

Health & Safety Policy

Updated May 2026 reflecting: • Legal References • Governance & Responsibilities • General Arrangements • Hazards	
Review Cycle	Annual or when there is a change in statutory guidance or legislation, incidents, organisational change
Next Review Date	May 27

GENERAL STATEMENT FOR HEALTH & SAFETY

This is a statement of policy by YMCA Taunton about its intentions, organisation and arrangements for ensuring the health and safety at work of its employees, visitors and contractors. Supplementary to this general Policy Statement, as necessary, there will be specific policies and procedures describing in detail health and safety provisions in each part of the organisation.

It is the policy of YMCA Taunton to:

1. At all times, will comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, RIDDOR 2013, COSHH 2002, PUWER 1998, Manual Handling Operations Regulations, Display Screen Equipment Regulations and associated legislation
2. Provide and maintain so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and healthy conditions, equipment and systems of work.
3. Use, so far as reasonably practicable, those substances and equipment from the range available which present the least hazard and minimum risk.
4. Provide such information, training and supervision necessary to enable employees to recognise potential dangers so that they might take precautions and carry out their duties in a safe manner and contribute positively to health and safety at work.
5. Ensure so far as reasonably practicable that the health and safety of other people will not be adversely affected by its activities.



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HOUSING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SUPPORT & ADVICE

6. Meet the requirements of current relevant legislation and ensure that employees and others who are involved with the activities of the Charity are consulted about matters that could affect their health and safety
7. Suitable and sufficient risk assessments will be undertaken and reviewed regularly, ensuring all activities are assessed so that hazards can be identified and controls put in place to minimise risk.
8. Carry out health surveillance where required.
9. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following significant organisational change, incidents, changes in legislation, or identified shortcomings.
10. Ensure that all employees with specific responsibilities for the maintenance of health and safety adequately delegate these responsibilities in their absence.
11. Near miss incidents will be investigated where appropriate to identify lessons learned and prevent recurrence



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Nick Low, Chair
YMCA Taunton

GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Trustees retains overall responsibility for health and safety governance and will receive periodic reports on health and safety performance, significant incidents, risk management and compliance. The CEO is responsible for implementation, monitoring and review. Managers are responsible for local compliance and ensuring employees and volunteers under their supervision receive appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision. All staff have a duty to work safely and report concerns.

1. Without detracting from the primary responsibilities of managers and supervisors for ensuring safe and healthy conditions of work, the responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Health and Safety Policy are carried out within the Charity is that of: **Clare Langley, CEO**
2. The following are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy in the various departments of the Charity:

a) Pre-School

Sarah Milton, Early Years & Young People Manager

Zoe Shattock Deputy Pre-School Manager

YMCA Taunton recognises its responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for children, employees, volunteers and visitors within the Pre-School. Activities will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), safeguarding procedures and relevant health and safety legislation. Suitable risk assessments will be undertaken and reviewed regularly to ensure that indoor and outdoor activities, equipment, educational visits and learning environments are safe and appropriate. Appropriate levels of supervision will be maintained at all times and all employees and volunteers are required to report any health and safety concerns immediately to the Early Years & Young People Manager or Deputy Pre-School Manager.

3. **ALL EMPLOYEES** have a legal responsibility to :

- a) Co-operate fully with the Charity in implementing the requirements of all Health and Safety legislation, related codes of practice, safety instructions and safety signs in order to achieve a safe and healthy workplace.
- b) Take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their activities at work and refrain from doing anything which constitutes a danger to themselves or others.
- c) Immediately bring to the attention of their line manager/supervisor any situations or practices which may lead to injuries or ill health.
- d) Ensure that any equipment issued to them or for which they are responsible is correctly used and properly stored.
- e) Be responsible for good housekeeping in the area in which they are working.
- f) Report all accidents, in accordance with YMCA Taunton guidance.
- g) Not interfere with anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

Anyone who becomes aware of a health and safety problem that they cannot put right must inform the responsible person named above immediately

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Accidents

Any accident, incidents, dangerous occurrences or near-misses however small, which occurs on the Charity premises, must be entered in the accident book and reported using the forms provided for this purpose. Accident books may be found in the following locations :

- a) Main Office and Preschool Office

Accidents and incidents will be reported to the Enforcing Authority by the CEO in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 and any subsequent amendments.

The CEO will examine Accident Records as part of general management procedures and investigate all reportable accidents.

First Aid

First aid facilities are provided for employees should they become ill or injured at work at the following locations :

- a) Main Office
- b) Kitchen Ground Floor
- c) Kitchen First Floor
- d) Preschool Kitchen
- e) Climbing Hall

Numerous personnel have achieved the required standard and are designated First Aiders.

Fire Safety

YMCA Taunton will maintain appropriate fire safety arrangements, including fire risk assessments, fire detection and warning systems, emergency lighting, fire-fighting equipment, staff training and regular evacuation drills. All employees, volunteers and visitors are required to comply with fire safety procedures and emergency evacuation arrangements.

ALL FIRE ESCAPE ROUTES and FIRE EXITS will be kept clear of obstruction at all times. Department Managers are to ensure daily, that extinguishers are in their correct locations and routes are obstruction free.

Fire extinguishers must only be used for small fires where there is no risk of danger or injury and to assist with escape from a burning building. Fire extinguishers will be tested annually.

Fire alarms are sited in most areas and will be tested monthly.

Fire evacuation drills will be carried out at least three times per year, including within the Preschool provision where required.

Passenger lifts and platform lifts must not be used during a fire evacuation.

Responsibility for checking fire procedures, equipment and maintaining fire records is that of the CEO.

FIRE ACTION PATHWAY

DISCOVER IT • RAISE IT • REPORT IT • EVACUATE



1. FIRE DISCOVERED

The fire alarm may be the first indication of a fire.

You may also discover:

- Fire, smoke, burning smell or signs of combustion are identified.
- Visible flames
- Smoke or heat
- Burning odour
- Activated fire detector
- Report from staff, visitors or contractors



DO NOT USE LIFTS AT ANY TIME.
Use the stairs.



2. RAISE THE ALARM

Immediately alert others to the danger.

If the fire is in or near a building:

- Operate the nearest fire alarm call point
- Evacuate the building immediately

If the fire is in an open area:

- Evacuate the immediate area
- Warn anyone at risk

DO NOT:

- ✗ Delay raising the alarm
- ✗ Assume someone else has reported it



3. REPORT THE FIRE

Contact Reception if safe to do so.

Reception will:

- ✓ Call 999
- ✓ Request Fire & Rescue Service attendance
- ✓ Provide the exact address and location of the fire

ADDRESS TO PROVIDE:

YMCA Taunton
Lisieux Way
Taunton
TA12LB



EMERGENCY CALL
999



4. IS IT SAFE TO TACKLE THE FIRE?

YES

Only if:

- ✓ You have received appropriate training
- ✓ The correct extinguisher is available
- ✓ Your escape route remains clear
- ✓ The fire is small and contained

NO

- ✗ Leave immediately
- ✗ Continue evacuation
- ✗ Proceed to the assembly point

FIRE MARSHAL / APPOINTED PERSON RESPONSIBILITIES



Assist evacuation



Check designated areas if safe to do so



Ensure assembly point procedures are followed



Report missing persons to Fire & Rescue Service



Liaise with Fire & Rescue Service



Prevent re-entry until authorised



IMPORTANT

- ✗ Never place yourself at risk
- ✗ Never fight a fire if unsure which extinguisher to use
- ✗ Never allow a fire to block your escape route
- ✗ Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- ✗ Do not re-enter the building until authorised



5. EVACUATE

Proceed immediately to your designated assembly point.



ASSEMBLY POINT

Parking Bay – Main Car Park

Staff, visitors and contractors must:

- ✓ Remain at the assembly point
- ✓ Await further instructions
- ✓ Never re-enter the building unless authorised



6. ACCOUNT FOR PERSONNEL

Trained appointed personnel will:

- ✓ Conduct roll calls where applicable
- ✓ Account for staff, visitors and contractors
- ✓ Report missing persons to Fire & Rescue Service
- ✓ Maintain control of the assembly area

KEY CONTACTS



EMERGENCY SERVICES
999



RECEPTION

Contact Reception to report the fire if safe to do so.



ASSEMBLY POINT

Parking Bay – Main Car Park

IN AN
EMERGENCY



RAISE THE ALARM
IMMEDIATELY



EVACUATE
THE BUILDING



GO TO THE
ASSEMBLY POINT



DO NOT RE-ENTER
UNTIL AUTHORISED



FIRE SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

If in doubt, raise the alarm and evacuate.

Thank you for helping keep everyone safe.

YMCA TAUNTON

Violence, Aggression and Abuse – Zero Tolerance

YMCA Taunton operates a zero-tolerance approach to violence, aggression, threatening behaviour, harassment, intimidation or abuse directed towards employees, volunteers, trustees, service users, contractors or visitors.

Any incident involving verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, physical violence, discrimination or harassment must be reported immediately to a manager and recorded in accordance with YMCA procedures.

Where appropriate, individuals may be required to leave YMCA premises, have access to services restricted, or be referred to the Police or other relevant agencies.

YMCA Taunton is committed to providing a safe environment for all and will take reasonable steps to protect employees, volunteers and others from unacceptable behaviour.

Visitors

All visitors must report to Reception on arrival and enter their details in the Visitors Book in the main office or Preschool if visiting the Early Years Dept. Members of staff are responsible for anyone visiting them whilst they are on charity premises. As far as possible, visitors will be accompanied by an employee and must not wander freely around working areas. Unaccompanied visitors must report to their original point of contact prior to leaving and then be escorted to reception or to an appropriate exit.

Contractors

In order to ensure that work undertaken on the charity's behalf is carried out without risk to the charity's employees and members of the public who may be affected by those operations, the competence and safety arrangements of contractors must be established prior to work commencing. **The CEO must be informed prior to a contractor carrying out any work which may be deemed hazardous e.g. construction or hot work etc.**

Contractors must have adequate insurance cover, be made aware of the requirements of this Health and Safety Policy and where appropriate submit a 'method statement' detailing how the work will be carried out in a safe manner whilst on charity premises prior to the work commencing. If appropriate, the CEO must be informed when the contractor arrives on site to enable the monitoring of the work to ensure it is being carried out safely. The Safeguarding of children, young people and adults must be maintained and work will be carried out in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, contractors will be subject to suitable safeguarding controls and supervision arrangements.

Working Alone

Managers must ensure that regular communication is maintained with members of staff who are required to work alone. Refer to the Lone Worker Policy. People working alone must not carry out certain activities; advice in this respect can be obtained from the CEO.

Home and Remote Working

Where employees are authorised to work from home or another remote location, YMCA Taunton will take reasonable steps to ensure that health and safety requirements are maintained. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their workspace is safe, suitably equipped and free from foreseeable hazards. Any work-related accidents, incidents or health and safety concerns arising whilst working remotely must be reported to their line manager without delay. Where appropriate, workstation assessments will be completed and reasonable adjustments considered to support employee wellbeing and safe working practices.

Occupational Road Risk

YMCA Taunton recognises that driving on charity business forms part of the work activities undertaken by some employees and volunteers. All persons driving on behalf of the Charity must hold a valid driving licence, ensure that any vehicle used is roadworthy, appropriately insured for business use where required, taxed and operated in accordance with Road Traffic legislation. Drivers are responsible for carrying out basic vehicle safety checks, planning journeys appropriately and ensuring that they are fit to drive. Mobile phones or other hand-held devices must not be used whilst driving and journeys should be managed in a manner that minimises the risk of fatigue. Any road traffic collision, incident or concern arising whilst undertaking charity business must be reported to the CEO as soon as practicable.

HAZARDS

Premises

The Charity recognises the importance of having clean and well-ventilated facilities in the workplace. The charity engages personnel to ensure that the workplace is cleaned on a regular basis and expects all employees to help keep the workplace clean, tidy and hazard free.

To that end, all access routes, corridors and staircases must be kept clean and free of obstruction. Work areas must be kept clean and tidy and all waste must be properly disposed of. Lighting must be maintained at an adequate level for the activity being carried out. The smoking policy must be strictly adhered to.

All employees must bring to the attention of their Supervisor any problem with workplace safety or cleanliness.

Climbing Wall, Equipment and Working at Height

Specific operational procedures, inspections, competency requirements, rescue arrangements and PPE controls are maintained separately for climbing activities.

YMCA Taunton recognises that climbing activities present specific risks associated with working at height and the use of specialist equipment. Climbing equipment, including ropes, harnesses, carabiners, anchors and associated safety systems, will be inspected, maintained and used in accordance with relevant legislation, including the Work at Height Regulations 2005, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), where applicable. Suitable inspection records will be maintained and only competent and appropriately trained personnel will be authorised to supervise, inspect or use such equipment.

Display Screen Equipment

All workstations will be assessed in line with Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended) to ensure that they are suitable for use by individual operators. Where any discrepancy is apparent and adjustments need to be made, the matter must be reported to the relevant manager.

Manual Handling

Manual handling must be avoided whenever it is possible to use other methods for transporting loads. When lifting or handling heavy or awkward objects, extreme care must be exercised and assistance must be obtained if there is any risk of strain or injury. Access to high-level storage areas must only be achieved by using suitable steps or ladders provided.

Hazardous Substances

Where a suitable non-hazardous alternative is available it must be used.

Where the use of a hazardous substance cannot be avoided, it must only be used for its intended purpose and the manufacturer's instructions must be followed.

All hazardous substances must be kept secure in their designated store. Only small quantities are permitted in the workplace.

All lids and caps must be replaced immediately after use and waste must be properly disposed of.

An assessment is made of all substances used by the Charity and where hazards have been identified, data sheets have been prepared which must be consulted so that users can familiarise themselves with the precautions they must take to minimise the risk. The CEO holds all data sheets on file, with copies being held by the Early Years & Young People Manager for substances which may be used by the early years staff. All new hazardous substances brought into the Charity must be stored in the correct manner and

notified to the CEO who will see that the hazard documentation supplied by the manufacturer/supplier is distributed to those persons to whom they apply.

NO SUBSTANCES, WHETHER HAZARDOUS OR NOT, SHOULD BE KEPT IN UNMARKED CONTAINERS

Electricity

A competent person regularly checks electrical installations and equipment for electrical safety. The CEO is responsible for organising such inspections.

Under no circumstances should anyone interfere with or attempt to repair electrical installations or equipment unless they have sufficient technical knowledge or experience to avoid risk of danger or injury.

No electrical equipment will be connected to the charity supply unless it is electrically safe. No personal electrical equipment of any type is to be used within the Charity by any employees without the specific, written authorisation of the CEO.

Electrical appliances must be checked prior to use to ensure that the supply voltage is correct.

Care must be taken to ensure that leads and cables do not cause tripping hazards.

Machinery and Work Equipment

The scope of 'work equipment' is extremely wide. It covers almost any equipment used at work including hammers, knives, photocopiers, ladders etc.

Machines and equipment will be properly maintained and must only be used for their intended purpose by people who have received adequate training and have been authorised to do so.

The Department Manager is responsible for ensuring all machinery and equipment is regularly serviced, inspected and maintained where appropriate and complies with all current legislation.

Specific arrangements are in place for the climbing equipment, which is managed by the climbing staff and overseen by the CEO.

Lifts and Accessibility Equipment

Passenger lifts, platform lifts and other accessibility equipment provided by YMCA Taunton will be maintained, inspected and serviced by competent persons in accordance with statutory requirements and manufacturers' recommendations.

Employees must not attempt to repair, interfere with or release persons from lifts unless specifically trained and authorised to do so.

Any faults, defects or concerns relating to lift operation must be reported immediately to the CEO and the equipment taken out of service where necessary.

Restricted Access

Cleaning cupboards to be kept locked shut when not in use.

Only authorised persons allowed within the Preschool.

Only authorised persons to have access to the Climbing Wall and is kept locked shut when not in use

Personal Protective Equipment

Where there is a requirement for personal protective equipment to be used it will be supplied and maintained free of charge by the Charity.

It is the responsibility of employees to use any equipment issued and to report any fault or defect in the equipment to the appropriate person.

Personal protective equipment includes harnesses, carabiners etc within the climbing environment. Specific controls and arrangements are in place for the climbing PPE, which is managed by the climbing staff and overseen by the CEO

Personal protective equipment should only be used after other controls have been put into effect and for risks that are of a temporary or residual nature.

Food Hygiene

When handling or preparing food there are specific hygiene requirements:

- Regularly wash hands before and during food preparation and especially after using the lavatory
- Tell your supervisor of any skin, nose, throat, or bowel problem
- Ensure cuts or sores are covered with correct waterproof dressings
- Keep yourself clean and wear clean clothing
- Never cough or sneeze over food
- Clean as you go. Keep all equipment and surfaces clean
- Prepare raw and cooked food in separate areas. Keep perishable food covered and either refrigerated (less than 8°C) or piping hot (above 63°C)
- Ensure waste food is disposed of properly. Keep the lid on rubbish bin and wash your hands after putting waste in it
- Avoid handling food as far as possible
- Tell your supervisor of any defects or concerns regarding the facilities – eg uncleanliness, refrigeration malfunction, cracked food preparation surfaces

YMCA staff and volunteers with responsibility for the preparation of food will be trained in Basic Food Hygiene and Allergy Awareness.

Allergies

Creating a working environment where employees and volunteers can safely do their jobs is part of our Duty of Care. Having an allergic condition that is severe or life threatening may also mean they can be protected under the Equality Act 2010, as it could be classed as a disability.

Employees or volunteers living with severe allergic conditions are to advise the CEO without delay to ensure Risk Assessments and controls as appropriate may be carried out. The law does not require those with allergic conditions to do so, but if adjustments are needed to enable employees and volunteers to work more effectively, then they should disclose their condition.

All YMCA Taunton First Aiders are trained in how to respond to anaphylaxis and administer an adrenaline auto-injector, first aiders and co-workers should be advised on where employees and volunteers keep their medication.

Individuals with a food allergy should advise their line manager or the CEO in order that we may risk assess to ensure that the potential for allergic reaction and cross contamination is reduced in the workplace.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, Vapes

Smoking and vaping within the premises or within 5 metres of the building are prohibited at all times.

The use of drugs (except when prescribed/under medical supervision) is prohibited on site at all times.

The use of intoxicants (alcohol) is prohibited on site at all times and no employee/volunteer may undertake his/her duties if under the influence of alcohol or drugs (except under medical supervision).

It should be noted that in line with our Code of Conduct, the consumption of tobacco products, vapes, drugs (unless prescribed/under medical supervision) and intoxicants are prohibited at all times when employees/volunteers may be identified as or wearing YMCA corporate clothing.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

YMCA Taunton recognises that mental health and wellbeing are important factors in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

The Charity is committed to promoting a positive working environment and taking reasonable steps to identify and reduce work-related stress and other factors that may adversely affect mental wellbeing.

Work-related stress will be assessed and managed in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 where significant risks are identified.

Employees and volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns relating to their wellbeing with their line manager or the CEO at an early stage so that appropriate support, guidance and reasonable adjustments may be considered where necessary.