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## Caringbah Major Incident YMCA Parent Update

18 January 2013

Parents and Families  
YMCA Children's Services  
Via email and mail

**RE: Information for YMCA parents – Court proceedings**

Dear YMCA Parents and Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an overview of the matter relating to a former YMCA employee which has been before the court.

In our commitment to keeping our families updated as new information comes to hand, we want to ensure that all current and new parents and families are aware of the facts of the proceedings as well as the outcome which was reached at Sydney's Downing Centre District Court today.

A former YMCA employee, Jonathan Lord, who worked at a number of the Y's Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services in the Caringbah area, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 6 years, after pleading guilty in August to a range of charges involving the indecent assault of young boys. Charges were first laid in October 2011. In some instances, Lord used his employment at the YMCA as a gateway of trust with children and families in the Caringbah community. Today's proceedings also outlined how Lord abused his position of trust as a private babysitter and as a member of his local church.

As a current or new parent utilising YMCA Childcare Services, please be assured that the Y goes above and beyond industry regulation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care. As a leading child care provider we are very careful with the rigor of our processes. We would like to highlight the following important facts:

1. Jonathan Lord had no prior convictions, passed a Working with Children Check, and reference checks were completed prior to his employment at the Y.
2. Jonathan Lord has participated in YMCA Child Protection Training programs.
3. From the moment we became aware of allegations we took immediate action and have continued to work closely with the investigation proceedings and provide support to our families.

To date, the Y has also:

- Communicated openly and consistently with staff, parents and schools in our Caringbah community, providing as much information as was legally possible.
- Reviewed all YMCA child protection policies and procedures.



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- Had two Compliance and Assessment Audits conducted on our Caringbah centres by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC), which determined our policies and procedures were of a "gold star" standard.
- Held three parent information sessions in the Sutherland Shire region and has continued to offer a third-party, professional counseling service to parents, families and staff.

This incident has highlighted the issue of grooming in communities. Whilst robust policies and procedures are put in place to keep children and staff at the Y safe at all times, we suggest that all parents engage in conversation with your children about the correct naming of body parts, appropriate child/adult interaction and encourage you to have open discussions about grooming.

We realise these conversations can be very difficult and so have included an information sheet from Network of Community Activities which we hope will assist you in having these talks with your children and identifying signs of grooming and abuse. In our commitment to child protection, the YMCA will continue to provide our families with the latest resources and information relating to this issue.

If anyone requires support or would like to speak to someone about these issues please contact Anne-Mary Nolan, Children's Services Operations Manager, on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

We would also like to reiterate that the YMCA continues to offer a professional counselling service to those who families who feel it would be of benefit. Anne-Mary can also assist in getting families in contact with this external service.

While we have attempted to give you all the necessary information relating to this matter we understand that some of you may have questions or concerns. Parents are encouraged to get in touch with myself or Anne-Mary, our doors are always open.

Yours sincerely,



Phillip Hare  
CEO

