



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# YMCA OF GREATER HARTFORD COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

## WHY?

A major strategy of the GHYMCA is to build employee and member loyalty (reduce turnover). Values define a healthy culture and create a safe and brave space for open and honest communication. Members and employees appreciate open and honest communication.

**These communication guidelines can help ensure that our interactions mirror our operational values.**

## YMCA OF GREATER HARTFORD STANDARD COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>

### EMAIL

- Email is to be checked daily when in the office or working.
- Acknowledge receipt of emails requiring action or follow-up within 1 to 2 business days of receipt. Whenever feasible, respond immediately.
- An automatic "out of office" reply will be activated when you are scheduled to be out of the office for more than one business day, which includes the contact information (name/email/phone#) for another employee if an urgent response is required. Indicate if you are out of the office for work-related reasons (e.g., training or conference).
- When using TOP Time or when out of the office for any personal reason, email will be checked or replied to on the 1<sup>st</sup> business day when the staff member returns to work.
- Emails deemed "urgent" should be avoided whenever possible. Instead, urgent matters should be addressed with a phone call or face-to-face meeting, accompanied by a follow up email if/when applicable.
- Matters that do not require an immediate response or that require discussion should be reserved for a face-to-face, one-on-one, or group meeting, whenever feasible.
- A standard Outlook email signature will be used in accordance with the guidelines established by the GHYMCA's membership and marketing department. Said signatures will be used on all email platform (e.g., Outlook desktop, phone). Other specific elements may be added to email signatures with approval from the GHYMCA membership and marketing department.
- Communications must be courteous and professional: email recipients will be addressed by name, proper language and formatting will be used (avoid using text message language), and proper signatures will be included.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Social Media will never be used in any circumstance to communicate directly with someone under the age of 18. We will not like, follow, add, tag, comment, or directly message anyone under the age of 18. If someone under 18 reaches out to us, we will tell them in person why we cannot reply through social media. Do not engage in conversation on social media or online with youth under the age of 18. Bring the conversation offline.
- We encourage the use of apps that help communicate with groups of staff, (program) members, or parents, as long as they are over the age of 18, and we have express permission.
- Social media postings, regardless of department, are to be shared with respective branch's membership team before posting.
- Public comments on branch social media pages should be replied to, publicly, within 24 hours. If you do not know the answer, give a brief, generic response. For any negative comments, publicly reply and say that you will contact the person privately to further discuss.
- Private messages on branch social media pages should be treated like emails and voicemails are from members, and should be responded to within 1 to 2 business days.

### CELL PHONES

(YMCA & Personal Phones)

- For those given a YMCA-issued cell phone, always attempt communication through that phone first.
- Texting should be limited as much as possible during off-shift hours, weekends, and TOP Time. If communication is needed that is not urgent, email should be used.
- Urgent matters/emergencies should be addressed with a phone call. Text use should be used to expedite the communication of an emergency to multiple parties simultaneously (e.g., building closure/weather related matters)

### MEETINGS

- When appropriate, major deadlines and projects should be discussed in a face-to-face meeting.
- A formal meeting invitation will be sent (e.g., through Outlook or Teams) to all parties required to attend the meeting.
- Communicate the cancellation of or changes to a scheduled meeting to all attendees, as soon as possible.
- The meeting host or organizer will distribute the agenda and related materials at least 2 business days in advance of the meeting (e.g. Cabinets, all-staff, and leadership meetings).
- Attendees are expected to review the meeting materials in advance and be prepared for discussions.
- Attendees are expected to be mentally present during meeting with cell phones silenced and stowed.
- Those not involved in a particular meeting should avoid interrupting others involved in group or one-on-one meetings until said meeting concludes.
- Meeting will adhere to the scheduled time frame. If the meeting extends beyond the agreed upon time, attendees will be asked if they are able to accommodate the change.
- Every meeting will have, at a minimum, a recap of decisions made, assignments/action items with applicable deadlines and be distributed in writing within 2 business days following the meeting.

### VOICEMAIL

- Voicemail is to be checked daily during scheduled work hours.
- Voicemails will be returned within 1 to 2 business days.
- An "out of office" announcement will be recorded if out of the office for more than 1 business day.



**WE BUILD  
LIFELONG  
SUCCESS**

<sup>1</sup> Branch—or department—specific communication guidelines can be added