of acceptable behavior. Because people who intend to abuse a child often violate policy to gain access to a youth, staff who know and follow these policies can identify, interrupt, and report violations before they become something worse. Interrupting a policy violation — even a small one — protects everyone: it can prevent a false allegation, and it puts every person on notice that no one at PBYMCA works in private, the

> rules apply to everyone, and violations will be detected.

Acknowledgment

Every employee and volunteer signs a written acknowledgment of this Code of Conduct and the full Abuse Prevention Handbook at hire, and again every year thereafter. Signed acknowledgments are kept in each person's personnel or volunteer file. See the acknowledgment page at the back of this handbook.

III

Policies for Interactions

The policies below define exactly what appropriate and inappropriate interaction looks like at PBYMCA. Any violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from a volunteer or program role.

A. Physical Contact

PBYMCA encourages appropriate physical contact that supports a positive, nurturing environment, and prohibits inappropriate displays of contact. In general, physical contact should be youth-initiated, brief, and observable by others.

✓ Appropriate	✕ Not Appropriate
Side hugs	Full-frontal hugs or kisses
Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs	Showing affection in an isolated or one-on-one area
Pats on the shoulder or back	Lap sitting, wrestling, piggyback rides, or tickling
Handshakes, high-fives, and fist bumps	Giving gifts or money directly to an individual youth
Pats on the head, when culturally appropriate	Allowing a youth to cling to a staff member's leg
Touching hands, shoulders, and arms	Any massage given by or to a youth
Holding hands with young children in escorting situations	Any affection unwanted by the youth or the staff member
Asking permission before touching or guiding a youth (e.g., fastening equipment)	Touching the bottom, chest, or genital areas outside of documented, authorized personal care

Some department-specific exceptions exist for young children (for example, comforting a crying toddler or checking a diaper with the back of the hand) — see the diapering and toileting procedures in Chapter V.

B. Verbal Interaction

Staff and volunteers may never speak to a youth in a way that is, or could reasonably be seen by an observer as, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Staff may not initiate sexually oriented conversation with a youth or discuss their own sexual activity in a youth's presence.

✓ Appropriate	✕ Not Appropriate
Positive reinforcement	Name-calling
Age-appropriate, family-friendly jokes	Discussing sexual encounters, or involving youth in a staff member's personal problems
Encouragement	Secrets, cursing, off-color or sexual jokes
Praise	Shaming, belittling, or derogatory remarks about a youth or their family
Strength-based conversation	Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate

✓ Appropriate	✕ Not Appropriate
	Compliments about physique or body development

C. One-on-One Interaction

Most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a youth. PBYMCA prohibits private one-on-one interaction unless it is approved in advance by program administration. When an approved one-on-one interaction is necessary — including virtual meetings — staff and volunteers must:

- Meet in a public place, in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection; if any occurs, keep it brief and report the nature and extent of it to a supervisor immediately afterward.
- Leave the door open, or move to a location that can be easily observed, if meeting in a room or office.
- Tell other staff or a parent that you are alone with a youth, and invite them to drop in.
- For closed-door meetings, schedule them in advance, use a room with a window, and notify a supervisor.
- For virtual one-on-ones, schedule in advance, share the meeting link/password with a supervisor, and invite a parent or supervisor to join.
- Document every one-on-one interaction and share the record with a supervisor.
- Immediately document and report any unusual incident — an injury, a disclosure of abuse, a behavior problem, or anything that could be misinterpreted.

> **Supervisor Check-Ins**
>
> Supervisors conduct routine, unannounced visits of one-on-one and virtual programming at least monthly, and log their observations.

D. Off-Site and Outside-the-Organization Contact

Many cases of abuse in youth-serving organizations occur off-site, outside of regularly scheduled program hours. PBYMCA prohibits interactions outside of scheduled program activities, including babysitting PBYMCA youth, unless the family already has a pre-existing personal relationship with the staff member independent of the program.

✓ Appropriate	✕ Not Appropriate
Taking a group of youth on an outing, with written parent permission	Taking one youth on an outing without written parent permission
Attending a sporting event with a group of youth	Visiting a youth at home without a parent present
Attending a family function with parents present	Babysitting a PBYMCA youth
	Entertaining one youth at a staff member's home
	A youth spending the night with a staff member, outside an approved program

Where outside contact is genuinely unavoidable — for example, a pre-existing family relationship — staff must notify an administrator, keep any group small, avoid one-on-one situations, apply the “Rule of Three” (never

fewer than two adults with one youth, or two youth with one adult), and get written parent confirmation for any trip or overnight stay.

E. Electronic Communication & Technology Use

PBYMCA strongly discourages electronic communication or social media contact with consumers. When communication is part of programming or otherwise unavoidable:

- Never text a consumer, and never reply to a text a consumer sends; notify a supervisor immediately if a consumer texts you.
- Email with a minor consumer must go to the parent or guardian, using an organizational (not personal) email account, and may be required to copy a designated staff member.
- Never communicate with a consumer through private messages on social media, gaming platforms, or disappearing-message apps.
- Keep personal social media accounts private, and never friend, follow, or accept a request from a consumer.
- Never post inappropriate comments on pictures of participants, and only post participant photos through PBYMCA's official channels.

PBYMCA filters and monitors technology used on-site. Devices may never be used in restrooms, locker rooms, or any area with an expectation of privacy, and cell-phone cameras or recording during programming require prior permission. Cyberbullying, harassment, and personal attacks are never tolerated.

Cell Phone Use During Program Hours

Personal devices may be on-site but must not be visible or used while a staff member is actively supervising consumers, except for breaks, emergencies, or explicit supervisor direction (for example, on field trips or off-site programs). Using a personal device to contact a member or participant for personal or inappropriate reasons is grounds for discipline up to termination.

F. Gift Giving & Gift Acceptance

People who intend to groom a child for abuse routinely use gifts to build trust and teach a child to keep secrets. For this reason, PBYMCA limits gift-giving in both directions.

- **Gifts to youth** are strongly discouraged. If given, a gift must be pre-approved by a supervisor, cost-capped by that approver, disclosed to the parent/guardian, given on behalf of the YMCA (never an individual staff member), and given to a group — never to a single youth.
- **Gifts from youth or families** up to $20 in value may be accepted, but must be disclosed to a supervisor. Money may never be accepted. Gifts over $20 must be politely declined. Artwork or thank-you notes may be accepted only if displayed publicly at the Y — never taken home by staff.

G. Working with Minor Employees & Volunteers

PBYMCA employs and hosts staff and volunteers under age 18. When a minor staff member supervises consumers, an adult employee must supervise them at all times, and any consumer they supervise must be at least two years younger than the minor supervisor.

✓ Appropriate	✕ Not Appropriate
Job-related instruction, coaching, and constructive feedback	Any sexual, romantic, or dating relationship, or sexualized interaction
Professional, respectful, work-related interaction	Grooming behaviors, favoritism, or an exclusive relationship
Meetings in observable, interruptible locations	Excessive, secretive, or personally significant gifts
Fair, consistent treatment and workplace-appropriate recognition	Asking a minor employee to keep a secret from a parent or from PBYMCA
Authorized, policy-consistent transportation	Private electronic contact via personal social media or disappearing-message apps
	Providing alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, or drugs
	Unauthorized transportation, or being alone with the minor in a vehicle

IV

Screening & Selection

Careful screening is one of the most effective tools for keeping people who intend to cause harm out of PBYMCA. Every employee and high-access volunteer goes through the same core screening process before they ever work with a consumer.

A. Application & Interview

All candidates for employment and high-access volunteer roles complete a standardized application that asks about prior YMCA and youth-serving experience, and includes youth-specific questions (preferred age group, discipline philosophy, response to anger, and outside involvement with youth). Applicants list three references — two professional, one personal — and review and sign PBYMCA's Code of Conduct as part of the application.

Every candidate for a role involving consumer contact completes a 30–60 minute, distraction-free, behaviorally based interview. Rather than hypothetical questions, interviewers ask about past behavior across six areas — trainability, policy adherence, patience, supportiveness, judgment, and boundaries — including a direct question about whether the candidate has ever been accused of inappropriate conduct with a consumer or coworker. Two trained interviewers are present whenever possible.

B. Reference Checks

PBYMCA contacts all three listed references after the interview and before any offer is made. Professional references must have known the candidate for at least six months in a work setting; if the candidate has prior youth-related experience, at least one reference must come from that specific role. The personal reference must have known the candidate for more than a year. Reference-checkers are trained to recognize higher-risk answer patterns, such as a short or lapsed relationship with the applicant, difficulty relating to adults, or a history of excessive involvement with youth.

C. Background Checks

- A criminal background check and National Sex Offender Registry search are completed before any employee or high-access volunteer begins service.
- Repeat checks occur at least once every two years for continuously serving employees and high-access volunteers.
- Anyone returning from an absence longer than six months — including seasonal staff — is re-checked before returning to duty.
- Written authorization is obtained from the individual, and completed checks are documented in the personnel or volunteer file.

Reviewing a Criminal Conviction

When a background check returns a criminal conviction, PBYMCA follows a structured, individualized review before making any employment decision:

1. An offer of employment is made contingent on the background check.

2. After a conditional offer, the candidate receives the required disclosures and provides written consent.
3. PBYMCA waits for the background screening report.
4. If the report shows a conviction, PBYMCA checks whether any law requires automatic disqualification.
5. If not automatically disqualifying, PBYMCA makes an individualized assessment of the relationship between the job and the conviction — considering the nature of the job, the nature of the offense, and the time that has passed.
6. If there appears to be a substantial relationship, PBYMCA confirms no law prevents using the conviction in its decision.
7. If a preliminary decision to disqualify is reached, the candidate receives a pre-adverse-action letter, a copy of the report, a summary of their rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, and an invitation to provide context.
8. PBYMCA waits at least five business days for the candidate to respond or dispute the report.
9. Any disputed information is reinvestigated before a final decision is made.
10. Mitigating information the candidate provides is reviewed and may allow the hiring process to continue.
11. If PBYMCA reaches a final decision not to hire, the candidate receives a formal adverse-action letter, and the specific reason is documented.

D. Ongoing Duty to Self-Report

Every employee and volunteer must notify PBYMCA within 24 hours, or as soon as reasonably possible, of any arrest, charge, or conviction — including a guilty or no-contest plea — that occurs after they begin service (routine traffic infractions are excluded unless driving is part of the job). Supervisors escalate any report immediately to Human Resources. An arrest or charge alone does not automatically trigger discipline; PBYMCA weighs the nature of the offense, its relationship to the job, and the time elapsed. Failure to report, or falsifying a report, can lead to discipline up to termination.

E. Drug Testing for Cause

Any employee or volunteer in a safety-sensitive role — including anyone who drives an organizational vehicle or supervises youth — may be required to submit to drug testing when a supervisor has reasonable suspicion based on specific, observed appearance, behavior, speech, or odor. Only a supervisor may remove someone from duty for this reason, and must document the basis in writing within 24 hours. A positive test, a refusal to test, or a tampered sample results in discipline up to termination.

F. Volunteer Access-Level Classification

Every volunteer is classified before their service begins, based on the frequency and privacy of their contact with youth, whether they transport youth, and whether they have supervisory or disciplinary authority.

Level	Examples	Screening & Training
Level 1 — Limited	One-time, fundraising, or event volunteers	Application, basic conduct orientation, always under staff supervision
Level 2 — Moderate	Program assistants, classroom	Application, interview, reference and

Level	Examples	Screening & Training
	helpers, league volunteers	background checks, abuse-prevention and mandatory-reporting training
Level 3 — High Access	Coaches, mentors, overnight-program volunteers, anyone who transports youth	Enhanced background checks, full abuse-prevention training before service, ongoing monitoring and periodic re-evaluation

G. Training for Staff Involved in Hiring

Everyone who takes part in hiring is trained on why screening matters, how to use the application and interview to assess abuse risk, the limitations of a criminal background check, best practices for reference checks, and how to identify red flags at every stage of the process.

> **Questions about screening?**
>
> Contact Human Resources — Erin Hicks — at (859) 475-0045 or hr@parisbourbonymca.org.

V

Monitoring & Supervision

When staff are well-supervised, people who might otherwise act on harmful impulses are less likely to do so because they know they may be observed. When youth are well-supervised, they are less likely to be drawn into inappropriate interactions with others. Effective supervision uses a variety of methods, at both scheduled and random times.

A. Facility Access & Identification

- Employees and volunteers wear an ID badge, clearly visible at or above waist level, at all times on site.
- Anyone arriving without a badge is checked against the current roster before being issued a temporary badge, or is denied access if their identity cannot be verified.
- Visitors sign in at the welcome center, are issued a visitor badge, and are escorted by a PBYMCA representative for the duration of their visit.
- Off-site or in the community, staff and volunteers wear organizational attire or a photo ID so they remain identifiable as authorized representatives.
- Everyone who enters the facility during operating hours — members, guests, contractors, and maintenance or cleaning crews — checks in with the front desk. Where there is more than one entrance, every access point is consistently monitored.

Because most incidents occur in private, PBYMCA identifies locations with unnecessary privacy or poor sightlines. Unused rooms, offices, and closets stay locked; rooms without windows are checked for adequate visibility; and designated staff complete facility walkthroughs multiple times each day, at varied and unpredictable times, documenting each check on the Facility Monitoring Checklist.

B. Checking In and Checking Out

- All participants check in and out per the program's established procedure; attendance is recorded at the start of the program and verified throughout.
- Staff take headcounts during transitions, field trips, and before dismissal.
- A youth is released only to a parent, guardian, or a person the parent has authorized in writing. Staff verify the identity of any unfamiliar pick-up person.
- A youth may not leave a program area without staff knowledge and permission.
- Third-party organizations using PBYMCA facilities must meet or exceed PBYMCA's sign-in and attendance standards.

C. General Supervision & Ratios

Supervisors and administrators use scheduled and random observation of every program, spontaneous conversations with staff and consumers, and documentation review to confirm that safety standards are always in place. Programs that mix age groups require closer, line-of-sight supervision, since most youth-to-youth incidents involve children from different age groups.

Licensed child-care programs follow the ratios set by Kentucky's child-care licensing regulation (922 KAR 2:120):

Age Group	Staff-to-Child Ratio	Max Group Size*
Infant	1:5	10
Toddler (12–24 months)	1:6	12
Toddler (24–36 months)	1:10	20
Preschool (3–4 years)	1:12	24
Preschool (4–5 years)	1:14	28
School age (5–7 years)	1:15	30
School age (7+), before/after school	1:25	30
School age (7+), full day	1:20	30

**Maximum group size applies to Type 1 licensed child-care centers. Non-licensed programs establish ratios appropriate to the activity and the ages served, and always use the lowest ratio required when ages are mixed.*

D. Supervising Employees & Volunteers

Supervisors document every observation visit — arrival and departure times, who was present, and a summary of findings — and vary their observation times so no predictable pattern emerges. They arrive before staff to check punctuality, confirm posted activities match what is happening, and specifically observe bathroom and locker-room compliance and the quality of staff-to-youth, staff-to-staff, and staff-to-parent interactions.

Off-site programs receive the same scrutiny, plus advance approval of every outing, a pre-visit to assess the location when possible, and — in large or unstructured venues — staff positioned at entrances, exits, and boundary lines, with a mandatory youth check-in at least once every hour.

E. High-Risk Activities

The following activities carry a higher risk of abuse or false allegation because they involve reduced sightlines, undressing, or close physical contact. PBYMCA applies specific safeguards to each.

Bathrooms & Showers

- Staff scan a restroom before allowing youth to enter.
- Group bathroom breaks follow the “Rule of Three” — never one adult alone with one youth.
- Single-stall restrooms: one youth in at a time, others wait outside with staff.
- Multi-stall restrooms: never send in more youth than there are stalls; staff stand outside, within earshot.
- Staff never use the restroom at the same time as youth.
- Showers: one youth per stall, staff stationed outside within earshot, and shower curtains that do not reach the floor.

Locker Rooms & Changing Areas

- Staff stand within earshot of the locker room while it is in use, and make brief, intermittent checks — more frequent for younger children.

- Mixed-age use is discouraged, time limits apply, and towel-snapping or other locker-room horseplay is prohibited.
- Lockers are arranged to minimize unnecessary privacy.

Diapering, Toileting & Personal Care

- The changing table is placed in an open, observable area; diapers are changed with at least two individuals present whenever possible, and every change is documented.
- For toileting, staff stand in the doorway with the door ajar; if entry is needed, the door stays open, and no more youth enter than there are stalls.
- Staff prefer verbal prompts over physical touch, explain each step, and match staff gender to the youth's when possible.

Naptime & Quiet Time

- No adult or youth sits or lies on another person's mat, bed, or sleeping bag.
- Youth are never left alone; mats and blankets are never shared.
- The room stays sufficiently lit, and staff maintain continuous line-of-sight over every sleeping youth.

Aquatics

- Swim lessons take place in open, viewable areas, under the supervision of staff beyond the instructor.
- Instructors keep hands visible above water when possible and narrate any necessary touch, asking permission when appropriate.
- Participants are never left alone during swim lessons, and designated staff — beyond lifeguards — monitor the pool deck and lounge.

Playgrounds & Recreational Activities

- Staff use zone monitoring — spaced around the whole area and positioned near low-visibility equipment such as tunnels and climbing structures.
- Staff stay actively engaged (watching and listening for every assigned youth) rather than socializing with each other.
- Program boundaries are clearly marked, and restroom breaks always maintain the required ratio in both the group that leaves and the group that stays.

Transportation

- Only YMCA-authorized drivers transport youth; personal vehicles are never used unless specifically authorized by leadership.
- Whenever possible, at least two authorized adults are present during transport; a single adult is never alone with a single youth.
- Staff take a headcount before departure, on arrival, and at every transition, and reconcile rosters across vehicles.
- Before a vehicle is left unattended, a staff member physically walks through it to confirm no one has been left behind.
- No unauthorized stops, and no distracted-driving or personal device use while driving or supervising.

Off-Site Activities & Field Trips

- Every outing requires written supervisor approval and written parental permission before it happens.
- Staff and volunteers are easily identifiable, and each is assigned a specific group of youth to supervise, with a roll sheet and routine name-to-face checks.
- Staff review boundaries, rules, and how to report a concern with youth before departure, and personal cell-phone use is prohibited while actively supervising.

F. When a Program May Not Be the Right Fit

Before enrollment, parents and guardians complete an intake form describing any medical or behavioral needs. PBYMCA evaluates fit by asking whether staff can adequately supervise the youth without compromising interactions with others, whether the youth has previously posed a risk to others, and whether PBYMCA can meet the youth's needs while keeping everyone safe. When a program isn't the right fit, staff meet with the family to discuss the findings and help identify an alternative resource. Where appropriate, PBYMCA develops an individualized safety plan, signed by the parent/guardian, the youth, and the program director, describing specific risk-reduction steps and how they will be reviewed.

VI

Reporting a Concern

Every person connected to PBYMCA — employee, volunteer, member, parent, guardian, or youth — has the right and the responsibility to speak up. Reports are always taken seriously, and PBYMCA prohibits retaliation of any kind against anyone who reports a concern in good faith.

PBYMCA has several ways to report a concern

Speak with any staff member, program leader, or supervisor.

Executive Director Sabrina Gordon — (859) 987-1395, sgordon@parisbourbonymca.org

Human Resources (employees & volunteers) — Erin Hicks, (859) 475-0045, hr@parisbourbonymca.org

Email — info@parisbourbonymca.org

Anonymous drop box at the front desk in the main lobby — no name required.

Praesidium Helpline (24/7, anonymous) — 1-855-347-0751, available to everyone: employees, volunteers, members, parents, and youth.

A report to PBYMCA never replaces the legal duty to report suspected child abuse directly to the authorities. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services first.

A. For Employees & Volunteers

If you witness a suspicious or inappropriate behavior, or a policy violation, by another staff member or volunteer:

- Interrupt the behavior.
- Report it immediately to a supervisor, director, or other authority — or report anonymously if you're not comfortable doing so directly.
- If the report concerns a supervisor or administrator, contact the next level of management.
- Complete an internal report, but do not conduct your own investigation.
- Keep reporting until you know appropriate action has been taken.

For a broader workplace concern — harassment, a policy violation, retaliation, or a whistleblower complaint — put it in writing (name the people involved, the date, any witnesses, what happened, and what resolution you're seeking) and submit it to your supervisor or to hr@parisbourbonymca.org. PBYMCA aims to meet with you and begin resolving a written concern within 10 business days, and any decision may be appealed to the Board of Directors.

B. For Parents, Guardians & Youth

Parents, guardians, and youth can raise a concern about the behavior of an employee, volunteer, another youth, or a parent/guardian, using the contact options above. A written complaint should include the names involved, the date, any witnesses, a description of what happened, and the outcome you're hoping for. PBYMCA aims to meet with you within 10 business days of receiving a written concern and to follow up with next steps; a decision may be appealed to the Board of Directors.

C. Anonymous Reporting

Anyone who is not comfortable reporting by name may use the anonymous drop box at the front desk or call the Praesidium Helpline at 1-855-347-0751, available around the clock. Praesidium staff take the call and, if the concern involves suspected sexual abuse, immediately instruct the caller to contact civil authorities before anything else.

Confidentiality

PBYMCA protects the confidentiality of anyone who reports a concern to the greatest extent the law allows. Legal authorities such as law enforcement or child-protective services may require information to investigate a report, but that does not remove PBYMCA's duty to keep the matter confidential within the organization.

VII

Responding to Concerns & Allegations

How PBYMCA responds to a concern, a policy violation, or an allegation of abuse can dramatically affect the harm to everyone involved — and the trust our community places in us. Once anyone raises a concern about the treatment of a youth, PBYMCA takes swift, determined action to reduce risk to the youth, to the person accused, and to the organization.

A. Responding to a Red-Flag Behavior or Policy Violation

Examples that require a report: seeking private or one-on-one time with a youth, buying gifts for an individual youth, unauthorized electronic contact, suggestive comments, or favoritism.

Supervisor's Response

1. Report to the next level of administration and determine who should respond.
2. Speak with the employee or volunteer who was reported.
3. Review that person's file for any prior similar complaints.
4. Weigh the context, severity, history, and trainability of the person involved to determine the right response.
5. Document the report.
6. If at any point a concern about abuse arises, stop and contact state authorities before doing anything else.
7. Notify parents or guardians when appropriate, and let the person who reported the concern know it is being taken seriously.

Depending on what is found, PBYMCA may increase monitoring, apply progressive discipline (see Section G), interview additional staff or youth, or review whether policy, procedure, or training needs to change.

B. Responding to Suspected Abuse by an Adult

This procedure applies any time there is a report, disclosure, observation, or reasonable suspicion of physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse or neglect — no proof is required to act.

Employee or Volunteer Response

1. Ensure the immediate safety of the youth.
2. Immediately notify a supervisor, the CEO, or the designated Child Protection Officer.
3. Immediately make any required report to law enforcement or the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
4. Cooperate fully with the responding authorities.
5. Complete all required incident documentation before the end of your shift, unless directed otherwise by leadership or law enforcement.

Do not investigate the allegation yourself, interview the youth beyond what's needed for immediate safety, or try to determine whether the allegation is true — that is not your role.

Supervisor & Administrator Response

1. Determine whether the youth is still in danger, and act immediately to prevent further harm.
2. Confirm that mandated reporting has occurred or is happening immediately.
3. Gather and accurately record the facts: who reported, who was allegedly abused, who is the alleged abuser, and the nature, location, and timing of the alleged abuse.
4. Contact local authorities, and get a case number and the name of the person you spoke with.
5. Notify the Health & Safety Team and follow the Crisis Management Plan (Section F) if an employee or volunteer is involved.
6. Suspend the accused employee or volunteer until the investigation is complete.
7. Notify parents or guardians when appropriate, and provide resources to survivors, families, and other affected people.

C. Responding to Youth-to-Youth Sexualized Behavior

Youth-to-youth sexual activity and sexualized behavior often go unreported because staff are not always comfortable documenting them. It is never the front-line staff member's job to decide whether behavior was “normal curiosity” — every instance of sexual activity between youth is inappropriate in PBYMCA programs, and only an outside authority such as child-protective services makes that determination if abuse is suspected.

Employee or Volunteer Response

1. If you observe sexual activity between youth, safely separate them immediately.
2. Calmly explain that the interaction is not permitted.
3. Notify your supervisor, and the parents or guardians involved, when applicable.
4. Complete an incident report documenting what you observed and how you responded.
5. Follow your supervisor's direction on notifying authorities and families.

Supervisor's Response

1. Meet with the reporting staff member to gather information.
2. Confirm the youth involved have been separated or placed under increased supervision.
3. Notify the proper authorities, per mandated reporting requirements, when appropriate.
4. Review the incident report for accuracy and completeness, and meet with the parents or guardians involved.
5. Determine what is needed to prevent recurrence — added supervision, a safety or behavior plan, revised policy, or additional training — and develop a written follow-up plan.

D. Internal Review

For allegations of sexual abuse, PBYMCA conducts an internal review only after reporting to civil authorities and with their consent — if authorities choose to investigate, PBYMCA cooperates fully and takes no step that could interfere. The Executive Director (or designee), Human Resources, and the Health & Safety Team lead any internal review by defining what happened, gathering information (personnel files, prior documentation, training

and disciplinary records, video footage, and interviews with witnesses — never the survivor, to avoid re-traumatization), identifying the root cause, and documenting findings and corrective action.

E. Survivor-Centered Response

PBYMCA's Survivor Assistance Coordinator — Erin Hicks — leads PBYMCA's response to anyone affected by abuse or inappropriate behavior. When a survivor is identified, PBYMCA proactively offers to meet, asks how it can support them, and offers resources such as counseling or pastoral care. In every conversation, PBYMCA:

- Listens with compassion and tells the survivor they were right to come forward.
- Makes clear they are believed, and that what happened was not their fault.
- Avoids expressing shock, and avoids questions that could make the survivor feel responsible.
- Follows mandated reporting requirements, and provides transparent, regular updates on the investigation and next steps — as much as possible, and within 24 hours of the report.

F. Crisis Management

A crisis is any occurrence that harms a youth, threatens PBYMCA's reputation or financial integrity, or creates legal liability — for example, an allegation of adult-to-youth abuse. PBYMCA's Health & Safety Team — Sabrina Gordon, George Flowers, Ashley Scott, and Mary Turvey — leads the response: securing immediate safety, limiting the accused person's access, applying progressive discipline, and verifying with authorities before any internal review begins.

Sabrina Gordon, Executive Director, is designated to respond to all inquiries from parents, media, and other stakeholders, using a prepared statement and communicating with compassion and confidence. Families are met in person, not by phone, and PBYMCA considers written outreach to program families and, where appropriate, a parent or community meeting.

G. Progressive Discipline

When a policy violation is confirmed, PBYMCA applies discipline appropriate to its severity, up to and including immediate termination for conduct that endangers a youth.

- **Verbal warning** — for a first, less serious issue; documented in a note to file.
- **Written warning** — for a persistent or more serious issue; placed in the personnel file with the violation, specific examples, and clear expectations going forward.
- **Termination** — when other measures have failed, or immediately for conduct that endangers a youth; made in consultation with Human Resources and legal counsel.

When an allegation raises a safety concern, PBYMCA asks whether the person's continued presence would create danger or be disruptive to the program. If any risk cannot be managed through reassignment, the person is placed on suspension or administrative leave, in writing, pending resolution.

VIII

Training Requirements

Training turns policy into practice. Every employee and high-access volunteer completes foundational abuse-prevention training before having any access to youth, additional training on recognizing and responding to red flags, and an annual refresher. Supervisors receive further, specialized training.

Training	Audience	Timing
Foundational abuse-prevention training (policies, boundaries, definitions of abuse, grooming, high-risk activities, preventing false allegations)	All employees & high-access volunteers	Before access to youth
Recognizing & responding to red flags and boundary violations, and mandatory reporting	All employees & high-access volunteers	Before access to youth
Effective monitoring & supervision of high-risk activities, and youth-to-youth sexual behavior	All employees & high-access volunteers	Before access to youth
Abuse risk management for supervisors (supervision strategies, corrective feedback, mandated reporting)	New & newly promoted supervisors	At entry to a supervisory role
Specialized training for responding to allegations (internal review, culture of reporting)	Supervisors who respond to allegations	Before taking on that responsibility
Annual refresher — current policies, boundaries, and role-specific topics	All employees & high-access volunteers	Every year
Volunteer abuse-prevention training module (delivered and tracked through Playerspace)	All volunteers	Before beginning service

Documentation & Accountability

PBYMCA documents every completed training in the employee's or volunteer's file. Failure to complete required training on time results in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or removal from service, and staff are not assigned program duties until their training is on file.

IX

Governance & Oversight

Abuse prevention starts with leadership. This chapter describes how PBYMCA's Board of Directors and executive leadership hold themselves accountable for the safety commitments in this handbook.

A. The Board of Directors' Role

- A standing Board committee is charged with abuse risk management and meets monthly. Leadership reports to that committee on policy gaps, pending incidents or litigation, media involvement, and overall prevention efforts.
- Board members complete a criminal and sex-offender-registry background check annually, and complete annual training covering the scope of abuse risk, its impact on survivors and organizations, and each Board member's role in prevention and response.
- The Board receives regular updates on abuse-risk issues, and is informed immediately of any allegation that could affect PBYMCA's reputation, financial integrity, or create legal liability.

B. Leadership Commitment

PBYMCA's CEO/Executive Director, Board, and leadership team communicate their commitment to abuse prevention at every level — through new-employee and volunteer orientation, parent and guardian communications, the PBYMCA website and signage, staff meetings, and community awareness efforts including Child Abuse Prevention Month each April. Leadership maintains its own competency through training at hire, annual policy review, case-scenario discussion, and ongoing consultation with outside experts, so that leaders are ready to recognize warning signs, respond to disclosures appropriately, and sustain a culture where people feel safe speaking up.

C. Program Approval & Third-Party Organizations

Any new program or activity outside a program's normal scope requires a written proposal — covering the program's purpose, population served, staffing ratios, and a monitoring and supervision plan — approved in writing by PBYMCA leadership before it begins. PBYMCA maintains a current inventory of every consumer-serving program, reviewed at least annually by the CEO and reported to the Board.

Outside groups and individuals who use PBYMCA facilities or interact with our youth are classified by their level of access. Anyone with access to youth program areas — instructors, contractors, or maintenance staff present while youth may be around — must sign PBYMCA's Code of Conduct, complete a criminal background and sex-offender-registry check, and complete abuse-prevention training, with documentation on file with PBYMCA. Anyone who does not meet that standard is continuously supervised by PBYMCA staff. PBYMCA reserves the right to observe any third party's activities, scheduled or unannounced.

D. Annual Policy Review

PBYMCA's Executive Director or a designee coordinates an annual review of every policy in this handbook, considering incident trends, program and staffing changes, feedback from employees, volunteers, and families, and changes in the law. Findings, revisions, and approval dates are documented; when a policy changes, affected staff and volunteers are notified and re-acknowledge the updated handbook.

X

For Parents, Guardians & Members

PBYMCA wants every family to understand our safety practices — and to know they are a partner in keeping our Y safe. This chapter is written directly for you.

A. How We Keep You Informed

- This handbook and our full abuse-prevention policies are posted on our website, included in enrollment and program handbooks, and available in print or electronically from any staff member on request.
- We share reminders, safety tips, and resource links through email, our program newsletters, and facility signage.
- We hold parent meetings and program orientations covering our supervision practices, staff-youth boundaries, and how to raise a concern.
- Each April, during Child Abuse Prevention Month, we offer additional community education and resources.

B. Protecting Your Child from Abuse

Talking with young children

- Use correct names for body parts, and establish clear rules about touch.
- Help your child identify three to five trusted adults they can tell if something feels wrong.
- Teach your child that it's okay to say "no," to move away, and to keep telling until someone listens.

Warning signs to watch for

- A sudden change in friends, interests, mood, or behavior — including new anger, anxiety, or withdrawal.
- Hiding gifts or money, or avoiding a specific person or place.
- "Too perfect" behavior, or a pattern of secret-keeping.

If your child discloses something to you

- **Listen** — stay calm, and ask only open-ended questions.
- **Reassure** — tell them it is not their fault and that they were brave to tell you.
- **Protect** — keep the accused person away from your child and ensure their immediate safety.
- **Report** — write down your child's exact words, and notify PBYMCA and, as required by Kentucky's mandatory-reporting law, law enforcement or the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

C. Our Youth Code of Conduct

Youth participants agree to treat others with respect, and to follow the same physical- and verbal-interaction standards described in Chapter III. Romantic relationships, hand-holding, and physical affection between youth are not permitted during programming. Electronic communication involving a youth must be visible to a parent

or staff member — never a private, one-on-one message. Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and weapons are strictly prohibited, and bullying in any form (including cyberbullying and hazing) will not be tolerated.

If Something Doesn't Feel Right

Trust your instincts and tell us. See Chapter VI, “Reporting a Concern,” for every way to reach us — including our 24/7 anonymous helpline at 1-855-347-0751.

XI

Acknowledgment

I have received, read, and understand the Paris-Bourbon County YMCA Abuse Prevention Handbook. I agree to comply with every policy it describes, including PBYMCA's Code of Conduct and my duty, as a mandated reporter, to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Printed Name

Role (Employee / Volunteer / Other)

Signature

Date

Signed acknowledgments are retained in the employee or volunteer's personnel file and renewed annually.