

POLICY MANUAL

Policy No. 113

Section:	Administration
Title	Child Protection

REASON FOR POLICY

To provide a safe environment for children and youth in all North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission (NVRC) programs and services by ensuring their protection from abuse while in our care.

POLICY

1. The Child Protection Policy is guided by the following principles:
 - a) While in the care of NVRC programs, the safety and well-being of children is our responsibility and primary concern.
 - b) Children are treated with respect regardless of ability, age, behaviour, culture, gender, ethnicity and economic circumstances.
 - c) Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm or the threat of harm.
 - d) The NVRC will minimize the risk of child abuse by adopting, maintaining and regularly reviewing recruitment, screening, supervisory, orientation and training processes.
 - e) There is a shared responsibility and accountability for child protection with our community partners, including voluntary groups and associations, agencies and service providers.
2. Employee, contractor and volunteer recruitment, screening, hiring, assessment and supervisory processes and practices will be maintained and reviewed to minimize the risks of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer or another child.
3. The regular orientation and training of employees, contractors and volunteers will include being made aware of and alerted to signs and symptoms of possible child abuse or neglect and to the NVRC processes and procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

4. The *BC Child, Family and Community Service Act* requires anyone who suspects that a child has been or is likely to be abused or has had a child disclose information concerning abuse or neglect to report the suspected abuse or neglect to a child welfare worker. The duty to report child abuse and neglect overrides any duty to protect the privacy of clients, employees, volunteers or contractors. At the time of reporting, the direct Supervisor, facility Programmer and the Director of Recreation & Culture or designate will be informed. The information reported will remain confidential and will not be shared with other NVRC staff, contractors, volunteers, Commissioners or people outside NVRC.
5. A NVRC Child Protection Code of Conduct that identifies positive work practices and establishes boundaries concerning acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, relationships, attitudes and responsibilities expected of employees and volunteers will be provided to all employees and volunteers working directly with children and will be reviewed annually.
6. Individuals working on behalf of the NVRC must adhere to the NVRC Child Protection Code of Conduct. Failure to comply with this policy shall result in disciplinary measures appropriate to the circumstances.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply: (Reference: *The British Columbia Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers*, published April 2007)

Physical abuse – a deliberate physical assault or action by a person that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm to a child. It includes the use of unreasonable force to discipline a child or prevent a child from harming him/herself or others.

Emotional Abuse – includes ignoring, habitually humiliating the child, withholding life-sustaining nurturing and situations involving intimidation, threats and bullying. Emotional abuse involves acts or omissions by those in contact with a child that are likely to have serious, negative emotional impacts. It includes the emotional harm caused by witnessing domestic violence.

Sexual Abuse – occurs when a child is used (or likely to be used) for the sexual gratification of another person. It includes:

- touching or invitation to touch for sexual purposes;
- intercourse (vaginal, oral or anal);
- menacing or threatening sexual acts, obscene gestures, obscene communications or stalking;
- sexual references to the child's body/behaviour by words/gestures;
- requests that the child expose his/her body for sexual purposes;
- deliberate exposure of the child to sexual activity or material; and
- sexual aspects of organized or ritual abuse.

Neglect – failure to provide for a child's basic needs. It involves an act of omission by the parent or guardian, resulting in (or likely to result in) harm to the child. Neglect may include failure to provide food, shelter, basic health care, supervision or protection from risks, to the extent that the child's physical health, development or safety is, or is likely to be, harmed.

AUTHORITY TO ACT

Authority to act is delegated to the Director of Recreation & Culture.

Original Approval Date:	March 9, 1992	Approved by:	Commission
Amended:	September 10, 2008	Approved by:	Commission
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