



Waterfront  
Neighbourhood  
Centre

Formerly Harbourfront Community Centre

# **CHILD AND YOUTH – PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**Effective Date: September 27, 2012**  
**as approved by the Harbourfront Community Centre**  
**Board of Management**

**Approved: September 27, 2012**

**Revised: November 28, 2012**

**Revised: February 13, 2013**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

**Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (Formerly Harbourfront Community Centre) has adopted the following Child and Youth-Protection Policies and Procedures to ensure that all employees/volunteers and those associated with Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC) are knowledgeable about, and take specific measures to protect children and youth in the course of their work and volunteer efforts.**

### **Who We Are**

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (Formally Harbourfront Community Centre) is a non-profit organization that works in partnership with residents and community-minded organizations to create a safe and supportive environment for people of all ages. By engaging the community, we ensure that WNC's activities will meet the growing and diverse needs of our neighbourhood – now and in the future.

WNC is supported by a volunteer board and is partially funded by the City of Toronto for administrative staffing and building-related costs. We rely on donations from community-minded individuals, foundations and corporations to fund the many programs and services that we offer.

### **What We Believe**

In our work, Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre strives to:

- Meet the needs of a diverse and changing multi-cultural community.
- Respond particularly to the needs of youth, children and isolated adults.
- Provide a range of responsive programs and services in an atmosphere of belonging.
- Advocate for provision of necessary services to the community.
- Provide full opportunities for local residents to become involved in the Board and Committees of the Centre and to ensure that Board, Staff and Volunteers reflect the local community.
- Obtain the necessary resources to fulfil our mission statement.
- Be supportive of our staff and volunteers, ensuring they are rewarded appropriately for their work.
- Act in a fiscally responsible manner.

### **What We Do**

Our Waterfront community is the fastest growing vertical neighbourhood in the City! Our programs mirror our community as the demand for family, children, community outreach and senior programs are on the rise. By engaging the community, we ensure that HCC's activities will meet the growing and diverse needs of our neighbourhood – now and in the future. For more information about our programs and services, please visit our website at: [www.waterfrontnc.ca](http://www.waterfrontnc.ca).

### The Team

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC) is governed by a volunteer Board of Management which is appointed by and ultimately accountable to Toronto City Council.

The City of Toronto has delegated varying levels of authority to its boards to deliver services on the Council's behalf. With this assignment of responsibilities also comes the obligation to conduct business in a manner consistent with City objectives and policies. For more information on the WNC Board of Management and policies, please visit our website: [www.waterfrontnc.ca](http://www.waterfrontnc.ca)

#### **WNC Board of Management responsibilities**

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre Board of Management responsibilities include the following specific matters:

- Overall management, operation and maintenance of WNC ensuring compliance with the bylaw, applicable laws and applicable City policies.
- Overall development, funding and management of all WNC programs
- Approval of the annual administrative budget for recommendation to City Council.
- Approval of the Annual Report for submission to City Council.
- Approval of all programs including fees for the use of the facilities and programs if applicable.
- Development of resources to support WNC's activities, programs and services.
- Approval of HCC's Annual Financial Statements for audit purposes and receiving the report of the Auditor.

#### **WNC Staff**

WNC Staff are employees of the City of Toronto and Toronto City Council has delegated authority to the WNC Board of Management for the overall management of WNC and its employees in accordance with the City's human resource policies and collective agreements.

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre employees are expected to conduct themselves with personal integrity, ethics, honesty and diligence in performing their duties for the organization. Employees are required to support and advance the interests of the organization and avoid placing themselves in situations where their personal interests actually or potentially conflict with the interests of the City of Toronto. The City of Toronto's Conflict of Interest Policy applies to all City of Toronto employees: [http://www.toronto.ca/calldocuments/conflict\\_of\\_interest\\_policy.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/calldocuments/conflict_of_interest_policy.htm)

## The Importance of Child and Youth Protection Policies and Procedures

Child and youth protection policies create barriers for sex offenders. Current research indicates that the more child/youth protective rules and regulations that an agency has in place, the less likely an offender will want to work there. As a child-centered organization, Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC) has based our policies and procedures on the following:

- **A shared understanding** by employees/volunteers of what constitutes child/youth sexual abuse and exploitation and how to recognize and prevent it.
- **Trained employees/volunteers** who are equipped to recognize situations of potential abuse and inappropriate behaviour, and the response that is expected of them in these situations.
- **Clear lines of communication, authority and decision-making** so that employees/volunteers have well-defined procedures and a consistent approach for handling all child/youth protection issues.
- **Regular review** of the effectiveness of policies and procedures whereby Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre can assess whether any adjustments, additions or improvements are required
- **Openness** about our work and how we conduct it. Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre has an open atmosphere where child/youth sexual abuse/misconduct can be raised and addressed. We critically assess our practice in an effort to continuously improve organizational child/youth protection measures.
- **Equity and fairness** by treating all reports with the same importance.
- **Dignity and respect** by keeping sensitive personal information confidential, and only sharing it on a 'need-to-know' basis.
- **Coordination** with other organizations that can assist with child/youth protection matters. This can include child welfare, law enforcement and legal counsel.

# **DEFINITIONS**



## **Child/Youth Abuse Definitions**

In order to prevent child/youth sexual abuse at Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC), it is first necessary to understand sexual abuse; how offenders groom; signs of a disclosure and the impact of abuse on victims. By understanding child sexual abuse; a major step is taken towards addressing the problem constructively and promoting positive change. The following definitions lay the groundwork for better awareness about child/youth sexual abuse and will help foster discussions among employees and volunteers.

### **Child**

A child is any person under 16 years of age as defined under the Child and Family Services Act which includes a child up to the age of 18 in certain circumstances under the Act

### **Youth**

Any person under the age of 24 years that attends WNC's Child and Youth Programs. WNC programs are offered to children and youth ages 0 – 24 years.

### **Physical Abuse**

The use of force against a child/youth in such a way that the individual is either injured or at risk of being injured. Physical abuse can be overtly aggressive (e.g. beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking, or assaulting a child/youth with a weapon) or can be more subtle and less obvious (e.g. bumping, pushing, restraining, pinching, squeezing an arm or leg).

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is a chronic pattern of behaviour towards a child/youth that causes negative effects on his/her emotional development. Examples include verbal threats, social isolation, ignoring, intimidation, put-downs, exploitation, and unreasonable demands. A single episode of name-calling would be considered inappropriate, but would not necessarily constitute emotional abuse. Repetitive name-calling or the intentional damaging of an individual's self-esteem, however, would be considered abusive. A single incident of high intensity emotional abuse/trauma would also qualify.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the failure to provide basic needs including physical, educational, emotional, etc. Neglect can also include such things as failure to provide proper medical care, adequate clothing or supervision.

### **Child Sexual Abuse**

Any form of adult and child sexualized interaction constitutes child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse of a child may occur through behaviours that do not involve actual physical contact.

### **Contact sexual abuse includes:**

- Touching the genital area, over or under clothing
- Touching breasts, over or under clothing
- Touching another's genital area
- Oral sex
- Vaginal or anal penetration with a part of the body (e.g. finger, penis) or with an object

### **Non-contact sexual abuse includes:**

- Invitation to touch another in a sexual way
- Voyeurism (i.e. "Peeping Tom")
- Encouraging or forcing a child to masturbate or to watch others masturbate
- Indecent exposure (i.e. "flashing" or showing genital areas)
- Involving children in the viewing or production of pornographic materials, or watching sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

### **A Child in Need of Protection**

The Child and Family Services Act in Ontario defines a child in need of protection as a child who is or who appears to be suffering from abuse and/or neglect. The Act clearly specifies how you can identify these children in Section 72 (1). (See pages 7 to 10).

#### **[CFSA s.72 (1)]**

Section 72 (1) of the Child and Family Services Act Despite the provisions of any other Act, if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect one of the following, the person shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society:

1. The child has suffered physical harm, inflicted by the person having charge of the child or caused by or resulting from that person's,
  - i. failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
  - ii. pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
2. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer physical harm inflicted by the person having charge of the child or caused by or resulting from that person's,
  - i. failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
  - ii. pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
3. The child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child

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knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child.

4. There is a risk that the child is likely to be sexually molested or sexually exploited as described in paragraph 3.
5. The child requires medical treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, the treatment.
6. The child has suffered emotional harm, demonstrated by serious:
  - i. anxiety
  - ii. depression
  - iii. withdrawal
  - iv. self-destructive or aggressive behaviour, or
  - v. delayed development, and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the emotional harm suffered by the child results from the actions, failure to act or pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
7. The child has suffered emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph i, ii, iii, iv or v of paragraph 6 and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm.

**Please note:** The Act and your duty to report under the Act applies to any child who is, or appears to be, under the age of 16 years. It also applies to children subject to a child protection order who are 16 and 17 years old.

People can still call their local CAS to report abuse of a child or young person, when that young person is over 16, the CAS can direct the caller/referral source to the appropriate resources/community services. More resources can be found at:

<http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/faqs.htm>

### Grooming

An individual who sexually abuses a child/youth often uses a variety of techniques to gain sexual access to the child/youth. The individual first gains the trust of the child/youth and the adults around the child/youth. An emotional connection is purposely built to reduce the likelihood that the child/youth will disclose the abuse.

This process is known as grooming. Grooming is often a slow, gradual and escalating process of building trust and comfort with a child/youth. The offender's goal is to have the child/youth see him/her as a caring adult that the individual can trust and whose directions he/she should follow.

Grooming also includes the process of making inappropriate behaviour seem normal. This process of normalizing inappropriate behaviour can range from the telling of sexual jokes to physical contact. Once trust has been established, the result can be a child/youth who is very confused, one who is torn between what he/she knows to be wrong and his/her feelings for the offender.

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Although the purpose of grooming is to non-violently access and control the victim, in extreme cases offenders may also attempt to physically maintain control over the child/youth.

In extreme cases, some offenders may attempt to gain control over a child/youth through the use of threats (to the child/youth, his/her pets or family) and/or physical force. This type of violence may be used to overcome resistance, maintain compliance, and/or prevent the child/youth from disclosing the abuse.

It is of the utmost importance to realize that the reason cooperative and compliant children/youths are victims is not because they were groomed, manipulated or brainwashed but simply because they are children/youths.

**WATERFRONT NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

## Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre Code of Conduct

As a reputable child/youth-serving organization, Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC) has developed the following Code of Conduct to guide our employees/volunteers which is in addition to the City of Toronto's Employee's Conflict of Interest Policy which all employees of WNC must abide by: [http://www.toronto.ca/calldocuments/conflict\\_of\\_interest\\_policy.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/calldocuments/conflict_of_interest_policy.htm).

While every employee/volunteer is valued and unique, we come together as an organization in the best interests of individuals, children, youth and their families. The safety, rights and well-being of the individuals we serve are at the core of our daily operations. We nurture supportive relationships with children/youth while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries.

And in keeping with this Code, employee/volunteer misconduct will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children/youth in all of WNC's child and youth programs.

### Misconduct

**Misconduct refers to inappropriate behaviour in the organization and includes but is not limited to any/all of the following:**

- Communication that goes beyond the employee/volunteer's employment responsibilities with the child/youth and/or does not occur within the context of their duties and responsibilities such as:
  - Writing personal letters or text messages to a child/youth.
  - Making personal phone calls to a child/youth.
  - Having personal Social Media exchanges with a child/youth (email, instant messaging, chatting, social networking, etc.).
  - Sending personalized gifts to a child/youth.

**Note:** *It is not misconduct to give a contextually appropriate thank-you card, birthday card, seasonal card, or other nominal gift to a child/youth, where such a gesture would be considered reasonable in the circumstances provided that all gestures, taken together, are not excessive in number and any such exchanges are carried out within the workplace, in the presence of others and with the knowledge of the organization.*

- Offering unauthorized rides to a child/youth.
- Spending time with a child/youth outside of designated work times and activities (except where such activity results from a parent-initiated request and the activity has been disclosed to and approved by the organization in advance via your direct supervisor).
- Favouring a child/youth.
- Telling sexual jokes to a child/youth.
- Showing a child/youth sexually explicit or sexist material, signs, cartoons, calendars, literature, photographs, or displaying such material in plain view.

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- Taking pictures/recording of a child/youth, except when specifically requested to do so by the organization and provided that only cameras owned or under the control of the organization are used to take such pictures/recording.

**Note:** *Under no circumstances may an employee/volunteer use his/her cellular phone or personal camera to take pictures of/record a child/youth, nor upload or copy any pictures/recordings he/she may have taken of a child/youth to the Internet/Social Media or to any personal storage device (except where such activity has been disclosed to and approved by the organization in advance via your direct supervisor).*

### **Employees/volunteers of Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre must:**

- Always adhere to the organization's policies and procedures in dealing with children/youth.
- Treat children/youth with respect and dignity.
- Treat all allegations or suspicions of sexual misconduct seriously. It is an employee/volunteer's responsibility to report allegations or suspicions as per WNC's reporting procedure.
- Follow established procedures when reporting any allegations of misconduct or potential policy violations.
- Consider the final outcomes of any behaviour, as well as a child/youth's reaction to any activities, conversations, or interactions so as to avoid embarrassing, shaming, or humiliating the child/youth.
- Establish, respect, and maintain boundaries with all children and youth.

### **Employees/volunteers of Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre must not:**

- Engage in any activity that endangers a child/youth or makes a child/youth feel uncomfortable.
- Engage in any activity that goes against the organization's mandate, policies, or code of conduct.
- Make any sort of remark, comment, or joke to/regarding a child/youth that is in any way suggestive, explicit, or sexual.
- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child/youth that may make the child/youth feel uncomfortable, or that violates reasonable boundaries.
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual misconduct — it is an employee/volunteer's duty to report, not to investigate.
- Place a child/youth in danger from anyone, either within or outside of the organization.
- Offer any child/youth "special" treatment that falls outside of the organization's mandate, or that may (or may appear to) place a child/youth at risk of exploitation.

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**Employees/volunteers of Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre should consider whether:**

- The activities they are engaging in with a child/youth are known to, or approved by, supervisors and/or parents. Child/youth interactions should not be kept secret. They should be transparent.
- Activities would raise concerns in the mind of a reasonable observer as to their appropriateness.
- The organization may be detrimentally affected by the employees/volunteers activities.
- The activity may be reasonably regarded as posing a risk to the personal integrity or security of a child/youth.
- The activity may contribute to a child/youth’s discomfort.
- The activity may appear inappropriate to the organization, the child/youth’s family, or the public.

Failure to adhere to Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre - Code of Conduct by any employee/volunteer will result in an investigation and disciplinary action if necessary. Appropriate consequences and/or disciplinary actions are to be determined by management and could include discipline up to and including termination of employment and/or volunteer position, and will be based on the nature and severity of the incident.

***I agree to comply with the above-noted Code of Conduct for Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# **EDUCATION & AWARENESS**

## **Groups to Receive Training on Child Sexual Abuse**

Understanding child/youth sexual abuse is the first step towards prevention, as well as towards the creation of safer environments for children/youth. It is important that all employees/volunteers learn about child/youth sexual abuse and the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

### **Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre Training Policy**

**The following groups shall receive training on the issue of child/youth sexual abuse:**

- 1. All new and existing employees and volunteers**, including full-time, part-time, contract, temporary or casual.
- 2. Parents or guardians**
- 3. Children/Youth in the care of the organization** (While children/youth won't receive sexual abuse training, they will receive training on safety strategies to help reduce the chance that they are victimized).

Visit [www.kidsintheknow.ca](http://www.kidsintheknow.ca) for age-appropriate safety strategies.

## **Child Sexual Abuse Training for Employees/Volunteers**

### **Policy**

All employees/volunteers shall receive training on child/youth sexual abuse upon starting work with Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre and annually thereafter.

### **Parameters**

#### **Training for employees/volunteers includes:**

- Understanding child/youth abuse
- Managing risk
- Reviewing the organization's child/youth protection policies, including:
  - ⇒ Code of Conduct
  - ⇒ Reporting and documentation
  - ⇒ Handling disclosure
- Learning how to teach prevention skills to children/youth

### **Procedure**

#### **New employees/volunteers:**

1. Training occurs as soon as the employee/volunteer begins working and before he/she is entrusted with the protection and care of children/youth.
2. Training occurs within the employee/volunteer's probationary period.
3. Training is conducted by their direct supervisor as an employee and the WNC Volunteer Coordinator as a volunteer.
4. The employee/volunteer will receive educational materials to take home and review.

#### **Existing employees/volunteers:**

1. Employees/volunteers will receive training when Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre introduces new information about child/youth protection and/or new policies and procedures.
2. Employees/volunteers will attend training sessions annually.

# HIRING

## Hiring Process

### Policy

The following hiring process must be undertaken for all new WNC employees/volunteers. The full process **must be completed prior** to allowing an employee/volunteer to work in a position with access to children/youth.

### Procedures

1. Create or update a job description:
  - a) Define the job and create detailed job criteria.
  - b) Include specific duties, key responsibilities and performance criteria.
  - c) Outline the level and type of contact the new employee/volunteer will have with children/youth.
  - d) Include the specific qualifications the new employee/volunteer must possess to work with children/youth in the organization.
2. Create a job posting and determine where the posting will be located:
  - a) Indicate in the posting that all applicants will be required to complete a thorough screening and interview process.
3. Have candidates fill out a job application form:
  - a) Gain signed consent to execute background checks. Reference checks performed for people who will be working with children, youth or vulnerable people are called "Vulnerable Sector Screening Program – Police Reference Checks".
4. Prepare the interview questions:
  - a) Include behavioural and situational questions.
  - b) Incorporate child/youth protection issues into job-specific interview questions.
5. Conduct first and second in-person interviews with at least one other employee/volunteer.
6. Provide the applicants with the Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre - Code of Conduct and City of Toronto - Conflict of Interest Policy.
7. Perform screening:
  - a) Criminal record check
  - b) Vulnerable sector screening check
  - c) Reference checks
  - d) Internet/Social Media check
8. Make an offer of employment once interviews and screening are complete.
9. Once the offer is accepted, have the new employee/volunteer sign:
  - a) The WNC Code of Conduct and City of Toronto Conflict of Interest Policy confirming having read and understood the guidelines
  - b) A confidentiality form
  - c) An employment/volunteering contract

# **ORIENTATION & SUPERVISION**

## **Orientation Process**

### **Policy**

All new WNC employees/volunteers shall have an orientation and will be assigned a mentor when they begin at the organization.

### **Procedures**

#### **Supervisors:**

1. The orientation will include a review of the organization's:
  - a. History, mandate, structure and values.
  - b. Expectations of employees/volunteers and supervisors (applicable to the position).
  - c. Training on what child/youth sexual abuse is and how it occurs in child-serving organizations.
  - d. WNC Code of Conduct and City of Toronto Conflict of Interest Policy.
  - e. Child protection policies and procedures:
    - i. Programs and services (outlining rules and what is expected of employees/volunteers)
    - ii. Reporting abuse/inappropriate behaviour
    - iii. Accountability and confidentiality
    - iv. Suspension and dismissal
    - v. Employee/volunteer supervision and evaluation
  - f. Declaration of Understanding, including a signature affirming understanding of the organization's child protection policies and procedures and the code of conduct and conflict of interest policies.
  - g. Child/Youth Protection Manual:
    - i. All new employees/volunteers will receive their own copy of applicable sections from the Child/Youth Protection Manual.

## **Probationary Period**

### **Policy**

All WNC staff and volunteers will undergo a six-month probation period when they begin, which will include weekly meetings with their supervisors. For employees in CUPE Local 2998 probationary period is outlined in the Collective Agreement. All unionized employees will be introduced to their union steward as per the Collective Agreement provisions.

### **Procedures**

#### **Supervisors:**

1. Carefully consider whether a new employee/volunteer is able to meet the expectations of the organization:
  - a. Pay close attention to the employee/volunteer's performance.

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- b. Observe the employee/volunteer's interactions with children/youth and families.
- c. Reinforce the WNC Code of Conduct and City of Toronto Conflict of Interest policy.

### **Employee/Volunteer Supervision**

#### **Policy**

Employee/volunteer supervision and monitoring is essential for keeping children/youth safe. Every employee/volunteer at Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre shall be supervised to promote accountability and provide occasions to teach and model appropriate behaviour. Supervision shall begin the first day a new employee/volunteer starts and shall continue through his/her employment.

#### **Procedures**

##### **Supervisors:**

1. Provide informal supervision including frequent and unscheduled drop-ins, observations and direct communication with the employee/volunteer.
2. Provide regular, formal supervision (scheduled meetings) to create workplans, discuss concerns, and provide feedback.
3. Complete a performance appraisal after a new, transferred, or promoted employee/volunteer's probationary period.
4. Complete a performance appraisal at 3, 6 month, annually and upon completion of probation (probation periods vary for part-time unionized employees) to discuss inappropriate or inadequate performance

### **Updates to Screening Process**

#### **Policy**

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre requires Vulnerable Sector Screening Program – Police Reference Checks for employees/volunteers who will be working with children, youth and/or vulnerable people prior to beginning their employment/volunteer placement.

#### **Screening Fees**

*Volunteers* - To make volunteering more accessible, WNC will pay the screening fee for volunteers.

*New Employees* – As per WNC's hiring policy, all new staff as of December 1, 2012 will be personally responsible for fees associated with providing a current screening report.

There are significant costs associated with the screening program. Donations to support the costs associated with the screening program are greatly appreciated.



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### **Procedure**

#### **Supervisors:**

1. Ask employees/volunteers to prepare documents for their checks on a timely basis.
2. Review checks and ensure they are satisfactory.

**REPORTING & DOCUMENTING  
COMPLAINTS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE  
AND/OR ILLEGAL BEHAVIOUR**

## **Reporting and Documenting Complaints of Possible Abuse and/or Illegal Behaviour**

### **Policy**

At Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC), all children/youth have the right to a safe and respectful environment that is free from sexual abuse and/or inappropriate conduct. Any acts committed by an employee/volunteer that violate the code of conduct will not be tolerated.

Any employee/volunteer engaging in such acts will be subject to a range of disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal (see Suspension & Dismissal: Potentially Illegal Behaviour - Policy on page 32). Similarly, WNC employees/volunteers who are aware of breaches of the WNC Code of Conduct and City of Toronto Conflict of Interest Policy, but fail to take appropriate action, may also be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

### **Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre is committed to:**

- Ensuring we create an environment that encourages reporting.
- Ensuring that prompt action is taken in regard to allegations of abuse; reporting to Children's Aid Society (CAS) and/or law enforcement agency; and/or parents/guardians.
- Treating all complaints as confidential.

### **Parameters**

This policy applies to all WNC employees/volunteers including full-time, part-time, contract, temporary or casual.

Employees/volunteers are required to immediately report all disclosures, allegations or indicators of sexual abuse regardless of source or content.

### **Procedures**

#### **Employee/volunteer:**

1. Treat the disclosure seriously and reassure the child/youth.
  - a. Document the disclosure on Incident Report Form A.
2. Report the disclosure immediately to your supervisor.
  - a. Document discussion on Incident Report Form A.
3. Keep the information confidential.
4. Do not investigate the allegation or determine accuracy.

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### **Supervisor:**

1. Consult with the Executive Director.
  - a. Document discussion on Incident Report Form A.
2. Notify the appropriate Children's Aid Society (CAS) and/or law enforcement agency about the incident and consult with child welfare and/or law enforcement agency about notifying the parents.

NOTE: Duty to Report Legislation.

- a. Document notification on Incident Report Form A.

### **Executive Director:**

1. Seek legal counsel, including HR/LR counsel.
2. Follow steps from the Suspension/Dismissal: Potential Illegal Behaviour policy on page 32.
3. Document the outcome of the investigation in Incident Report Form A.

### **Other Matters of Note**

#### **Interference with the Conduct of an Investigation**

A threat or promise made to discourage the filing of a complaint, or any interference with the conduct of an investigation, including an attempt to have a complaint withdrawn, is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

#### **Confidentiality**

All complaints will be handled in confidence. We will not disclose the identity of any parties involved, or the circumstances of the complaint, except where necessary for the purpose of investigative or corrective action, where required by law, or for the protection of individuals. Similarly, employees/volunteers interviewed as part of an investigation under this policy shall treat all information in a confidential manner. An employee/volunteer who breaches confidentiality may be subject to discipline.

A copy of the documented incident shall be placed in the accused employee / volunteer's human resource file. Any identifying information about the child/youth victim or reporting person shall be removed from this copy. A generic letter shall also be placed in the file that indicates the alleged offence, how it was handled, and any follow-up that was completed.

## Communications with Employees/Volunteers

### Policy

All information regarding complaints and disciplinary action is confidential. Circulation of any information, whether correct or incorrect, can have serious consequences for all parties involved, and can result in legal action. The organization shall carefully manage all communication during investigations to reduce unnecessary exposure, trauma and misrepresentations. Employees will be informed only on a need-to-know basis.

### Procedures

#### Executive Director:

1. For those employees/volunteers who have knowledge of the complaint or allegation, the Executive Director may share the following:
  - a. Reassure employees/volunteers that standard organizational procedures are being followed with the employee/volunteer in question. Reiterate the expectation of confidentiality. Any information that is part of a child/youth welfare and/or law enforcement agency investigation is confidential and should not be discussed among employees. Leaking out information/details can compromise both child/youth welfare and criminal investigations.
  - b. Remind employees to be mindful not to risk defamation of character by talking about the employee/volunteer or making public assumptions or judgements.
  - c. Reassure employees/volunteers that a fair process is ensuing.

**Note:** *There may be times when an employee/volunteer is falsely accused of sexually abusing a child/youth. While these cases are rare, they do exist. In situations where abuse has been fabricated, the falsely accused employee/volunteer may be traumatically impacted. This can cause significant damage to his/her professional and personal reputation, as well as great psychological suffering. It is important to re-establish employee/volunteer morale and trust. Make sure that all individuals involved in the investigation are informed about the employee/volunteer's innocence.*

## **Communications with Parents about Suspected Abuse by an Employee/Volunteer**

### **Policy**

Where a report has been made to a child/youth welfare and/or law enforcement agency, we shall consult with the agency about how the organization can support the child/youth and communicate with the family.

### **Procedures**

#### **Executive Director:**

1. Consult with the child/youth welfare and/or law enforcement agency and carefully consider the information communicated to parents/guardians: where, when, how and by whom.
2. Meet with the parents/guardians with another member of the organization present (such as a supervisor, manager, etc.).
3. Relay information to parents/guardians about the steps that will be carried out during the investigation, and assure them that the organization will not permit the suspected individual to be in contact with their child/youth in the organization's care while the investigation is ongoing.
4. Keep parents/guardians informed of the outcome of any investigation and the progress of any court proceedings.
5. Keep parents/guardians informed about the resources available to assist them.

# **SUSPENSION & DISMISSAL**

## Suspension/Dismissal: Potentially Illegal Behaviour

### Policy for Potentially Illegal Behaviour

Employees/volunteers accused of child/youth sexual abuse shall be suspended or dismissed until cleared of all allegations. Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre seeks legal counsel on all matters pertaining to allegations of sexual abuse.

### Procedures for Potentially Illegal Behaviour

#### Executive Director:

1. Follow procedures under Reporting and Documenting Complaints of Possible Abuse: Illegal Behaviour on page 27.
2. Suspend the employee with or without pay or transfer to a position where there is no contact with children/youths until the case is resolved. Suspend a volunteer from his/her position immediately until the investigation is completed.
3. Outcomes:
  - a. The employee/volunteer is cleared of all allegations:
    - i. The employee/volunteer is fully reinstated to his/her position.
    - ii. All those notified internally of the investigation are told that the employee/volunteer has been cleared of all allegations.
  - b. Abuse is confirmed:
    - i. The employee/volunteer is terminated with cause from his/her position without notice. The organization will seek human resources or legal advice to ensure termination is handled appropriately.
  - c. Unconfirmed investigation:
    - i. The organization will seek legal counsel to determine whether the employee should be immediately terminated with appropriate severance and limited, if any, references. The volunteer will be terminated.
4. Document the outcome of the investigation on Incident Report Form A.

**\*Note:** During the suspension or dismissal process, the organization will seek legal counsel.



## **Discipline / Suspension / Dismissal: Inappropriate Behaviour**

### **Policy for Inappropriate Behaviour**

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre investigates all allegations of misconduct by an employee/volunteer towards a child/youth that may involve child/youth sexual abuse. An investigation determines what course of action needs to be taken.

Employees/volunteers accused of inappropriate behaviour may be disciplined, suspended or dismissed depending upon the nature of the incident and the results of the investigation.

### **Procedures for Inappropriate Behaviour**

#### **Executive Director:**

1. Follow procedures under Reporting and Documenting Complaints of Possible Abuse: Inappropriate Behaviour on page 33.
2. Suspend the employee with or without pay or transfer to a position where there is no contact with children/youths until the case is resolved. Suspend a volunteer from his/her position immediately until the investigation is completed.
3. Outcomes:
  - a. The employee/volunteer is cleared of all allegations:
    - i. The employee/volunteer is informed.
    - ii. Any individuals told about the incident are informed that the employee/volunteer has been cleared.
    - iii. Document that the allegations were not substantiated and place in a file specific to documented complaints (not in employee's personnel file) to protect the employee and organization.
    - iv. Follow up with the employee/volunteer who made the false or unsubstantiated allegation. While false allegations from a child/youth about sexual misconduct are uncommon, if they do occur, they can be a sign of a child/youth in distress and should be followed up on.
  - b. Inappropriate conduct confirmed or the conduct is unconfirmed:
    - i. The organization will seek HR, Labour Relations or Legal advice.
    - ii. Expectations are clarified as outlined in the HCC Code of Conduct/ City of Toronto Conflict of Interest Policy and a written warning is given (this depends on the incident, and if the incident is deemed serious, no warning will be given).
    - iii. Place documentation in employee/volunteer file as outlined in organization's documentation procedures.

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- iv. Place employee/volunteer on increased supervision and document supervision plan on Incident Report Form B — Part three.
- v. Set a review period for one month (with outcome documented on Incident Report Form B — Part four). Review includes whether:
  - i. The employee/volunteer re-establishes and is maintaining appropriate boundaries. In this case, the employee/volunteer's interactions continue to be monitored.
  - ii. Supervision/observations lead to further concern regarding the employee/volunteer's inappropriate conduct. In this case, further investigation occurs and if misconduct is established, further discipline up to and including termination for cause is imposed.
  - iii. Short-term improvement in interactions with child/youth. However, future inappropriate conduct is noted. In this case, further investigation occurs and if misconduct is established, further discipline up to and including termination for cause is imposed.

## **False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse or Misconduct**

### **Policy**

All information regarding allegations of child/youth sexual abuse and/or misconduct are confidential. In matters where an employee/volunteer has been wrongly accused of child/youth sexual abuse or misconduct, the employee/volunteer will be fully reinstated and Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre will immediately notify all those informed of the incident that the allegations were false.

### **Procedures**

#### **Executive Director:**

1. For an employee/volunteer wrongly accused of child/youth sexual abuse or misconduct, the Executive Director will share the following:
  - a. Inform the accused employee/volunteer that it has come to the attention of the organization that she/he was falsely accused. Reassure the employee/volunteer that all those informed of the allegation will be notified as such.
  - b. Inform employees/volunteers that are aware of the allegations that the employee/volunteer was falsely accused.
  - c. Reiterate the expectation of confidentiality and that the matter has been closed.
  - d. Follow up with the employee/volunteer who made the false or unsubstantiated allegation. While false allegations from a child/youth about sexual misconduct are uncommon, if they do occur, they can be a sign of a child/youth in distress and should be followed up on.
  - e. Action may ensue regarding the individual who made the false allegation if done maliciously.

# **ACCOUNTABILITY & CONFIDENTIALITY**

## **Confidential Information**

### **Policy**

Employees/volunteers of Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC) are regularly entrusted with confidential information regarding the community it serves. All information with respect to third parties (including information related to children, youth and families) received by employees/volunteers in the course of their involvement with WNC are regarded as confidential.

Suspensions of child/youth sexual abuse will only be shared with the employees/volunteers in the organization who need to know. WNC will maintain confidentiality while keeping the interests of the child/youth as the primary concern.

### **Procedure**

#### **Employees/volunteers:**

1. All complaints against employees/volunteers will be directed through the formal complaint process in a prompt manner.
2. No employee/volunteer shall attempt to address the situation on his/her own.
3. No employee/volunteer shall engage in, or threaten to engage in, retaliation against anyone who discloses, reports, or otherwise provides information with respect to alleged sexual abuse or misconduct and/or as per any City of Toronto Whistle Blower Protection Policies.
4. No employee/volunteer shall disclose any information to the public or to the media regarding Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre policies, operations, employees, volunteers or complaints (reports).
5. Upon commencement of employment, the employee/volunteer shall sign a confidentiality agreement.

# **PROGRAMS, SERVICES & ACTIVITIES**



# WNC – Risk Management Procedures for Programs, Services and Activities

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre(WNC) has additional Policies and Procedures which are specifically designed and relate to our organization's programs, services and activities and are contained under this section and/or appended to this manual.

### Child/Youth Programs

The following risk management procedures apply to all of WNC's child/youth programs, activities, and services:

- No employee/volunteer shall transport children/youths in his/her personal vehicle without authorization from his/her supervisor and permission from the child/youth's parent/guardian.
- No employee/volunteer will have children/youth at his/her home without a parent/guardian's permission and authorization from his/her supervisor.
- All volunteers will be supervised in programs by a WNC employee and at no time are they to operate programs on their own without direct employee supervision.
- All volunteers/staff are assigned photo ID and their photos are maintained in WNC's database systems.
- Employee's photo ID must be available at all times on their person and they are to sign in and out of the building either using their employee timesheet and/or volunteer sign in/out sheet kept at WNC Reception.
- An updated list of WNC's current volunteers will be kept at WNC Reception. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will ensure that all staff receive regular communications regarding authorized volunteers and the volunteer list (including the sign in/sign out sheet) is updated monthly.
- At overnight program activities, the adult-to-child/youth ratio shall be no less than 1-5 and adults will sleep in rooms separate from children/youth.
- All children enrolled in WNC children's programs under the age of 12 years will be escorted to bathroom facilities using a peer buddy system and at no time is any individual and/or group to linger in the WNC bathroom facilities.

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### Establishing Boundaries

WNC understands that defining a child/youth's role and teaching appropriate boundaries reduces a child/youth's risk of sexual exploitation. Maintaining appropriate boundaries with children/youth will build their security and help them learn how to create healthy relationships and set their own personal boundaries. Adults who respect a child/youth's personal boundaries (including physical, emotional and sexual boundaries) teach children/youth how they should expect to be treated by others.

WNC is committed to teaching children/youth to respect personal space and privacy. Privacy for use of bathrooms and changing is one aspect we think of when discussing boundaries.

Children/youth having their own program space supervised directly by WNC employees is another aspect of teaching how to set personal boundaries, create safe places for themselves and build their security and leadership skills. The following guidelines apply:

- All children, *not* enrolled in a program who are under the age of 12 are not to be left unattended at WNC and must be under the direct supervision of a caregiver (13 years of age or older) at all times.
- All adults, including parents/guardians of children/youth enrolled in WNC programs are asked to respect child/youth program space and model appropriate boundaries for children/youth.
- All adults other than WNC employees and/or specific program-related volunteers are requested to remain out of the child/youth program spaces unless prior authorization has been given by a WNC staff member for purposes of monitoring program provision.
- All parents/guardians are requested to leave the program areas once they have signed out their child/youth from the program, so that the program can continue and/or that staff may complete program cleanup activities.
- All adults are also requested to respect the age limits of all program activities i.e. Youth Basketball and/or other age defined programs which are for only those age groups. Parents/guardians are encouraged to speak with WNC staff if they wish to have further information regarding this policy and/or program concerns.

In addition, WNC welcomes parent/guardian participation in all our programs. We encourage parents/guardians to speak directly with program staff as to how their child/youth's program supports parent/guardian involvement and their child/youth's developing independence.

### Space Access

All program rooms will either be accessed by registered WNC program groups and/or via WNC space use agreements that have prior approval. All individuals that are accessing WNC's washrooms, public entrances, public access computers, café and bleacher area are subject to WNC's **Space Access and Behaviour Policies** as posted and may be asked to leave the building if their behavior and/or activities are interfering with program and/or WNC operations.



## **WNC CHILD AND YOUTH-PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

### **Interpersonal Relations**

Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (WNC) expects that employees and users of our services are to be treated with dignity and respect.

#### **a) Relations with service users**

Employees and volunteers are to exercise professional standards, judgment and care when dealing with service users. Professional relationships must be maintained at all times. Employees and volunteers shall not give out personal contact information to service users, nor be involved in any monetary exchanges. The WNC Code of Conduct included in WNC's Child and Youth Manual outlines in detail expectations on personal contact with child and youth service users.

It is strongly discouraged to engage in any intimate or sexual relationships with service users.

Employees and volunteers shall provide fair and equitable service to all users and shall uphold professional standards of the client /staff relationship.

With WNC's community development approach, some individuals over time change status back and forth between service user, volunteer and employee of WNC. There may also be times when individuals are acting as service user, volunteer and employee in a program at the same time. In these situations, the Manager/Supervisor/Director has a responsibility to oversee careful monitoring, supervision and support of the individual to ensure their performance and conduct meets reasonable standards as outlined in this policy.

#### **b) Relations with other employees and volunteers.**

All employees and volunteers are expected to treat each other professionally and with respect. No actions or behaviour which undermines or demeans an employee, either directly or indirectly, will be tolerated.

Employees or volunteers in a supervisory or management position (i.e. Board of Management members) shall not enter into any contractual relationships with their staff outside of work, which may jeopardize the supervisory relationship.

Employees who have concerns about other employees should discuss those concerns directly and constructively with the person involved. If employees are not able to resolve a conflict between them, a supervisor, manager or director may assist. Similarly with volunteers, any issues that cannot be resolved should be discussed with the WNC Volunteer Coordinator.

If romantic/sexual relationships occur between members of staff, it is the responsibility of both individuals to deal appropriately with any potential conflicts of interest.

Should such relationships occur the members of staff affected can always discuss issues with their Supervisor, another Manager or Director in confidence to ensure that actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest do not arise during the performance of their job.

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It may be necessary to review the relevant reporting structure if the relationship is between a line manager and a member of staff. If staff members need advice they may approach their Supervisor, another Manager or Director in confidence.

Staff should take care that financial, familial or personal relationships do not advantage or unfairly disadvantage any member of staff, or other individuals, e.g. applicants for jobs or service provision.

Failure to adhere to Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre - *Risk Management Procedures for Programs, Service and Activities* by any employee/volunteer will result in an investigation and disciplinary action if necessary. Appropriate consequences and/or disciplinary actions are to be determined by management and could include discipline up to and including termination of employment and/or volunteer position, and will be based on the nature and severity of the incident.

***I agree to comply with the above-noted Risk Management Procedures for Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I hereby confirm that I have received a copy of and have read the **WNC CHILD AND YOUTH-PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL** and accept continued employment/voluntary service and will adhere to the Terms and Conditions set out therein.

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Employee/Volunteer Name (Please Print)

---

Employee/Volunteer Signature

---

Date

---

Witness Name (Please Print)

---

Witness Signature

---

Date

# APPENDICES

## **WNC CHILD AND YOUTH-PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Applicable City of Toronto Policies – Conflict of Interest

[http://www.toronto.ca/calldocuments/conflict\\_of\\_interest\\_policy.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/calldocuments/conflict_of_interest_policy.htm)

Applicable City of Toronto Policies – Reference Check Process:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EL7.7>

Duty to Report under the Child and Family Services Act, Ontario

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/abuseandneglect/abuseandneglect.aspx>

Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario – Resources for Sexual Assaults

<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/ovss/faqs.asp>

Justice for Children and Youth Resources – Age Based Laws - Sexual Activity & Others

<http://jfcy.org/>

<http://www.jfcy.org/PDFs/AgeBasedLawsJune2012.pdf>

Justice for Children and Youth – General Resources & Youth Support

<http://www.jfcy.org/>