



NEW CANADIANS CENTRE PETERBOROUGH

Policy Name: Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedure Manual

**Created: November 8, 2011
Review Date: February 2014
Effective: May 6, 2014**

1.0 PURPOSE

The New Canadians Centre Peterborough (NCCP) is committed to developing young citizens to become active and committed members of the community. This development is achieved through the services offered by the SWIS and Community Connections programs and other special events involving Youth. Child abuse will not be tolerated by the NCCP. The Board of Directors and Executive Director are dedicated to protecting the safety and dignity of any youth involved in organizational activities, programs and events; adult volunteers; paid employees and anyone who has contact with the NCCP. This policy sets out steps to prevent and deal with allegations and cases of Abuse against Children and Youth, as defined within this policy.

2.0 SCOPE

All members, volunteers and staff are required to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained within this policy. This policy deals only with the prevention of abuse of children/youth. For details on workplace policies regarding Harassment see the NCCP's **Harassment Policy** and **Anti-Discrimination, Access, & Equity**.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Abuse, as defined by the Ontario Child and Family Services Act, includes sexual, physical, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect and general risk of harm.

Children/Youth are defined as any individual under the age of 18.

4.0 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 4.1 All adult volunteers and staff are expected to:
- i. respect the rights and dignity of themselves and others;
 - ii. demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility;
 - iii. act with consideration and good judgment in all interpersonal relations;
 - iv. respect everyone's right to privacy;
 - v. avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with youth wherever possible;
 - vi. avoid any physical contact that may make a youth feel uncomfortable;
 - vii. avoid vulgar, disparaging and/or sexually suggestive language;

- viii. avoid the consumption of alcohol or other controlled substances while in the presence of a youth or during the time responsible for monitoring a youth;
- ix. establish appropriate relationships with youth (i.e. instructor, guide, mentor) and avoid contact outside of NCCP Programs;
- x. ensure, where reasonably possible, that two adult members supervise or accompany youth during NCCP activities, or that other adults are with earshot or within sight; and
- xi. realize that bullying, physical, verbal or cultural abuse, and/or sexual harassment are unacceptable conduct by any staff member or volunteer.

5.0 RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

5.1 Police Record Checks

- 5.1.1 All staff and volunteers in a position of responsibility at youth targeted events, or other NCCP events where youth will be present, are required to submit to a police record check.
- 5.1.2 Police checks will be required as a condition of employment for all applicable NCCP positions.
- 5.1.3 Applicable staff and volunteers will be expected to submit a police record check every three years. If an employee or volunteer leaves the NCCP and then returns, another police record check must be completed.
- 5.1.4 If any police record check is returned with a criminal conviction, the involved party must be prepared for a verification of conviction to be completed with local police services. This information will be submitted to the Executive Director who will determine whether the individual will be hired or secure a volunteer placement based on the nature of the position, risk involved and nature of the conviction. During this phase, the individual in question will not conduct employment or volunteer duties.

5.2 Personal Reference Checks

- 5.2.1 Personal reference checks must be verified for all staff applying for positions at the NCCP. Personal reference checks must be verified for key volunteer positions.
- 5.2.2 The staff member engaging the individual (prospective volunteer or employee) is responsible for completing these checks. A minimum of two reference checks should be completed.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING ABUSE

The Ontario Child and Family Services Act, recognizes that each NCCP staff member and volunteer has a responsibility for the welfare of children.

It states clearly that, members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to report promptly to a children's aid society if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is or may be in need of protection.

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a children's aid society.

6.1 Reporting and Investigation Procedures

All incidents of disclosures or suspicions of abuse will be reported to an individual's Supervisor and/or the Executive Director. Notifications should be made in writing and should include:

- i. name of staff or volunteer(s) involved;
- ii. date of incident;
- iii. short description of incident/allegations;
- iv. any other individuals or potential witnesses which might have input or information with respect to the incident; and
- v. signature and name of individual compiling the report and date compiled.

6.2 Alleged Staff/Volunteer Involvement

- i. Upon receipt of the incident report, the Executive Director and individual responsible for completing the incident report will promptly contact the Children's Aid Society (CAS) to report the allegation of abuse. The Executive Director and any staff involved will cooperate fully with any investigation being conducted by Police or CAS.
- ii. The Executive Director shall undertake an initial investigation of the allegation(s) immediately following the receipt of an incident report. Caution will be taken by the Executive Director not to impede any investigations being conducted by police or child protection services.
- iii. The Executive Director will keep the Governance Committee informed of the status of the investigation during the filing of all reports and investigations.
- iv. Once written notice has been received, the staff member or volunteer under investigation will be immediately removed from duty, in accordance with standard Federal and Provincial labour legislation. For employees, this type of suspension could include suspension from duty with or without pay.
- v. If the incident involves the Executive Director, an incident report should be filed directly to the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Governance Committee will then follow the same steps as described above.
- vi. All information is to be collected according to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

6.3 Alleged Home Incident(s)

When abuse is suspected to have been perpetrated by the parent/guardian, the above reporting procedures for staff/volunteers will apply. CAS will take a lead role in investigating allegations with full cooperation from NCC staff and volunteers.

7.0 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If a complaint is substantiated, an employee or volunteer will face disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination due to gross misconduct. Reinstatement of an employee or volunteer will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the Executive Director and where necessary the Governance Committee.

8.0 TRAINING

Training will be made available to all employees, including applicable volunteers, addressing the issue of abuse, recognition and reporting of abuse, and possible termination.

9.0 COMPLIANCE

Any staff member or volunteer, failing to comply with this or any other policy regarding the prevention of child/youth abuse risks disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment. If illegal activity has taken place, the proper authorities will be notified and the NCC will fully cooperate with any investigations.

10.0 AGREEMENT

By signing this policy, you agree that you have read and understand this policy. You are further agreeing to comply with its terms and conditions and recognize that you will be held accountable for your actions.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date

Signature of Executive Director

Date