



Title: Human Rights Policy – Programs and Participants	Policy No.:
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1.0 Purpose

YMCA of Greater Toronto (YMCA) recognizes the dignity and worth of every individual. As part of our commitment to wellbeing and the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB), we seek to create a climate of mutual respect and provide welcoming program sites that respect the rights of every individual.

Nothing in this policy is intended to deny or discourage a person from seeking assistance through other avenues including the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, or the police, or the courts.

2.0 Persons Affected

This policy applies to members of the public who participate in YMCA services and programs. Staff, volunteers and interns (student placements) should refer to YMCA's Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

3.0 Policy

Discrimination and harassment in our facilities and program settings, whether intentional or unintentional, will not be tolerated.

Discrimination and harassment based on protected grounds is prohibited by the Ontario Human Rights Code. Protected grounds include age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including breastfeeding and pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability. YMCA also prohibits discrimination based on level of literacy and political affiliation. The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act also prohibits harassment (i.e. a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcome).

Violations of this policy are subject to remedial action which may include the suspension or termination of a person's participation or guest access to YMCA facilities and programs.

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Reprisal against any individual for reporting a violation of this policy is strictly prohibited. Prohibited acts of reprisal include but are not limited to coercion, threats, violence or any other manner of retaliation.

Members of the public with a concern about accessibility should refer to YMCA's Accessibility Policy.

4.0 Definitions

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) details specific requirements and standards for accessibility in Ontario. Accessibility standards are the rules that organizations in Ontario follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Accommodation includes measures taken to make a service or program accessible to a person with a disability.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with regard to a service, activity or program based on an alleged violation of this Policy. A complaint is distinct from an inquiry, feedback or a suggestion.

Discrimination means unequal or different treatment, including harassment, that is based even in part on a protected ground (i.e. age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including breastfeeding and pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability) as well as level of literacy and political affiliation. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional. Discrimination may take obvious forms, or it may happen in subtle ways. Even if there are many factors affecting a decision or action, if discrimination is one factor it would be a violation of this policy.

Gender expression is how a person publicly presents or expresses their gender identity. This can include behavior and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways people express their gender. Others perceive a person's gender through these attributes.

Gender identity refers to a person's subjective experience of their own gender. It is a deep internal feelings of whether they identify as woman, man, transgender, genderqueer, non-binary, two-spirit or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth.

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Good faith reporting means making a report or disclosure in good conscience with an honest belief, for the purpose of addressing discrimination or harassment.

Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. If a person does not explicitly object to harassing behavior, or appears to be going along with it, this does not mean that the behavior is acceptable. Harassment including behavior that a person ought reasonably to know is unwelcome.

Protected grounds are: age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including breastfeeding and pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability (all protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code) as well as level of literacy and political affiliation.

Reprisal means penalizing or threatening to penalize a person from exercising their rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code or this policy or from participating in an investigation.

Sex is the classification of people as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person’s reproductive systems, hormones and chromosomes.

Sexual harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious conduct or comment because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of conduct or comment is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It includes unsolicited and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature such as unwelcome sexual advances (verbal, written or physical), requests or demands for sexual favours, any other type of sexually-oriented conduct, verbal abuse or joking of a sexual nature, or saying or doing something because a person does not conform to gender stereotypes.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Non-Supervisory Staff:

- 5.1.1 To create and maintain an accessible, harassment and discrimination-free environment by promoting human rights and reasonably acting to remove barriers to equal treatment
- 5.1.2 To report allegations of discrimination and harassment promptly to a supervisor or manager
- 5.1.3 To cooperate with the review process

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5.2 Managers and Staff in a Supervisory Role:

- 5.2.1 To create and maintain an accessible, harassment and discrimination-free environment by promoting human rights and reasonably acting to remove barriers to equal treatment
- 5.2.2 To take allegations of discrimination and harassment seriously and to respond promptly to any observation, allegation or complaint
- 5.2.3 Report to their supervisor, facilitate the review process and take remedial action as required.
- 5.2.4 Refer to YMCA's Accessibility Policy in dealing with accessibility-based complaints from members of the public.

5.3 Participants:

- 5.3.1 To treat others with respect and dignity.
- 5.3.2 To abide by this policy and, when requiring assistance or accommodation, communicate their needs to a YMCA supervisor or manager.

6.0 Procedures

- 6.1 Anyone who believes that they have been subject to discrimination or harassment contrary to this policy may make an informal complaint to a manager or other supervisory staff for resolution. Alternatively, any individual may make a complaint under YMCA's Complaints Policy. There is no requirement to try informal resolution first.
- 6.2 Persons affected by discrimination or harassment are encouraged to raise a complaint at the earliest opportunity for their issue to be addressed promptly.
- 6.3 Staff receiving a complaint shall submit an incident report as soon as possible.
- 6.4 YMCA reserves the right to not address a complaint if the main underlying factual allegations occurred more than a year prior to the making of the complaint and the discrimination and/or harassment has not continued.
- 6.5 YMCA will endeavor to ensure that biases do not influence the process and that Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging are considered in the process and investigation findings.
- 6.6 Language in this Policy will be updated as equity informed terms evolve.

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7.0 References and Links / Related Documents including links to Management Practices

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

[Accessibility Policy](#)

8.0 Review/Revision History

Date	Revision No.	Revision Type	Reference Section(s)
August 17, 2026	3.0	Update	Updated to new policy template
February 25, 2020	2.0	Update	
January 1, 1994	1.0	New Policy	N/A