



# Making Healthy Connections

# Volunteer Handbook

## YMCA of Bristol

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

## **Welcome**

First of all, I want to thank you for committing your time and special talents to the YMCA of Bristol. At the Y we believe that when people come together for a common cause, the whole community is strengthened. When you become a volunteer, you have the opportunity to share your blessings with those who need it most.

We value your participation and enthusiasm and sincerely hope that you find your time with the Y meaningful, effective, and rewarding.

Volunteers play a critical role in achieving the Y mission: to put Christian Principles into practice through programs that promote healthy lifestyles, strong families, and positive youth development to build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Volunteering is more than just sharing your time and passion. It's about the satisfaction of knowing you are helping people become stronger, giving back to your community and gaining new friends. In the Y tradition of meeting community needs, Y volunteers engage in challenging experiences that change their lives and the lives of others.

We're glad you're joining us as a volunteer of the YMCA.

Amy McCracken  
Human Resources  
YMCA of Bristol

**A. Introduction** The goal of the YMCA of Bristol is to consistently recruit, develop, motivate and recognize strong volunteers. The involvement of talented, committed individuals greatly extends the range, quality and variety of YMCA programs and services.

**B. Purpose of Handbook** This handbook was designed to help volunteers understand their role at the YMCA and how volunteers fit into the purpose and programs of the YMCA.

**C. Volunteer** The YMCA defines a “volunteer” as anyone who performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the YMCA of Bristol without financial compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of agreed upon out-of-pocket expenses.

**D. Qualifications** It is generally desirable that volunteers are passionate about the YMCA’s mission, purpose, goals and objectives. They should possess aptitudes, skills and capacities needed for volunteer service. A successful background check will be required of all volunteers (unless under 18).

**E. Core Values** Volunteers will adhere to and exemplify the YMCA’s five Core Values of Honesty, Caring, Respect, Responsibility, and Faith.

- **Honesty** To tell the truth, to act in such a way that you are worthy of trust, to have integrity, and to make sure your choices match up with your values. Honesty is represented by the color BLUE for true blue truthfulness.
- **Caring** To put others before yourself, to love others, to be sensitive to the well-being of others, and to help others. Caring is represented by the color RED for love and the heart.
- **Respect** To treat others as you would have them treat you, to value the worth of every person including yourself, and to be cordial even if you disagree with someone. Respect is represented by the color YELLOW for the Golden Rule.
- **Responsibility** To do what you should, to do what is right, and to be accountable for your behavior and obligations. Responsibility is represented by the color GREEN for our fiscal and environmental responsibilities.
- **Faith** To develop your relationship with God, to be a seeker of truth, to trust God with your life, and to be sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see. Faith is represented by PURPLE for the Kingdom of God.

## **F. General Guidelines**

**a. Volunteer Code of Conduct** Volunteers are expected to abide by the YMCA of Bristol Volunteer Code of Conduct. The document is located in the back of this handbook.

**b. Supervision** Each volunteer will have a YMCA Supervisor who is responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of volunteers' work. They will be available for consultation, assistance, and on-going feedback. Please ask any questions of this person, or report any problems or concerns to them. You may also contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 423-968-3133.

**c. Volunteer Schedules** The supervisors are responsible for the preparation and supervision of the volunteers' schedule. Please contact them with questions or for clarifications.

**d. General Attendance** Volunteers are expected to be on time and to remain until they end their assignment. If volunteers are unable to make a scheduled volunteer task time, they must inform their YMCA Supervisor immediately.

**e. Volunteer Records** In order for the Y to have an accurate record of the hours of volunteer service, the Y asks that volunteers record their time. This is done through filling out time sheets provided by the supervisors. Volunteers should notify their YMCA supervisor immediately of changes to their name, address, telephone number, email address, or emergency contact information.

**f. Dress Code** Volunteers must wear clothes that are appropriate for their work and congruent with YMCA modesty standards. Clothes should have no alcohol or drug logos on them. The dress code for volunteers varies for each activity. Volunteers must make sure they are aware of the volunteer dress code for the activity in which they are participating. If volunteers have any questions concerning the dress code, they should contact their supervisor.

**g. Insurance** The YMCA does not provide insurance and related benefits to volunteers. As an example, there are no insurance plans for volunteers including no medical, accident, dental, worker's compensation, disability, or other coverage.

**h. Membership & Program Fees** The YMCA does not offer free memberships to volunteers. Volunteers may not trade their time for free or reduced cost in program participation.

**i. YMCA Property** Personal locks may not be left on YMCA property. The YMCA may retrieve, inspect and review both business and personal information and items stored on or in YMCA property, such as computers, storage devices, desks, lockers, cabinets, and YMCA vehicles.

**j. Confidentiality** Information contained in YMCA records for volunteers, employees, members and program participants must be maintained confidentially at all times. Unauthorized access, modification, deletion or disclosure of information may constitute a criminal act. Distribution and/or reproduction of any record or information outside the intended and approved use are strictly prohibited. In addition, YMCA computer systems are for the use of authorized users only.

**k. Conflict of Interest** Volunteers are expected to refrain from giving the impression that the personal views and positions they express regarding economic, political or religious issues are those of the YMCA.

**l. Harassment** The YMCA has a zero tolerance policy in regards to harassment. Harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender or to racial, ethnic or religious groups. Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to: unwelcomed advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**m. Property loss** Volunteers should leave all personal belongings locked up in their vehicles or in some other safe place. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen property of volunteers.

**n. Cell phone use** Volunteers must refrain from using their cell phone when they are volunteering. If there is an emergency, contact YMCA staff and they will take care of the matter.

## **G. Orientation & Training**

**a. Orientation** Each volunteer will receive role-specific training by a YMCA supervisor.

**b. Volunteer Service Descriptions** Volunteers should be provided a brief, written description of their duties by their immediate supervisor. They are encouraged to ask questions on matters that concern their duties and responsibilities so that they clearly understand their role.

**H. Child Abuse Prevention** Any suspected or reported child abuse shall be treated in accordance with laws and YMCA policies. Because of the concern for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, the YMCA has developed policies, standards, guidelines, and training to aid in the detection and prevention of abuse.

See THE YMCA of Bristol's Policy on Assuring the Protection and Wellbeing of Children near the end of this handbook.

## **I. Safety & Health**

**a. General** Safety is a priority of the Y. It is a responsibility of all volunteers to observe safety and health rules and to employ the principles of accident prevention on a daily basis. Some of the guideline expectations include:

- Observe all hazard warning signs.
- Use all safety equipment required for one's assignment, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, hands, and other extremities.
- Know the location of fire/safety exits and evacuation procedures.
- Keep all aisles and walkways, working areas, and emergency equipment clear of obstacles.
- Refrain from running, fighting, horseplay, or distracting others.
- Observe safe operating procedures for all equipment; make sure all guards and other protective devices are in their proper places prior to operating the equipment, and only operate equipment which volunteers have been authorized for and properly trained.
- Do not wear frayed, torn, or loose clothing, jewelry or long unrestrained hair near moving machinery or electrical equipment.
- Follow proper lifting procedures at all times.
- Use seat belts when driving or riding in vehicles while volunteering for the YMCA.

**b. Bloodborne Pathogens** The YMCA seeks to minimize the risk of exposure by periodically training individuals who may encounter blood-borne pathogens in the course of their volunteer assignment. The YMCA subscribes to the concept of "universal precautions," which means that all human blood or other body fluids must be treated as if they were contagious. Universal precautions mean that volunteers are expected to use specific procedures and to use personal protective equipment when necessary.

**c. Emergency Response Plan** Each YMCA branch/site has a specific set of emergency response plans on site. Volunteers may review these plans at any time.

**d. Smoking** The YMCA is committed to providing a smoke-free, safe, and healthy environment. Smoking or use of any tobacco product is prohibited on all YMCA properties, including parking lots, walkways and green space.

**e. Alcohol and Drug Free** The YMCA is committed to maintaining an alcohol and drug-free environment. Use, possession, or being under the influence of a controlled substance will not be tolerated.

## **YMCA of Bristol**

### **VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Volunteers will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the YMCA of Bristol consistent with the mission of the YMCA. Volunteers must adhere to the YMCA Five Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Faith.
- Volunteers must exhibit a healthy role model by maintaining a positive attitude of respect, patience, encouragement, integrity, courtesy, and maturity.
- At **no** time during a YMCA program should a volunteer be alone with a child where they cannot be observed by others.
- If working with children, volunteers should **never** leave a child involved with their program unsupervised. Children must be supervised at all times by YMCA staff or approved volunteers.
- Volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's health including significant fever or contagious conditions.
- Volunteers will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement, rather than competition, comparison and criticism.
- Volunteers shall abstain from humiliating or frightening types of disciplinary actions.
- Volunteers will refrain from any action that could be considered child abuse, including; but not limited to:
  - o Physical Abuse: spanking, slapping, striking, intimidating
  - o Verbal Abuse: humiliating, degrading, threatening
  - o Sexual Abuse: inappropriate gesturing, touching, language
  - o Mental Abuse: neglecting, shaming, cruelty, put downs
- Volunteers must treat program participants of all races, religions, cultures, and backgrounds with equal respect and consideration.
- Volunteers' appearance must be clean, neat, and appropriately dressed.
- Volunteers may not smoke or use any tobacco products on YMCA property or during YMCA events and activities.
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on YMCA property or during YMCA events and activities is strictly prohibited.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes/gestures, intimate displays of affection towards others, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, offensive mannerisms (e.g., throwing things, flailing movements, foot stomping) and/or any other kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, staff, and other volunteers is prohibited.
- The YMCA will conduct appropriate background and reference checks on all volunteers. Upon request, volunteers must agree to provide any information needed to run such checks.
- Volunteers will not give children monetary gifts.
- A monetary and expensive gift to staff/volunteers is prohibited.

**Any violation of the Code of Conduct may result in termination.**

## **THE YMCA of Bristol's Policy on Assuring the Protection and Wellbeing of Children**

The YMCA of Bristol makes numerous efforts to prevent child abuse. These include but are not limited to:

- A background check including, but not limited to, references from past employers, personal acquaintances, military, educational institutions, volunteer organizations, civic groups, character verification, health and personal activities and involvements.
- Allegations or suspicions of child abuse are taken seriously and are reported to the police and state agencies for investigation.
- Programs are structured and observed so that staff and volunteers are never the only adult present with children with the possible exception of emergency conditions or with special approval by site supervisors.
- Periodic interviews/evaluations are conducted with children and parents regarding day to day experiences, encouraging reports of any event out of the ordinary.

The YMCA goals for childcare are:

- To support and strengthen the family unit.
- To help children develop to their fullest potential.
- To deliver programs in a positive YMCA environment of safety, support, and care.



## **Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities**

### **Volunteer Rights**

- To be treated as a partner and friend
- To have a meaningful assignment with consideration for volunteer's individual interests, skills and life experiences
- To be kept informed about YMCA programs, policies and people through frequent communications via the Volunteer Coordinator. This may include conversations, meetings, memos, newsletters, and emails
- To receive sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well informed, patient and thoughtful and has time to invest in volunteers
- To be treated respectfully and to be given equal consideration for all volunteer assignments, regardless of age, income, disability, gender, background or religion
- To receive respect from all YMCA staff
- To enjoy a work environment that is energetic and enjoyable

### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

- To have a heart in the interest of the kids, families, and community the YMCA serves
- To understand the YMCA mission and goals
- To abide by the commitments that one makes
- To speak up, ask questions and share ideas
- To accept supervision, knowing that everyone is accountable to someone
- To offer constructive criticism, seeking to understand before judging
- To continue to grow and learn more about one's volunteer task, the YMCA, and the ways of the Y
- To treat people with loving kindness and open communication, regardless of age, income, ability, gender, background or religion
- To act as a responsible member of our YMCA family
- To seek joy in one's volunteer service