



Youth Interaction Code of Conduct

Joy of Motion is dedicated to being a safe place for all children. We define that as a space free of physical and emotional harm, which includes harassment, bullying, and abuse. The goal of this Code of Conduct is to create this environment for children, staff, and volunteers while nurturing creative freedom and self-expression for all.

Joy of Motion instructors, staff and volunteers will be referred to as "Employee(s)" for the remainder of this document.

DEFINITIONS

Certain definitions are outlined here to help clarify Joy of Motion's current understanding on these topics.

Child: A child or youth is defined as any person under the age of 18 OR any person over the age of 18 enrolled in a youth program.

Staff: Staff is defined as any person employed by Joy of Motion, including administrative staff, faculty, or other instructors. For the purposes of this document, staff also includes regular volunteers (e.g. workstudy).

Harassment: Harassment refers to behavior that is unwelcome, demeaning, or personally offensive to its recipients.

Bullying: Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Child Abuse: Federal law describes child abuse as any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

GUIDELINES

Certain guidelines are outlined below to help ensure that Joy of Motion maintains a safe environment.

1. To protect all the persons described above, at no time during a Joy of Motion program or class may an Employee be alone with a single child where the Employee cannot be observed by others.
2. All Joy of Motion classes should be held in spaces where the Employee and students can be observed by parents: ideally rooms with windows, mirrors, and an unlocked or open door.

3. Employees shall never leave a child unsupervised.
4. Employees should not be alone with a child in a single-occupancy, locked bathroom; minors who need assistance in the bathroom should be escorted either by two adults OR by their parent or guardian.
5. At offsite performances, dressing rooms should be utilized as green rooms, for preparation, makeup, etc. Children should change their clothes in a private space like an adjacent bathroom.
6. Employees shall not abuse children or use corporal punishment of any kind. This includes physical, verbal, sexual, and mental abuse, or neglect. Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and is cause for immediate dismissal.
7. Employees will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. A child's right to say "No" is to be encouraged and respected.
8. Employees will use appropriate touch in their instruction and interactions, and will not touch children's groin or breasts, or pat them on the buttocks.
9. Employees will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement, rather than competition, comparison, and criticism.
10. Employees will not give gifts or special favors to individual children or show preferential treatment to a child or group of children to the exclusion of others.
11. Employees will respond to children with respect and consideration, and treat all children equitably regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and cultural or financial background.
12. Employees will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward other adults in Joy of Motion studios.
13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol, recreational marijuana, or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
14. Smoking, vaping, or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
15. Profanity or inappropriate jokes are prohibited. Employees should refrain from using music that includes profanity, sexual content, or explicit references to drugs, alcohol, or violence.
16. Employees will not have private interactions through social media, text, computer, or hand-held devices with any single child in the program without the inclusion of the child's parent.
17. Social media or other digital interactions should be on platforms where messages are recorded and saved (i.e. messaging programs, text, email), not through programs designed to be ephemeral (i.e. Snapchat, Instagram or Facebook stories, etc).
18. In any setting, Employees should refrain from sharing excessive personal information or intimate details of their personal life with children.
19. Any kind of harassment, bullying, or abuse is prohibited.
20. Employees should not host children in their homes or private residences overnight or at any time where they may be unsupervised or alone with the Employee.
21. Employees are not to transport children in their own vehicles without express prior consent of parents and Joy of Motion leadership.
22. Employees may not date program participants under the age of 18 or those whom they are directly supervising, and should refrain from dating participants in youth programs who are over 18.
23. All Employees are required to read and sign this document and are required to attend child abuse prevention training (administered by Safe Shores DC or another Darkness to Light curriculum).

MANDATED REPORTING GUIDELINES

- In Maryland, “Educators” are considered mandated reporters and should report any suspected child abuse immediately to Joy of Motion’s leadership, who will then work with them to contact local authorities; educators should not attempt to undertake an investigation on their own.
- In the District of Columbia, both “Teachers” and “Coaches” are considered mandated reporters and should report suspected child abuse immediately to Joy of Motion’s leadership, who will then work with them to contact local authorities; teachers or coaches should not attempt to undertake an investigation on their own.

**Portions of this Code of Conduct are excerpted from YMCA of the USA’s Child Abuse Prevention Code of Conduct, as recommended by Safe Shores DC.*

RESOURCES

Maryland - Child Protective Services:

<http://dhr.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-or-neglect/mandated-reporters/>

DC - Mandated Reporting Training: <https://dc.mandatedreporter.org/pages/Welcome.action>;
<https://cfsa.dc.gov/service/mandated-reporter-training>

Safe Shores - DC Child Advocacy Center: <https://www.safeshores.org/>



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EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned Employee, have read and comprehend Joy of Motion Dance Center's *Youth Interaction Code of Conduct*, and I understand that any violation of its terms may result in disciplinary action or termination of my employment. I will do everything in my power to help facilitate a safe space for all children at Joy of Motion Dance Center.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date