

Volunteer Manual

Youth Alive Trust's guide to being a safe and effective leader







**Thank you for choosing
to be a volunteer at YAT!**

Purpose of this manual

As leaders we want to hold ourselves to a high standard. This is so we can be the best role models and mentors of the children/young people on our programmes and in our community. We want to be a body of people united in our vision, values and faith. This booklet is not intended to impose strict rules, but to convey the vision of Youth Alive Trust and the level of integrity we want all our paid staff, volunteer staff and leaders to be held to.

Vision

Youth Alive Trust (YAT) is a youth and community development agency. Established in 1989 to serve young people in New Brighton and surrounding suburbs, the Trust aims to support young people holistically (socially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually) through our programmes.

We want a team that is passionate about creating a safe, caring and FUN environment for young people. Where everyone feels included and accepted, 'part of the whānau.'

To see tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau filled with hope



YAT'S VALUES

Safety:

To provide a place where young people are safe and feel safe – on our programmes, in our building and with our leaders. Safe from bullying, safe from abuse, safe from gangs, safe from negative peer pressure, and safe to be themselves.

Faith:

Our values, code of conduct and morals are based on the Christian faith. These are modelled to young people and shared when appropriate. Matt 22 v 37-40 – Love God & love your neighbour as yourself.

Holistic Support:

Recognising and supporting all the key areas of growth needed in an individual – socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Fun:

To provide programmes and activities that bring enjoyment, smiles and laughs to everyone involved – young people and volunteers. Laughter is a great medicine and we want to provide programmes that are appealing and create long lasting positive memories.

Encouragement:

We provide oodles of positive affirmations, Hi-5's and big smiles that build self-esteem and encouragement and foster a 'have a go' attitude. 'Put-downs' and 'shaming' are not acceptable.

Inclusive:

We do not discriminate against anyone from being a part of our programmes, whatever race, culture, religion, gender, or behavioural issue. Everyone starts with a clean slate and much grace is offered for those who slip.

Leadership:

Encouraging young people to be positive influences in their home, school and community. We aim to build up new young leaders and feed them back into the programmes that they were once a part of or other community, school or government programmes.

YAT'S VALUES

Networking:

We aim to integrate ourselves into community life, networking with other community groups, schools, the police and council. We believe we are stronger working together than alone.

Identity & Culture:

YAT seeks to celebrate diversity and culture. We not only want to be inclusive, but also to provide a safe place which allows children/young people and leaders to express and explore their cultural identity. Making sure each child feels valued and accepted for who they are and where they come from.

Servant Leadership:

We want to follow the example of Jesus in our leadership style (John 13:4-5). We hope that there is plenty of fun/joy in being a leader at YAT, although we want our primary focus to be the enjoyment of the children/young people. Ensuring their well-being and doing what we can to make this a great place for them to be.

Teamwork:

Without our volunteers we wouldn't be able to run all the amazing programmes and activities we do. Using your initiative, working together as a team, encouraging one another and sharing the load is what helps create a positive environment and makes YAT a great place to be for everyone.





Code of Ethics

Youth Alive Trust acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand. Our staff should take responsibility (and seek training) to understand the Treaty, Te Reo me ona Tikanga Maori, and apply this learning where appropriate.

All YAT staff should acknowledge and have an understanding of the 'Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand'. This should be used as a guide, to ensure that our work with rangatahi is carried out in a safe, skilled, ethical manner. It also serves as a means of accountability for YAT leaders, and should be used as a reference for any ethical issues that may arise.

See 'Mana Taiohi' (pg. 8-9)

Full version available here:

<https://arataiohi.org.nz/career/code-of-ethics/>

Mana Taiohi



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Code of Behaviour

'Above Reproach' Policy:

We want to grow a community that is characterised by **LOVE & FORGIVENESS**, not by rules and regulations. As part of our faith and being responsible for working with children/young people, there is a particularly high standard that comes with the responsibility of being a role model to others. We call this being 'Above Reproach' in our actions and behaviour, both in our professional and personal lives.

It is important to keep yourself accountable to others. Within YAT this could be your Programme Coordinator, the Volunteer Coordinator, or your Mentor. If you genuinely are struggling in any area please don't be afraid to talk about it. We are also here to support you and want the best for you as well. Be honest and teachable!

By agreeing to be a leader we ask that you accept this responsibility and agree to follow the standards that centre on personal growth.

Language & Conversations:

- No swearing.
- No gossip, negative language or put downs.
- Don't engage in 'adult/inappropriate' conversations or talk about a child in front of them or other children/young people.
- No purposeful embarrassment of a child due to an accident or incident.
- No purposeful belittling of a child especially in front of another child.
- Be fair, consistent, and precise in communicating with the children/young people.

Clothing:

Wear appropriate clothing (for activities provided). Be mindful of what you are wearing and what you are portraying (e.g. no 'see-through' clothing, clothing that reveals your underwear, or any inappropriate wording/images).

Relationships, Boundaries & Personal Safety

With tamariki & rangatahi:

- **No romantic relationships** ('dating') between volunteer staff and children/young people.
- **No sleepovers one on one** with a child (including no mixed tenting/bunkrooms on camps).
- **Don't be alone** in any rooms with a child where no one can see you.
- No driving with children/young people in a car one on one, unless it's an emergency and/or you have parental consent.
- Volunteers should ensure that any physical contact with children only meets the child's physical and/or emotional needs.
- When a child initiates physical contact in the seeking of affection, reassurance or comfort it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for their developmental stage and needs.
- **Hi-5's, fist-bumps & handshakes are great** ways to give positive affirmation.
- **Never be alone in a bathroom or changing room** with a child. While on site use designated "staff only" toilets. Do not use boys/girls bathrooms during programmes.

Volunteer staff **should not attempt to contact children/young people from YAT programmes outside of programme time** unless through prior arrangement with the parent/caregiver(s) (e.g. mentoring, counselling, volunteering)

Reason:

A child could tell their parents and you could get in trouble even if everything was harmless. Things can be misinterpreted!

We trust you but we also want to keep you safe!

If you are concerned about anything tell your programme coordinator right away
BE ACCOUNTABLE!

Alcohol & Substances

YAT programmes are a drug, alcohol, and smoke free environment; we ask all our volunteer staff to uphold this as well.

Leaders cannot be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance while they are caring for children on a YAT programme, activity or event.

Never offer or buy drugs or alcohol to children.

Do not do anything illegal at any time!

Do not drink alcoholic drinks in the company of any children, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Leaders should again be 'Above Reproach', being wise around alcohol and aware you are an example to your fellow leaders and children in ALL areas of life.

Choosing to live with high moral standards so that nobody is led astray by your actions, is part of the privilege of leadership.

Smoking & Vaping:

No smoking or vaping on Grace Vineyard premises or surrounds, during programme, while in sight of a child, or while being identifiable as a YAT leader.



Note:

YAT takes this area seriously and any infringements could result in leaders being asked to step down from leading for a time or even indefinitely.

YAT's biggest rule



**respect
OTHERS**

**respect
YOURSELF**

**respect
PROPERTY**

our second biggest rule is

HAVE FUN

& give everything a go!

Social Media & Cell-Phones

Social Media is a huge part of young people's lives, that's why we want to navigate it as wisely and effectively as possible. Keeping our team protected but also utilising this to encourage, support and connect with our young people, their parent/caregiver(s) and the wider community.

Youth Alive Trust runs several social media pages for posting updates, programme information, highlights, celebrating our team, games & activities, and sharing other community news/relevant resources for young people and their parents. This is also a point of contact for people to message should they have questions or queries for our team.

Youth Alive Trust also has a general programmes phone and an OSCAR phone which can be used to text/call young people/parent/caregiver(s).

Therefore volunteers should not add any children/young people from YAT programmes or their parent/caregiver(s) on any social media, streaming or gaming platform OR to give out their personal number (unless via formal mentoring agreement). YAT employees are able to communicate necessary information through appropriate channels.

If a child/young person manages to contact you **always keep a record** of all conversations and **avoid replying after 9pm**. As soon as possible inform a YAT staff member. Never use things like 'snapchat' to communicate with children/young people where records cannot be obtained easily.

Do not contact YAT staff/group chats after 9pm unless absolutely necessary to communicate information about a YAT programme, event or activity (e.g. about an activity the following day). This is well outside of YAT office hours and most staff are finished work. Anything not urgent can wait till the next day.



PLEASE DO NOT use your phone on programme (unless it's an emergency, absolutely necessary, or taking photos/playing music).

Volunteers that excessively use their phone during programmes may be asked to hand it in to the coordinator until debrief.

Training!

Part of volunteering at YAT is attending the regular training provided.

These are highly recommended for **ALL VOLUNTEERS** to attend. These will teach you skills needed to fulfill the tasks involved in your role and help to grow your leadership skills.

It is also important to attend trainings to ensure you are updated on what's happening at YAT and our **Policies and Procedures**.



Driving & Vehicle Use

On YAT programmes you may be asked to drive a vehicle. To drive a vehicle you must adhere to all of YAT's vehicle policies.

Every van should ideally have a second leader sitting in the back row to help manage behaviour while driving. It is both leaders' responsibility to ensure everyone in the van is accounted for and wearing a seatbelt before driving. Children under the age of 8 must use a booster seat and may need help with that and their seatbelt.

Seatbelts must be worn at all times by all passengers while driving on YAT programmes.

During van rides noise should be kept at manageable levels to allow the driver to focus on driving safely. Children should be sitting down at all times and all limbs must remain inside of the vehicle while moving. It is your role if you are not the driver to enforce this.

The second leader in a van is also responsible for making a list of all children/young people in the van and ensure no one is missing before leaving off-site locations.

It is usually expected that a YAT driver has held their Full Drivers License for 2 years before they drive on programmes. Before using a vehicle owned or operated by YAT, permission must first be gained from the appropriate YAT representative. This will involve completing a Driver Agreement form and providing a copy of your drivers license. You may then be required to take part in a drivers test with an appropriate YAT representative to ensure your driving abilities.

All speeding and parking fines are the responsibility of the driver.



Ratios

Our ratios are 1 leader aged 16 or older to x amount of kids depending on the activity.

Our standard ratios are 1:10 in the building, 1:8 out of the building, 1:6 around/in water.



Some activities may have different ratios which your programme coordinator will advise you of.

This means that at any point during the programme if you are 16 years old or older, **you are legally responsible for up to 10 young people.**

This is why it's really important to stay aware and spread out and not just hang out with the other leaders.

When someone is trying to get a group to listen it is recommended to **spread the leaders around and through the group** to make it easier to remind children to keep quite while listening.

Ensure all children in your care are **visible and within hearing distance at all times.**



Health & Safety

Youth Alive Trust is committed to ensuring the health & safety of all employees, volunteer staff, children, parents/guardians, and visitors. We commit to as far as is reasonably possible providing a safe environment for everyone. We expect everyone in the team to play a role in helping to keep each other safe.

Sick or Injured Child:

If a child is injured/unwell while on programme, take them away from any activities (if they are able to move). If they are seriously injured clear the area around them (DO NOT try to move them). Reassure them and keep them calm and comfortable. Report to Programme Coordinator who will contact a parent if necessary.

Leaders without current first-aid certificates **SHOULD NOT administer any first aid**. This should be certified staff only, if it's necessary/appropriate.

If needed emergency or medical services should be contacted. An Incident/Accident report should be completed by the person with the most knowledge of the incident or accident.

Sun safety:

YAT will provide free sunblock for children while on programme, although they are encouraged to apply their own before arriving. Children should apply sunblock to themselves or if necessary with help from a leader.

Leaders should be proactive in ensuring children have applied sunscreen (especially before & after swimming), wear their sun hats, drink enough water, and keep out of the sun when possible.

Food & Kitchen Use:

When food activities are held or prepared for a programme, activity or event always ensure:

- The area is clean before starting
- Food is served on clean plates or trays.
- Everyone touching food washes and dries their hands.
- Long hair is tied up (or hair net worn).
- Food is fresh to eat, covered when required and stored appropriately
- Money handling and touching food do not mix!

Make sure all areas used are cleaned after use:

- Dishes are first **RINSED WITH WATER ONLY** and then put through the dishwasher.
- Dishes are put away in correct places
- Dishwasher is turned off if you're the last one to use it at the end of the day (ask for help if never done before).
- Leftovers stored appropriately
- Bins emptied
- Benches wiped
- Floors swept & mopped if needed

While in kitchen shoes should be worn at all times. Leaders must be mindful of access to and use of knives, ensuring children use them correctly if needed.

Risk management:

All activities incorporate a level of risk. If we are aware of the potential for an accident we can eliminate or minimise danger. It's said 92% of all accidents are considered avoidable.

If you see unsafe practice, shut it down, then figure a way to minimise or eliminate the risk, and enlist the help of other staff to help you do this.

Your programme coordinator will have relevant safety plans; talk to them if you have any questions or concerns.

Emergencies:

In an emergency call 111 (Police, Ambulance, Fire)

Emergency evacuation point is at the old school or the Seafield carpark.

Child Protection

The rights, welfare and safety of children are the primary and first concern of YAT.

All staff have the responsibility for the safety of young people on YAT programmes and for the safe management of identified and suspected child abuse and neglect.

All cases of suspected child abuse must be responded to in a manner which ensures the child's **immediate and future safety**; reassure them they did the right thing.

Ask open ended questions, and **don't make any promises** you can't keep (e.g. I will keep you safe, I won't tell anyone...).

Explain to the child that you need to tell someone else, after which you should speak to your programme coordinator or the Programmes Manager.

As soon as possible record in writing as much detail as possible, any disclosure of abuse, any factual concerns or any observations. But DO NOT do this in front of the child.

Decisions on contacting outside agencies or Oranga Tamariki will be made by a YAT manager or the Child Protection Officer. However, do not be afraid to share information if you are concerned about the wellbeing of a young person.

ORANGA TAMARIKI CONTACT DETAILS:

If you feel a young person is in immediate danger call the police 111.

If you are worried about a child and want to make a referral or report of concern phone 0508 326 459 or email after hours contact@ot.govt.nz. OT also offer advice, so if you are unsure, it's better to ask than to ignore possible abuse/neglect.

Complaints

If at any time a parent, a child or volunteer wish to raise a concern, suggestion or has a complaint, it is appropriate to talk to the Programme Coordinator or in the second instance the Programmes Manager. All complaints are dealt with confidentially, fairly and actioned as soon as possible.

Should a volunteer member of staff be found to be liable or responsible for a complaint, they may face disciplinary action in accordance with YAT policy.

A volunteer staff member may be suspended immediately pending further investigation if they are accused of any of the following: Striking or sexually abusing a young person, failing to observe programme rules so that a young person is injured or placed in serious danger.

If the complaint is upheld, the volunteer staff member will be dismissed.

Volunteer staff complaints against other volunteer staff must be referred to the Programme Coordinator.

If it is clearly inappropriate to speak with the Programme Coordinator the staff member may approach the Programmes Manager or the Trust Manager.



For Volunteer Support Contact:

020 4125 2362
volunteer@yat.org.nz