

SAFEGUARDING UNDER 18'S FITNESS PROTOCOL



YMCA North is all about Youth Empowerment and Healthy Living. We actively recognise and promote physical activity as an important element in youth physical and mental health development. This protocol provides a set of expectations for YMCA fitness facilities and services offering access and/or provisions to Under 18s. These requirements ensure the additional vulnerabilities and needs of under 18s are recognised, as well as ensures YMCA continues to provide safe environments, promoting under 18s wellbeing and rights.

Minimum Age Requirements of Children and Young Persons.

The Minimum age of child or utilising a YMCA fitness facility via a family membership is 9 years old. The minimum age of a young person utilising a YMCA fitness facility via youth membership, raise up crew members and casual youth visits is 14 years old.

Non- YMCA Supervision of Children and Young Persons

YMCA recognises someone as being suitable to supervise a young person (under 14 years) when they are 17 years or older. An under 17-year-old(s) supervising an under 14-year-old(s) may only be considered when this applies to a group wishing to access facilities and 2 or more of the group are over 14 years.

The ratio of 2 over 14 years is applicable to everyone who is under 14 years.

Even subject to this group supervision criteria, YMCA staff hold overall say in whether the identified 'group' supervision is regarded by YMCA as appropriate.

Family Membership children aged between the ages of 9-14 utilising YMCA fitness facility must be actively always supervised by a parent/carer over the age of 17 years old.

Active supervision is the Parent/Carer having:

- The young person in line of sight.
- Within distance to always provide immediate assistance.

Unsupervised access is for 14 years and older.

Under 14 years outside of a family membership, who wish to access fitness facilities may do so on a casual membership when they are supervised:

- By a person 17 years or older.
- Within a group where 2 or more of those members are 14 years or over.

YMCA Staff Supervision

- Centres should identify times of increased utilisation by Under 18's.
- YMCA will have identified staff rostered on at all times of operation.
- Wherever actively possible YMCA Centre's will increase staff rostering to support the increased supervision responsibilities during peak Under 18's access timeframes.
- Rostered staff member(s) are identified to all fitness facility users via the "Instructor on Duty" board.

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- All YMCA Staff operate to and within strict safeguarding policies, procedures, and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
- All safeguarding information is accessible via YMCA website, intranet, receptions and on display within Centres.

Facility Checks

Regular facility checks are conducted throughout all areas of the facility during operational hours to ensure that the facility is safe for all customers. Increased regularity of facility checks during peak periods of Under 18s access must be reflected in applicable practice and documentation.

Induction of Under 18s

All Under 18s joining or accessing a YMCA fitness facility or service are required to receive an induction. Induction should be conducted by a YMCA fitness instructor. The under 18 may be asked questions relating to the below which are relevant to supporting them starting an exercise programme:

- Goals.
- Exercise history.
- Any applicable medical history.

Whilst the induction is between the fitness staff member and the person under 18 years. Inductions are not held 1:1 and/or in private locations. All under 18's Inductions must be supervised. Supervision may be from:

- a parent/carer.
- within the presence of other YMCA staff; or
- other adults (if not confidential) e.g., on the gym floor.

All YMCA staff are mindful to confidentiality and privacy rights when conducting Inductions. This is applicable whether they are:

- supporting an induction occurring by being in the room; or
- enabling inductions to be conducted in public settings e.g., gym floors, foyer, etc.

Under 18s are encouraged to bring a support person (over 17 years) along to their induction.

Under 18's service information

YMCA will supply all Under 18a with service information guidance at the time of joining the fitness facility – via a copy of the “Welcoming Under 18's to YMCA Fitness”. The Welcoming Guide may be provided in either hard or digital copy. The Welcoming Guide supports under 18's in understanding information relation to key areas* such as:

- Membership criteria
- Supervision requirements
- YMCA requirements (practice and behavioural)

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- Maintaining their own welfare e.g., goal setting, etc.
- Scheduling Appointments.
- Attire and Resourcing e.g., what to wear and bring.
- Seeking support and specialist advice.
- What to do if they have any worries and/or a safeguarding concern.

*These are an indication of key areas but are not exclusive.

Welfare of Under 18s

All YMCA fitness staff are required to be REPs registered. REPs registration gives independent verification that registered individuals meet the industry standards on an ongoing basis. When prescribing exercises for Under 18's YMCA fitness instructors are to take into consideration the Exercise New Zealand "Guidelines for children in exercise facilities" This has age specific recommended activities for Persons aged 6 -16 years.

When prescribing Exercises for Young Persons aged 16 -18 years YMCA fitness instructors are to take the following into consideration.

- Experience and current physical activity level.
- Height and weight and size.
- Physical development age.
- The design of the fitness equipment is suitable.
- The amount of repetitions and sets prescribed.
- Supervision required of the exercise.

Not all exercises are appropriate for Under 18s to attempt without adequately trained supervision and should be discouraged from being attempted. YMCA staff have the right to prohibit any exercises and/or equipment from being used by any person(s) if doing so is a risk to the individual and/or others.

Whilst not limited to or exclusive, the below are deemed inappropriate for young people without adequate supervision from a qualified fitness professional:

- Free weight bench press.
- Barbell squats.
- Max load lifts (e.g., 1 RM)
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Group Exercise Classes

Any fitness classes labelled "family friendly" reflects these classes as being appropriate for young people from 9 years old being able to attend. Supervision for the young person's remains as noted. All other Group Exercise classes are available to all young people aged 14 years and older.