

Plastic Tides

Guidelines for Interacting with Minors

These Guidelines aim to promote a safe environment when Plastic Tides staff, volunteers, and GYM Mentors interact with Minors¹. They apply to all members of the Global Youth Mentor Program (“GYM Program”) and Plastic Tides team, who, while representing or serving Plastic Tides or otherwise participating in the GYM Program, interact with Minors.

Be Aware: Members of the Plastic Tides community must at all times be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their interactions with Minors when they are acting on behalf of or in relation to the GYM Program or Plastic Tides.

Be Mindful of Boundaries: When interacting with Minors, members of the Plastic Tides community should be aware of the vulnerability of Minors and themselves in such interactions, and be particularly aware of the importance of maintaining appropriate physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. Members of the Plastic Tides community must not engage in any covert or overt sexual behaviors with Minors, including seductive speech, gestures or physical contact that exploits, abuses or harasses.

Physical Contact: Physical contact with Minors can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. Members of the Plastic Tides community must, before touching another person, especially a Minor, be aware of how physical touch with Minors can be perceived or received, and show prudent discretion in determining whether physical contact would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern or celebration. Acceptable forms of physical contact with a Minor include high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, pats on the back or shoulder, or side hugs. Types of physical contact to be avoided include tickling, rough-housing, wrestling, piggyback rides, any type of massage, and any form of unwanted affection.

Although at times limit-setting with Minors may be necessary for safety reasons, members of the Plastic Tides community are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a Minor. Similarly, speech, gestures or other behaviors that are bullying, demeaning, belittling, hurtful, meant to embarrass or make reference to the Minor’s physical development or appearance are never appropriate.

One-on-one Interactions: One-on-one meetings with a Minor should be avoided. If you are a GYM Mentor, your only one-on-one interaction with any Minor, should be exclusively during your weekly one-on-one meetings conducted through the Canvas/BigBlueButton application with your assigned Youth Leader. You may not have any one-on-one interactions with Youth Leaders not specifically assigned to you by a staff member of Plastic Tides and you may not conduct any one-on-one meetings with your assigned Youth Leaders using any applications other than Canvas/BigBlueButton.

Reporting Abuse: Members of the Plastic Tides community must act when there is reasonable cause to suspect that Minors are being abused in any way, whether in the GYM Program or

¹ For purposes of these Guidelines, the term “Minor” refers to any person under the age of 18, including, but not limited to, prospective/active Youth Leaders in the Global Youth Mentor Program.

elsewhere. Suspected, observed or self-disclosed abuse or neglect must be reported to the Plastic Tides' Co-Founders and applicable civil authorities.

Prohibited Items: When interacting with Minors, the possession and/or use of illegal drugs and the use of tobacco products or alcohol is prohibited. Members of the Plastic Tides community are prohibited from providing a Minor with alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, inappropriate videos, pornography or other such items.

Gifts: Members of the Plastic Tides community should not accept from or give gifts to Minors without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Communicating with Minors: Communication with Minors is only allowed for the purpose of conducting Plastic Tides business or otherwise furthering the GYM Program-related objectives upon which the interaction with the Minor is based. For the protection of all concerned, the key safety concept that will be applied to such communications is transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication:

1. Communication that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (i.e. mentor) is prohibited.
2. Plastic Tides staff and volunteers who use any form of electronic communications, including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with Minors, may only do so for activities involving Plastic Tides business and, to the extent possible, using a Plastic Tides address or site. Where such communications are private exchanges, a copy of the exchange should be retained.
3. If you are a GYM Mentor, your only form of communication with a Minor should be through the Canvas/BigBlueButton or through the GYM Program dedicated Facebook page.
4. Do not display an unprofessional or inappropriate background when interacting with Minors online, such as inappropriate images or words on the wall or on the virtual background.
5. Do not engage in any sexual activity, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or share sexually explicit material (or assist in any way to provide access to such material) with Minors.
6. Never photograph, film or otherwise record a Minor without the prior consent of the Minor's parent or guardian.
7. Do not engage or allow Minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations, or related matters.
8. Do not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while interacting with Minors online.
9. Do not tell a Minor "this is just between the two of us," or use similar language that encourages Minors to keep secrets from their parent/guardian.