

The City of Santa Monica is committed to creating opportunities for enrichment and learning at every age. Our programs and services are designed for our youngest community members to older adults aging in place. We take the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults seriously. Staff, volunteers, and contractors are expected to act conscientiously to exemplify the highest ethical standards. Staff, volunteers, and contractors must take care that they do not place youth in vulnerable situations. Accordingly, when working in connection with City-managed youth programs, all staff must comply with the following:

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL AND VERBAL INTERACTIONS

The City of Santa Monica has **ZERO TOLERANCE** for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of participants in its programs. Any mistreatment or abuse will result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service. This list is not all-inclusive; other behaviors may be identified:

Appropriate Physical Interactions

- Side hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs
- Brief pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- High-fives and hand slapping
- Briefly touching hands, shoulders, and arms
- Briefly placing arms around shoulders
- Holding hands with young children in an escorting situation
- Physical contact necessary for providing valid medical assistance or for providing needed assistance to special needs youth
- Physical intervention necessary to separate youth involved in a physical altercation

Inappropriate Physical Interactions

- Full-frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling
- Piggyback rides
- Tickling
- Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas
- Touching, grooming, or playing with hair
- Any type of massage
- Allowing a youth to cling to a staff member's leg
- Any physical act of affection that is unwanted by the youth
- Any physical act of affection that occurs in an isolated area



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PROVIDING SERVICES TO YOUTH
Standards for City-Managed Youth Programs

Appropriate Verbal Interactions

- Instruction and guidance
- Positive reinforcement
- Encouragement
- Praise
- Appropriate critiques where necessary to the program (e.g., “your hand was in the wrong position” when giving a swim lesson), provided in a non-derogatory fashion
- Appropriate jokes

Inappropriate Verbal Interactions

- Initiating sexually oriented conversations
- Discussing staff or volunteer sexual encounters
- In any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers
- Off-color or sexual jokes
- Remarks demonstrating any bias or discriminatory intent based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ancestry, national origin, religion, medical condition, or physical or mental disability
- Secrets
- Name calling
- Cursing
- Remarks that are harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, demeaning, or humiliating

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

The City aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits staff from engaging in private one-on-one interactions with youth unless approved in advance by the program supervisor.

GIFT GIVING

Staff are prohibited from giving gifts (including gifts of food) to any youth. Any gifts to youth must be approved by and come from the program, not individual staff.

OUTSIDE CONTACT

Appropriate Outside Contact

- Taking groups of youth on a program related outing (parental approval and a minimum of two staff or the number of staff required to satisfy the program standard staff/youth ratio, whichever is greater, with at least one staff employee, are required)
- Attending program-related sporting activities with groups of youth (parental approval and a minimum of two staff or the number of staff required to satisfy the program standard staff/youth ratio, whichever is greater, with at least one staff employee, are required)
- Visiting a youth at the youth’s home for program-related reasons, with the parents present at all times

Inappropriate Outside Contact

- Taking one youth on an outing
- Visiting a youth, whether in the youth’s home or elsewhere, without a parent or approved adult guardian present
- Hosting one or more youth in the home of staff
- One or more youth spending the night with staff
- Transporting youth in a personal vehicle (except in a true emergency with prior notice to the program supervisor wherever practical and, if not practical, notice to the program supervisor as soon as practical)

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Any private electronic communication between staff and youth, including private communications through social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) is prohibited. All electronic communication between staff and youth must be publicly viewable (i.e., accessible to program supervisors and the youth's parents) and/or copied to a program supervisor and/or the youth's parents.

REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING ABUSE/NEGLECT AND OTHER UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

If staff, volunteers or contractors observe any suspicious or inappropriate conduct or violations of standards on the part of other staff, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to supervisor, the program manager, program administrator, division manager, or department leadership. Such individuals must also complete the *City's Report Regarding Suspicious or Inappropriate Conduct or Standards Violation*.

As required by mandated reporting laws and City policy, all staff, volunteers and contractors must report as practically possible any suspected abuse or neglect of a youth to Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) and to their program supervisor. If the situation is urgent or there is an immediate safety threat, they must call SMPD.

REPORT ABUSE OR CONCERNS

Los Angeles County CPS

(800) 540-4000

Santa Monica Police

(310) 395-9931