

Abuse Prevention Policy

Revision Number: 1.0 (policy creation)

Effective Date: 25Feb2019

Definitions

“The Organization” is defined as St Andrews Heights Community Association (SAHCA).

“Vulnerable person” is defined as person who is or may be, for any reason, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. Vulnerable persons include, but are not limited to children and youth (persons under the age of 18), persons with infirmities and/or disabilities, and seniors. A vulnerable person is in a position of dependence on others and may be at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

“Guardian” is defined as a person responsible for the wellbeing of a vulnerable person and may include a family member or legal guardian.

“Economic abuse” is defined as deliberate misuse of the money or belongings of an individual.

“Emotional abuse” is defined as mental or emotional injury to a vulnerable person that results in an observable and material impairment in an individual's growth, development or psychological functioning.

“Elder abuse” is defined as any action by a person in a position of trust that results in harm to or jeopardizes the well-being or safety of any elder person

“Neglect” is defined as failure to provide adequate care for an individual.

“Physical abuse” is defined as injury intentionally inflicted on a vulnerable person.

“Sexual abuse” is defined as contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a vulnerable person and a volunteer in a position of trust or authority.

“Corporal punishment” is defined as punishment that involves physical interaction including hitting, slapping, spanking, shaking, etc.

Purpose

This policy outlines how SAHCA will prevent the physical, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse of vulnerable persons by its volunteers. The Organization 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 SAHCA's care. This policy will be reviewed, signed and dated by each volunteer identified as being in a position of authority with vulnerable persons both at the time of hiring as well on an annual basis moving forward.

SAHCA has no employees nor does it plan to have employees in the foreseeable future. This policy will require updating should the SAHCA choose to hire employees in the future.

Volunteer Screening

Candidates for volunteer positions that involve regular interaction with vulnerable persons are required to complete a City of Calgary Police Information Check, including a Vulnerable Sector Check, through the Calgary Police Service or other comparable police service as determined by the SAHCA, at the expense of the SAHCA. All information collected through the police information check process will be reviewed by the directors of the SAHCA, as required, and retained by the SAHCA Secretary in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the volunteer and any other persons involved with SAHCA programs or services.

Volunteer screening is required regardless of the current volunteer status with the Organization if the volunteer is in a position or transfers into a position of authority and trust that involves interactions with a vulnerable person.

Volunteer Requirements

All programs offered by the SAHCA are designed to encourage safe interactions between volunteers and vulnerable persons. The requirements are as follows:

- All volunteers are restricted from being alone with vulnerable persons and the vulnerable persons must be easily observed by other adults at all times unless the volunteer is also a parent or guardian of the vulnerable person.

- Volunteers are not permitted to implement new activities or programs for vulnerable persons without the Organization's consent. Requests for new activities or programs must be submitted in writing to the SAHCA executive.
- 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 are supervised and can be easily observed by other adults.
- Volunteers are not permitted to transport vulnerable persons in the name of SAHCA unless the volunteer is also a parent or guardian of the vulnerable person.

General Conduct

The following guidelines pertaining to the general conduct of the Organizations volunteers are not and cannot capture every situation that may be encountered by volunteers. Volunteers are expected to act with a degree of personal discretion that protects vulnerable persons. Actions may still be considered unacceptable despite not being listed as prohibited in this policy. The SAHCA reserves the right to take disciplinary action against volunteers whose actions are found to be inappropriate regardless of whether they are captured in the policy. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves as follows:

- Volunteers will treat all vulnerable persons with respect and consideration. Treatment must be fair and equal, and must not be based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, intellectual capability, economic, or social status. All efforts must be made to avoid favouritism, or the appearance of favouritism.
- Volunteers are not permitted to use harsh or inappropriate language, degrading punishment, or any type of restraining device for behaviour management.
- Volunteers must not engage in, or allow others to engage in, any form of intimidation, harassment or hazing.
- Volunteers are not permitted to have sexual contact with vulnerable persons.
- Volunteers must not dress, undress, shower or bathe with or in the presence of vulnerable persons.
- Volunteers are not permitted to use physical punishment of any kind.
- Volunteers are prohibited from sharing sleeping locations with vulnerable persons including tents, hotel rooms, or other similar areas unless the volunteer is a parent or guardian of the vulnerable person. Volunteers are permitted to sleep in open areas as long as the area is large enough for volunteers to have their own defined sleeping areas and other volunteers or parents/guardians are also present at all times.
- Volunteers must not discuss anything of a sexual nature, including sexual history, preferences, fantasies, the use of illicit or pornographic materials, etc. while in the presence of vulnerable persons.
- Volunteers are not permitted to possess any materials of a sexual nature while participating in SAHCA activities including books, magazines, videos, audio files, clothing, toys, etc.
- When required, volunteers are permitted to have one-on-one discussions or counselling with vulnerable persons provided the discussions take place in an area that allows for private conversation while remaining in the view of other adults or a parent or guardian.

The Organization does not permit exceptions to these guidelines.

Reporting of Incidents and Allegations of Abuse

Volunteers must immediately report all incidents and/or allegations of inappropriate behaviour and/or abuse to a member of the Organization's executive board. Upon reporting the incident and/or allegation, the SAHCA board member must immediately inform the entire SAHCA board and the board must report the incident and/or allegation to the necessary authorities including the Calgary Police Service, the Children's Aid Society, etc., as applicable. The SAHCA board must also report the incident and/or allegation to the Organization's insurance company as well as the City of Calgary's Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator assigned to the Organization. Volunteers identified in incidents and/or allegations of inappropriate behaviour and/or abuse will be immediately prohibited from interacting with vulnerable persons on behalf of the Organization pending the outcome of an investigation conducted by the Organization and/or appropriate authorities.

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

Invited Persons that do not Typically Visit the Premises

Any invited person that does not typically visit the Organization's premises, such as a guest instructor, must be supervised by the volunteer(s) approved by the Organization to supervise the applicable activity. The volunteer(s) will supervise the invited person at all times and will not permit the invited person to be alone with the vulnerable person(s).

Feedback

Feedback is a vital element in overseeing the implementation of an abuse protocol. Volunteers or persons participating or observing the Organization's activities are encouraged to report any confusing or conflicting policies or gaps between protocols, procedures and practices to the SAHCA board. Volunteers or persons participating or observing the Organization's activities are encouraged to discuss and suggest ideas and potential amendments to the abuse policy.

Volunteer Agreement

I have read and understand the SAHCA Abuse Prevention Policy and I agree to abide by its guidelines and requirements throughout the course of my volunteer activities for the SAHCA. I agree that protection of vulnerable person(s) participating in the activities I am volunteering for is a priority. I agree to provide the SAHCA board with a police check as required by the policy. I understand that my failure to follow the terms of this policy could result in disciplinary action.

Volunteer Name (print)

Volunteer Signature

Date

SAHCA Board Member Name (print)

Board Member Signature

Date