

Hounsfield Heights-Briar Hill Community Association

Policy Type:

Human Resource

Original Effective Date:

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Policy Name:

Abuse Prevention and Volunteer Screening

Date of Last Amendment:

PURPOSE

This policy establishes how Hounsfield Heights Briar Hill Community Association (HHBH CA) will prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons by its employees and volunteers. HHBH CA seeks to create a welcoming and nurturing environment and has zero tolerance for those whose actions may jeopardize the safety, health or innocence of those in our organization's care.

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all current and future employees and volunteers of HHBH CA (whether compensated or not) who will have the responsibility of supervising, directing, coordinating, instructing and/or assisting with the activities of vulnerable persons, such as children, youth, disabled persons and seniors.

This policy will be reviewed, signed and dated by each employee and volunteer both at the time of hiring as well on an annual basis moving forward.

DEFINITIONS

Because abuse takes many forms, it can be broken down into the following subtypes, all of which are prohibited within the scope of this policy:

Physical abuse: Injury intentionally inflicted on a child, youth, disabled person, senior or other vulnerable person.

Sexual abuse: When a person (including an adult, a youth or another child) uses a child, youth, disabled person, senior or other vulnerable person for his or her own sexual pleasure. Sexual abuse may involve touching and non-touching behaviour.

Emotional abuse: A mental or emotional injury to a child, youth or vulnerable person that results in an observable and material impairment in an individual's growth, development or psychological functioning.

POLICY GUIDELINES

HHBH Program Delivery

All staff and volunteers running programs for the HHBH CA in partnership with and under the envelope of a recognized sport or recreation organization or licencing body for that program are required to read and comply with all the policies and procedures of the partnering organizations and with this Abuse Prevention and Volunteer Screening Policy. Compliance will be with whichever is the stricter of these.

Personnel Screenings

Safeguards in the recruiting and hiring process (including volunteers) will be used to eliminate from consideration any candidates who display characteristics that could classify them at risk for violating this policy. This includes a written application when hiring all employees and a written application when recruiting and approving a volunteer **who is not a parent of a participant** and who will be working with a vulnerable person in a scenario where the parent or guardian of the vulnerable person is not present.

The required screenings, including reference checks for employees and for volunteers (who will be working with the vulnerable sector in a scenario where the parent or guardian of the vulnerable person is not present) and any additional background information, is determined on a case by case basis and will depend on the positions and the level of involvement of the individual with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons.

This application, along with the rest of the employee's or volunteer's file, will be kept by HHBH CA for up to 7 years past the date the volunteer or employee's duration.

Vulnerable Persons

Candidates for positions that involve regular interaction with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons will be screened and selected using the following:

- Standard employment application that includes a signed authorization to perform necessary background checks, such as a vulnerable sector check **for those who are not a parent of a participant.**
- Criminal background checks in any and all provinces where the candidate has lived.
- Sexual offender registry checks in any and all provinces where the candidate has lived.
- Driving records and any applicable certification if the position requires the transportation of children.
- In-person interview of the candidate **for those who are not a parent of a participant.**
- As part of the final approval for hiring or recruiting volunteers, vulnerable sector checks will be conducted for those who regularly work with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors or other vulnerable persons.

Criminal background checks, sexual offender registry checks and vulnerable sector checks *will* be performed prior to being enlisted as an employee or volunteer. Annual criminal background checks will be performed on employees and volunteers, randomly or as deemed necessary. **After every five years** a new criminal background check, sexual offender registry check and vulnerable sector check will again be performed.

All information collected about candidates will be reviewed and used to determine if they are appropriate for the respective position. If hired or recruited, all information collected during the hiring or recruitment process will be included in the employee/volunteer's permanent file, which will be maintained over the course of his or her employment and/or volunteer commitment with HHBH CA.

Every HHBH CA employee and volunteer seeking to transfer into a position that involves working with children, youth, seniors, disabled persons and other vulnerable persons must undergo the same screening and review process as new hires.

Structural Guidelines for Programs

All programs offered by HHBH CA are designed to encourage safe interactions between employees and/or volunteers and children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and vulnerable persons. The following guidelines are meant to keep established safeguards effective:

- All programs or activities must have identified designated person who is in charge of the program and responsible for ensuring all HHBH CA and governing bodies policies and procedures are followed. In the case of programs or activities with multiple teams a coordinator will be identified to be in charge and responsible for all the teams and ensuring all HHBH CA and governing bodies policies and procedures are followed. Each team must also have a minimum of one person identified as the person in charge of the team and responsible and ensuring all HHBH CA and governing bodies policies and procedures are followed.
- Employees and/or volunteers are restricted from being alone with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons where they cannot be easily observed by others.
- Employees and/or volunteers are not allowed to implement new activities or programs for children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons without HHBH CA. Request for new activities or programs should be submitted in writing to management.
- Should a vulnerable person need to be 'segregated from the group' for disciplinary actions (i.e. a child is misbehaving and has been given a 'time-out'), the vulnerable person is to be located in an area where they can be supervised by at least two (2) adult workers and/or volunteers.
- Written permission must be obtained from a parent or guardian before any employee and/or volunteer transports children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons in the name of HHBH CA.
- Children under the age of 12 placed in the care of HHBH CA will only be released to a parent, legal guardian or person designated by a parent or legal guardian.

General Conduct

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for both mind and body, the following guidelines are meant to guide HHBH CA employees/volunteers during their interactions with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons. These guidelines do not and cannot outline every situation that may be encountered while on the job, requiring employees/volunteers to act with a certain degree of personal discretion.

Because a certain action is not prohibited in this section does not mean it is acceptable behaviour. HHBH CA reserves the right to take disciplinary action against employees/volunteers whose actions are found to be inappropriate regardless of whether they appear in this section:

- Employees/volunteers will treat all children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons with respect and consideration. Treatment shall be fair and equal, and shall not be based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, or economic or social status. All efforts must be made to avoid favouritism or the appearance of favouritism.
- While representing HHBH CA, employees/volunteers shall not possess, distribute, use or allow others to use any alcohol or drugs.
- Employees/volunteers shall not use harsh or inappropriate language, degrading punishment or any type of restraining device in the name of behaviour management.
- Employees/volunteers shall not participate in or allow others to engage in any form of hazing.
- Employees/volunteers shall not have sexual contact with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons.
- Employees/volunteers shall not dress, undress, shower or bathe with or in the presence of children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons.
- Employees/volunteers shall not use physical punishment in any form.
- Employees/volunteers are prohibited from sharing sleeping locations with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons. This includes beds, tents, hotel rooms and other similar areas. Employees/volunteers can sleep in open areas as long as the area is large enough for employees/volunteers to have their own defined sleeping areas and other employees/volunteers are also present.

- Employees/volunteers shall not discuss their own sexual history, behaviours, preferences or fantasies nor their use of illicit or pornographic materials while in the company of children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons.
- Employees/volunteers shall not possess any sexually oriented materials (books, magazines, videos or clothing) when conducting business in the name of HHBH CA.
- When one-on-one discussion or counselling is warranted, employee/volunteer interactions with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons will take place in an area that allows for private conversation while remaining in the view of others.

If for any reason, an employee/volunteer acts in a manner that is contrary to these guidelines, they must submit to their supervisor/the board etc. a written description of the incident and the reasons for such action. The report will be reviewed for wrongdoing. A copy of the original report along with any additional findings made by the reviewer will be included in the employee's/volunteer's permanent file.

Training

New employees to HHBH CA will be supervised by a senior employee or senior board member within the HHBH CA for a minimum of 2 weeks, or longer if deemed necessary by HHBH CA. New volunteers that are working with the vulnerable sector **who are not a parent of a participant will** be supervised by an employee that is not considered a 'new' employee that is also under supervision.

Abuse training is mandatory for all volunteers and staff members who regularly work with children, youth, disabled persons, seniors and other vulnerable persons.

Training materials and procedures are to include, but are not limited, to the following:

- In-house video presentations
- Handbooks
- Policies
- Instructions for reporting incidents
- Refresher courses
- Recognizing the signs of abuse

Abuse protocol training will take place upon hiring a new employee and when adding a new volunteer (who will be working with the vulnerable sector in a scenario where the parent or guardian of the vulnerable person is not present) and then again annually. In addition to completing mandatory training, volunteers and staff are required to respond to and report all allegations or complaints of abuse in an appropriate manner and in accordance with any applicable policies and procedures.

Reporting of incidents and allegations of abuse

Employees and/or volunteers are to immediately report all incidents and /or allegations of abuse using HHBH CA Incident Report Form/System. Upon reporting the incident and/or allegation, the Executive Director is responsible for reviewing the report and then immediately reporting it to a senior board member (if applicable) and to the necessary authorities such as local police, Children's Aid Society, etc. Further, the Executive Director and/or the senior board member is to report the incident and/or allegation to the insurance company and legal counsel.

All employees and/or volunteers identified in such incidents or allegations of inappropriate behaviour and/or abuse will be immediately redeployed away from all vulnerable persons pending the outcome of the investigation conducted by the appropriate authorities.

At no time will the HHBH CA have the authority to apply corporal punishment to any parties involved in the incident and/or allegation.

Transportation of the Vulnerable Sector

All the same procedures, guidelines, reporting, etc. within this Abuse protocol apply while transporting the Vulnerable Sector. Where at all possible, transportation is to be arranged through a transportation company as used by the local public-school system. If HHBH CA operates the transportation itself or uses a transportation company that is not typical to the local public-school system, then additional abuse protocol guidelines will be implemented and reviewed around this type of transportation (of the Vulnerable Sector).

Invited Persons that do not typically Visit the Premises

In the case of an invited person that does not typically visit HHBH CA premises, such as a temporary contractor to do maintenance on the building, HHBH CA employee(s) or volunteer(s) will assign an employee or volunteer to supervise this invited person and periodically check in with them while they are present on the premises.

Feedback

As feedback is a vital element in overseeing the implementation of an abuse protocol, it is very important that all employees and volunteers report anything to management/or the board if anyone recognizes a gap between protocols, procedures and practices.

Staff and volunteers are also encouraged to discuss and suggest ideas and potential amendments to the abuse procedure based on their daily experience and interactions.

**Hounsfield Heights Briar Hill Abuse Prevention Policy
Employee Agreement**

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the content of this policy, you are required to consult your supervisor/the Board. This should be done prior to signing and agreeing to the HHBH CA Abuse Prevention and Volunteer Screening Policy.

I have read and understood the HHBH CA Abuse Prevention and Volunteer Screening Policy and agree to abide by its terms and conditions throughout the course of my employment/volunteer activities. I understand that my failure to follow the terms of this policy could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination (as applicable).

Employee / Volunteer signature

Date