

Child Protection Policy

Purpose and Scope:

The EJ-YMCA Child Protection Policy provides a framework for individual and organizational practice that focuses on protecting children, preventing abuse against them, and promoting behavior that demonstrates respect for their rights. The focus of this policy is on the relationship between adults who act in any capacity with the EJ-YMCA, through any of its programs or centers, and the children who participate in any of the EJ-YMCA activities.

The policy aims to protect children from intentional and non-intentional harm or abuse. It applies to the EJ-YMCA as an institution and to all those collaborating with it, and notably service providers and partners. For people placed under the EJ-YMCA's responsibility (staff, volunteers, interns, beneficiaries, people using facilities of the EJ-YMCA, ...), this policy applies to all situations, professional or otherwise, during and outside working hours. It is the EJ-YMCA's responsibility to ensure that everyone is informed of the existence and content of this child protection policy.

The EJ-YMCA Child Protection Policy is based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 and the Palestinian Child Law No.7 of 2004 (PCL).

Terminology:

- **Child:** is every human being who is under 18 years of age.
- **Child's rights:** all the rights set forth in the UNCRC and the PCL
- **Abuse:** direct and indirect acts, intended or unintended towards the child, in the purpose of causing harm or threatening to harm the child physically or verbally or sexually or psychologically, thereby leaving negative effects on the child's physical and mental growth and development.
 - **Physical abuse:** the actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

- **Emotional abuse:** the actual or likely adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.
- **Sexual abuse:** actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature.
- **Negligence:** the failure of the child's caregiver in providing the developmental needs in health, education, nutrition, emotional development, housing, and safe daily life conditions, thereby causing harm to the child in any way, whether physically or mentally or emotionally or socially or ethically.
- **Exploitation:** pushing, luring or obliging the child to carry out acts and activities that do not harmonize with his/her physical or mental or emotional or ethical development, or thereby exposing the safety or survival or growth of the child to danger.
- **Child labor:** work that deprives children who are under 15 years old of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical, mental, social, and moral development.
- **Child marriage:** marriage of a teenager before the age of 18 years old which violates Palestinian Law and children's rights in general, as it places them at high risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse.
- **Children affected by armed conflict:** in the Palestinian context, and due to the Israeli Military Occupation, Palestinian children are vulnerable to recruitment as human shields, informants, and child soldiers, as well as being taken into Israeli military detention, or getting injured or killed during political violence.
- **Discrimination:** any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, gender, language, religion or political opinion which aims at deactivating or hindering the recognition or enjoyment of the human rights, or practicing these rights on the basis of equality.
- **Child Protection:** policies and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this policy, it applies particularly to the duty of the EJ-YMCA - and individuals associated with it - towards children who participate in any of its activities.

Behavior and Responsibilities:

EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, partners, guests, suppliers, ... must not:

- Hit or physically assault or abuse any child.
- Develop a relationship with the child that might- in any case- be considered as exploitation or sexual abuse.
- Act in ways that might be offensive or might expose the child to the danger of abuse.
- Use terms or make suggestions or advice that are inappropriate, insulting or harmful to the child.
- Act physically in a way that is inappropriate or sexually provocative for the child.
- Behave in ways that intend to cause shame, humiliation, disdain, or underestimation for a child, or commit any form of emotional exploitation.
- Discriminate against a child, or show preferential treatment for a particular child while excluding others.
- Discriminate against a child who is active in any shape in political resistance to the occupation.
- Make any behavior or action that may constitute or is possible to constitute a mal-practice towards the child.
- Disclose any piece of information about children that are part of the EJ-YMCA interventions or activities, unless written consent is provided by the parents.
- Encourage or direct any child to perform an economic activity that is recognized as child labor.
- Encourage or direct any child to participate in a political activity.
- Encourage any teenager to go into a relationship that may lead to early marriage.

EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, partners, guests, suppliers, ... must:

- Treat all children with respect.
- Mitigate the risks to which children might be exposed, and be aware of the steps that must be taken when they have concerns about the children's safety.
- Ensure the highest level of child protection standards during the implementation of activities.
- Empower children, acquaint them with their rights, argue about these rights, and introduce them to what is acceptable and what they can do in case they face a problem related to the executed activities.
- Maintain the confidentiality and personal privacy of the child and his/her family and protect them when providing any reports or information that may be issued by the EJYMCA; wherein the safety of the child and his/her best interest ought to be in the first place.
- Refuse to carry out any activity in an environment that may result in causing harm to children.
- Report any case of neglect, abuse, and/or violation, promptly to the direct supervisor who should document and respond immediately to take appropriate actions against the perpetrator.
- Report any case of a child affected by the armed conflict as the EJ-YMCA has specialized interventions to support survivors of political conflict.
- Provide direct support or refer a child who is affected by incidents of political violence to receive support at any other specialized organization.

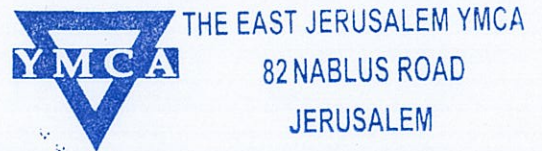
Reporting potential violations:

EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, partners, guests, suppliers, ... should promptly report any potential violations of this policy to the EJ-YMCA Human Resources Department promptly. Reporting violations should follow the Complaints Mechanism set in the Accountability Framework of the EJ-YMCA. There will be no punishment or other retaliation for the reporting of a potential

violation of this policy. If the person providing this information requests anonymity, this request will be respected to the extent that doing so does not impede any investigation.

Breaches to the Policy:

Failure of any of the EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, partners, guests, suppliers, ... to comply with this Policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action based on the measures set in the EJ-YMCA Human Resources Manual, which, depending on the circumstances, may include termination of employment or of the relationship, while reporting the incident to the authorized relevant Child Protection Networks within the Ministry of Social Development.



This Policy was endorsed by the Board of Directors in January 2021

The East Jerusalem YMCA

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