



## **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
Amended	March 26, 2015	Approved by:	Commission

## **PROCEDURES MANUAL**

### **Procedures Related to Policy No. 113**

Section:	Administration
Title	Child Protection

#### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Staff Recruitment and Screening Procedures
  - All new employees and, where appropriate, volunteers, must obtain a criminal record check by the RCMP for records or information of criminal convictions for sexual abuse. Employees who are hired to work in licensed settings (e.g. licensed preschools and daycamps) must obtain criminal record checks through the Ministry of the Solicitor General's office prior to being engaged as personnel working directly with children. Potential staff and, where appropriate, volunteers, will be asked to sign a waiver agreeing to the screening prior to being hired.
  - As per the federal Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), the criminal record check will not be distributed to other agencies or organizations, even at the request of a staff/volunteer. The criminal record check will be treated as confidential.
  - Whenever possible, a minimum of three reference checks for all prospective employees will be conducted, preferably with persons of character and previous employers. These references will be documented and filed with Personnel/Payroll prior to employment.
2. Staff Orientation and Training Procedures
  - All new employees/volunteers will participate in an NVRC orientation process, which will include reviewing and receiving a written copy of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Policy 113). By their signature, employees/volunteers will acknowledge having received a written copy of the policy.
  - NVRC supervisory staff will be responsible for ensuring their staff/volunteers who will be working directly with children and youth have copies of and are cognizant of relevant policies and materials, to include: a) Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Policy 113), b) Supervision of Children Policy and Procedures (Policy 110), c) NVRC Child Protection Code of Conduct, and d) relevant emergency procedures.
  - Staff working with children in recreation programs that are longer than 1.5 hours in length, such as licensed preschool and daycamps, may receive training in appropriate behaviour management strategies.
3. Staff Evaluation and Supervision
  - Staff supervising child and youth programs will make periodic visits to programs to assure that employee performance, program standards and quality and organizational policies are maintained.

- Supervisory staff will provide the program instructors, contractors or volunteers working directly with children and youth with an annual performance review.

#### 4. Staff and Volunteer Relationships to Children

- Program staff and volunteers are discouraged from socializing outside of NVRC program activities with program participants under the age of 18 for whom they have a direct responsibility.
- NVRC staff and volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical, verbal or emotional punishment, or by failing to provide the necessities of care and well-being. A staff member or volunteer who is uncertain about how to appropriately manage a child's difficult behaviour should consult his/her immediate supervisor.
- Staff and volunteers providing direct care for young children will be identified by a name tag, uniform or t-shirt.
- Program staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of all children in their programs and immediately report any signs of suspected child abuse (see #6 Reporting Procedures).
- 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 adopted and provided to all employees and volunteers working directly with children. The code will be reviewed annually.

#### 5. Responsibilities to Parents and Guardians

- Parents will be advised by the program instructor/leader if the leader has a concern about their child's program participation or general health except in those situations of suspected abuse, in which case the reporting of suspected child abuse must be followed (see #6 Reporting Procedures).
- At the commencement, during or at the end of a program, staff shall not release a child to anyone other than the parent or guardian having legal custody of the child or to those individuals as authorized by the parent or guardian as indicated in writing or on the Emergency Consent Form.

#### 6. Reporting Procedures

- When there is any suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the employee, contractor or volunteer who becomes aware of the situation is legally obligated to report his/her concern to a child welfare worker.
- The employee, contractor or volunteer is required to inform his/her supervisor of this action and may request the supervisor's support to make the report.
- It is the responsibility of the supervisor to inform the Director of Recreation & Culture or designate immediately that such a report is made.
- A child welfare worker can be contacted as noted below:

*During working hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm) call:*

- the local Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) office – listed in the blue pages of the phone book or online at  
***[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/regions/regional\\_offices.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/regions/regional_offices.htm)***

- the local Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency – listed in the white pages of the phone book or online at  
***[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about\\_us/aboriginal/delegated/pdf/agency\\_list.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/aboriginal/delegated/pdf/agency_list.pdf)***
- Enquiry BC - Metro Vancouver at **604-660-2421**. Ask for your local MCFD office or Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agency nearest you.

*After hours* – (Monday to Friday 4:30pm to 8:30am and all day Saturday, Sunday and statutory holidays) for both MCFD and Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agencies, call **604-660-4927**

7. Discipline and Dismissal of Staff or Volunteers

- If an employee/contractor/volunteer is suspected of child abuse or neglect by another employee/contractor/volunteer, it is his/her obligation to report that suspicion immediately to his/her supervisor.
- The NVRC will immediately remove any employee/contractor/volunteer who is suspected of child abuse from any further contact with children while the complaint and situation is investigated.
- The NVRC investigation, disciplinary and/or dismissal policy and procedures will be followed upon the report of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- If an employee/contractor/volunteer is suspected of child abuse or neglect, all information relevant to the matter will be held in confidence, other than the making of the report to one's immediate supervisor.

Approval Date:	January 6, 2009	Approved by:	Director of Recreation & Culture
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