

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

Since its establishment in 1948, the EJ-YMCA became the 'safe space' for children and youth where they could participate in physical, social and recreational activities, as well as receive specialized services tailored for their specific needs.

The EJ-YMCA's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure provides a framework for individual and organizational practice that focuses on keeping adults-at-risk and children safe from abuse. The EJ-YMCA commits to stop abuse against adults-at-risk and children, and prevent it where there is a risk that it may occur.

The EJ-YMCA believes that safeguarding is every human being's responsibility, and it should be based on a clear understanding of adults-at-risk as well as children's needs. Therefore every staff member, volunteer, service provider, and participant has a duty to keep others safe by following these steps:

1. Awareness
2. Prevention
3. Responding
4. Reporting

Terminology:

- **Adult-at-risk:** a person over 18 years old who:
 - has care and support needs, that may or may not be currently covered; or
 - is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse; or
 - as a result of his/her care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or the risk of it.
- **Child:** is every human being who is under 18 years of age (please refer to EJ-YMCA's Child Protection Policy for terminology related to a child, child abuse, child negligence, child protection).
- **Safeguarding adults-at-risk and children:**
 - protecting them from maltreatment;
 - preventing acts that harm their wellbeing;

- ensuring they receive safe-services;
- empowering them to live a better life.

Scope:

This policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, service providers, and participants at any of the EJ-YMCA centers and programs.

Context:

To ensure effective implementation of this policy, it is bound and supported by a number of EJ-YMCA policies:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Diversity, Inclusion and Equity
- Anti-Corruption and Fraud Policy
- Accountability Framework (Complaints Mechanism)

Policy Statement:

- The EJ-YMCA has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.
- The EJ-YMCA commits to promote wellbeing and harm prevention, and to respond effectively whenever concerns are raised.
- The well-being of adults-at-risk and children is paramount, and all of them have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of age, gender, race, cultural background, career experience, skills, beliefs, or anything else.
- The EJ-YMCA recognises that some youth-at-risk and children are additionally vulnerable because of gender, age, level of dependency, or other issues.
- There are no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults-at-risk and children from abuse, exploitation, and mistreatment.

- The EJ-YMCA will work and cooperate with appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure reporting of abuse is appropriate and that the response is to the best benefit of the adult-at-risk or child concerned.
- Through the policies and mechanisms set in place, the EJ-YMCA has created an enabling environment for its staff, volunteers, participants and service providers to raise safeguarding concerns and feel supported with their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The EJ-YMCA requires its Communication and Media staff to get a signed consent form from adults and caregivers before sharing stories or information about participants at any of its centers and programs. The EJ-YMCA does not permit sharing of information related to adults-at-risk and children that might jeopardize their safety and wellbeing.
- All staff and volunteers must receive Safeguarding training, as part of orientation to EJ-YMCA policies, during their induction phase into the organization. Accordingly, they are required to promptly report incidents and raise concerns as part of their duties.
- All service providers must receive and declare commitment to EJ-YMCA policies including Safeguarding Policy and Procedures during contractual phase.
- All participants at the different programs and centers of the EJ-YMCA must be informed about EJ-YMCA policies including Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and the appropriate channels to report incidents or raise concerns.
- The designated Human Resources personnel will fulfil their responsibilities as set in the Accountability Framework and make any necessary referrals as required by the General Secretary and the Complaint Committee assigned.

Safeguarding Procedures:

1. Responsibilities

- The EJ-YMCA believes that safeguarding is every human being's responsibility.
- Every staff member, volunteer, service provider, and participant has a duty to keep others safe.
- Every staff member, volunteer, service provider, and participant must follow the appropriate channels set at the EJ-YMCA to raise concerns and report incidents.
- The EJ-YMCA appoints the Human Resources Department to receive such concerns and incidents.

2. Reporting safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

- Every staff member, volunteer, service provider, and participant is required to raise concerns and report incidents of abuse within the first working day of recognizing them.
- Every staff member, volunteer, service provider, and participant must reach out to the Human Resources Department through any of the following channels:

Mail EJ-YMCA, 82 Nablus Rd, POB 19023, East Jerusalem

Mobile/WhatsApp +970 (0) 562610016

Website <http://www.ej-ymca.org/complaints>

Email complaints@ej-ymca.org

By hand, addressed to Human Resources Department, located in Beit Sahour

- Reporting violations should follow the Complaints Mechanism set in the Accountability Framework of the EJ-YMCA.

3. Responding to safeguarding reports

- Concerns raised and incidents reported undergo the same procedures of sensitive complaints as set within the EJ-YMCA's Accountability Framework.
- The Human Resources Department will follow the set mechanism to deal with the sensitive complaint, and arrange for the protection of and support to the adult-at-risk or child.
- Should the adult-at-risk or child require any specialized services like: medical care, safe shelter, legal advice, psychological support, etc. the Human Resources Department will make necessary referrals to relevant governmental bodies, following approval of the General secretary and the set Complaints Committee.
- Wherever possible, the adult-at-risk should be informed that a concern is reported about risks to them unless it is not safe to do so. It is every adult's right to make decisions concerning their lives. These rights, including the right to privacy, will be weighed when considering responsibilities towards them. They will not be overridden other than where it is clear that the consequence would be seriously detrimental to their, or another person's well-being and where it is lawful to do so.
- In cases where reports are made about adults-at-risk who face honor-based violence or forced marriages, the reports should be dealt with in ultimate confidentiality and without the knowledge of a relative or family member, or friend, or community leader or any other person who is part of the adult's community, as this would place the adult at further risk.

- 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, and unless it is a case of clear and imminent danger to the individual in question or another person.

4. Allegations of abuse or malpractice against a staff member or volunteer

- If the allegation is against an EJ-YMCA staff or volunteer, the allegation must be reported immediately without any delay, to the Human Resources Department.
- It is essential that any allegation of abuse or potential abuse made against a person who works with children and adults-at-risk including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child or adult-at-risk, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Types and Indicators of Abuse:

Following are some types and indicators of abuse that can help individuals recognize it and eventually raise concerns. More types and indicators can be found.

1. Child Abuse

a. Physical indicators

- Any injuries, bruises, fracture, etc. which are not consistent with the explanation given for them.

b. Emotional indicators

- Changes in behaviour e.g. under-achievement or lack of concentration, inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.

c. Neglect indicators

- Regular poor hygiene, or inadequate clothing, or consistently being left alone and unsupervised.

d. Possible sexual abuse indicators

- Preoccupation with sexual activity through words, play or drawing.

- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, dreams or nightmares, sometimes with sexual connotations.

e. Domestic abuse indicators

- A child experiences domestic abuse as part of his/her family life, regardless of whether he/she is physically harmed.

2. Adult-at-risk Abuse

a. Physical indicators

- Injuries which have no satisfactory explanation, or where there is a reasonable suspicion, or a definite knowledge, that injuries resulted of violent acts, or through lack of care, by the care giver.

b. Domestic abuse indicators

- Adults in need of care and support e.g. persons with disabilities, face a higher risk of abuse, which can take any form; neglect, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, honor-based-violence, forced marriage, etc.

c. Psychological indicators

- Unexplained paranoia, or low self-esteem, or excessive fears.

d. Financial abuse indicators

- This usually involves an individual's funds or resources being inappropriately used by another person. Possible indicators are unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills, or lacking belongings and services which they can clearly afford.

e. Discriminatory abuse indicators

- Significant harm or exclusion from mainstream opportunities, provision of poor standards of health care or protection, based on age, gender, race, cultural background, career experience, skills, beliefs, or anything else.

f. Neglect indicators

- Poor condition of accommodation, or inappropriate medical care, or failure to enjoy life with dignity.

Breaches to the Policy:

Failure of any of the EJ-YMCA staff, volunteers, partners, service providers, ... 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 through the authorized relevant channels within the Ministry of Social Development.

This policy was endorsed by the EJ-YMCA Board of Directors in November 2022.

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