



# **GDRC**

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Purpose**

The GDRC has developed the following Child Protection Standard Procedures to guide all employees/volunteers working on all GDRC programs. The GDRC accepts its responsibility to children, young adults, parents and volunteers involved in its programmes and is committed to enduring adherences to the following policy to support the provision of sound, safe and healthy sport, recreation and leisurely experiences in our community.

### **Policy**

We believe that GDRC employees/volunteers play a key role in the protection of children regardless of their contact with the public. GDRC employees/volunteers are the ambassadors of our organization. Maintaining personal boundaries is integral to developing healthy relationships with children and families. Behaviour that presents risk often begins by breaking boundaries with children and teens.

The intent of the Child Protection Standard Procedures is to guide employees/volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the children involved in activities or programs delivered by the GDRC. By providing employees/volunteers with the guideposts against which they can measure their own behaviour and the behaviour of those around them, employees/volunteers are empowered to identify and address behaviour of concern at an early stage to help better protect children.

### **Scope**

All employees/volunteers are responsible for treating all children with respect and dignity, and for maintaining appropriate boundaries. Employees/volunteers must monitor their own behaviour towards children, and be aware of the behaviour of their colleagues, to ensure that behaviour is appropriate and respectful, and will be perceived as such by others.

If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behaviour or the behaviour of others, you should discuss it with your supervisor. Refer to the Reporting Requirements section for further guidance



### ***Things to Consider:***

Before engaging in any behaviour or activity with a child, and when considering how your behaviour or the activity may be perceived by the child and by others, you should consider whether:

- The activity you are engaging in with a child is known to, and approved by, your supervisor and/or the parents of the child. All interactions with a child should be transparent.
- The activity or behavior you are engaging in would raise concerns in the mind of a reasonable observer as to its appropriateness.
- The activity or behavior is directly and objectively tied to your job function.
- The GDRC may be detrimentally affected by the activity or behavior.
- The activity or behavior may be reasonably regarded as posing a risk to the child.
- The activity or behavior may contribute to a child's discomfort.
- The activity or behavior may appear inappropriate to the GDRC, the child's family, or the public.

In addition, always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behavior, or other interactions, and avoid criticizing, embarrassing, shaming, blaming, or humiliating a child. Do not place inappropriate expectations on a child. Use your instincts as a guide.

Ask yourself: "Whose needs are being met by the activity or behavior?" The purpose of an activity or behavior should always be to meet the child's needs, not the adult's needs.

## **General Rules of Behavior**

### **Employees/volunteers of the GDRC must:**

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Establish, respect and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children involved in activities or programs delivered by the organization.
- Always adhere to the organization's policies and procedures in dealing with children.
- Treat all disclosures, allegations or suspicions of sexual or other unlawful or inappropriate behavior involving a child seriously – an employee/volunteer must report all disclosures, allegations or suspicions of inappropriate or unlawful behavior as set forth in these Child Protection Standard Procedures.

### **Employees/volunteers of the GDRC must not:**



- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child or a reasonable observer feel uncomfortable, or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any communication with a child within or outside of work that may make the child uncomfortable or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any behavior that goes against (or appears to go against) the organizations' mandates, policies, Code of Conduct, or Child Protection Standard Procedures, regardless of whether they are serving the organization at that moment
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behavior – it is an employee/volunteer's duty to report the matter to his/her supervisor or child welfare, not to investigate.

## Inappropriate Behavior

It is important for all GDRC employees/volunteers to understand that behaviours, as they relate to the safety and protection of children, fall into a continuum.

On one end of the continuum are those behaviors that are ***unlawful***. Unlawful behaviors are those that are criminal or that breach child welfare or related legislation, and include such things as child abuse, sexual assault, sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, procurement, luring, child pornography offences, corrupting morals, indecent acts, voyeurism, etc.

**Unlawful behaviors need to be reported to the child welfare agency and/or law enforcement for investigation. This Code provides you with information about how to submit such a report.**

At the other end of the continuum are those behaviors that are inappropriate but are of such a nature that it is believed they can be addressed and corrected through additional training, supervision and monitoring.

Inappropriate behavior could range from one-time behaviors to multiple instances, and could include behavior that is repeated even after it has been brought to the attention of the employee. It includes such things as telling inappropriate jokes to or in earshot of a child, confiding in a child with personal stories and having unauthorized contact with a child outside of work duties.



**Inappropriate behavior needs to be brought to the attention of management so it can be followed up formally and internally. The GDRC will determine if the behavior is inappropriate and how it will be addressed.**

In the middle of the continuum are those behaviors that may either be unlawful or inappropriate, depending on the overall circumstances. Or, it may be behavior that is initially seen as behavior that could be corrected through additional training, supervision and monitoring, but upon following up and learning more information, it is determined the behavior is more serious and warrants a formal investigation.

For the protection of children in our care, all instances of inappropriate behavior will be followed up on. Behaviors of concern will be reported to the child welfare agency, law enforcement or the licensing body for the individual for further investigation whenever we deem such action to be warranted.

**Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children involved in GDRC programs.**

Behavior considered inappropriate is that which may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Communication that goes beyond the employee/volunteer's responsibilities with the child and/or does not occur within the context of their duties and responsibilities. For example:
  - Making personal phone calls to a child and/or one or more members of the child's family
  - Having personal electronic or cell phone exchanges with a child and/or one or more members of the child's family (email, text message, instant message, online chats, social networking (including "friending"), etc.), regardless of who initiated the exchange
  - Writing personal letters to a child or one or more members of the child's family
  - Excessive communication (online or offline) with a child or the child's family

***You must report all communication with a child or his/her family that occurs outside the workplace. This enables the organization to ensure any such communication is appropriate and within reasonable boundaries, and will help to identify any problematic situations.***

2. Spending time with a child or the child's family outside of designated work times



- and activities, especially if this is not known to your supervisor and the child's parents. *You must report to your supervisor all contact with a child or the child's family outside of designated work times and activities BEFORE the contact occurs.*
3. Favoring one or more children to the exclusion of others (for example, paying a lot of attention to, giving or sending personalized gifts\*, or allowing privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate).
  4. Using a personal cell phone, camera or video to take pictures of a child, or allowing any other person to do so, as well as uploading or copying any pictures you may have taken of a child to the Internet or any personal storage device. Pictures taken in a work-related setting, with prior written consent from the parent/guardian, and in circumstances in which the parent/ guardian and your supervisor is aware that pictures are being taken may be permissible provided the organization has approved the activity in advance and has put procedures in place to ensure the pictures will be stored in a location only accessible to those with a need to access and removed when no longer required for the purpose for which they were taken.
  5. Offering or providing rides to a child in your personal vehicle, or in the organization's vehicle, except when your supervisor is aware of and has approved it and express parental consent has been granted, or in emergency situations. *You must report all rides you give to a child, whether in your own vehicle or in the company vehicle, to your supervisor.*
  6. Telling sexual jokes to a child or making comments to a child that are in any way suggestive, explicit or personal.
  7. Showing a child material that is sexual in nature, including signs, cartoons, graphic novels, calendars, literature, photographs, and screen savers, displaying or keeping such material in a location where it is reasonably possible that a child may see it, or making such material available to a child
  8. Physically or emotionally harming a child
  9. Intimidating or threatening a child
  10. Making fun of a child

***Whether or not a particular behavior or action constitutes inappropriate behavior will be a matter determined by the organization having regard to all of the circumstances, including past behavior, and allegations or suspicions related to such behavior.***

## Reporting Guidelines & Requirements

All employees and volunteers are required to report unlawful behaviour to police/child welfare and inappropriate behaviour or incidents to their supervisor. This requirement applies not only to behaviour or incidents that you personally witness, but also to those that you hear about.



Adults often worry that they may be overreacting and misreading a situation, and this may cause them to minimize concerning behavior they witness or hear about. There is also a fear of damaging a working relationship by raising a concern about a work colleague. It can be hard to believe that someone you work with or someone you met through your work duties could harm a child, and it can be tempting to downplay a transgression in the hopes it will not be repeated.

A person's character or their position in the organization has nothing to do with whether that person's behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in a given situation. It cannot be about whether you are "right" or "wrong," it must be about doing the best you can to identify behavior of concern so it can be dealt with appropriately.

Categories of incidents that need to be addressed by staff/volunteer under these Child Protection Standard Procedures include the following:

**1. Reports of Unlawful Behavior from a Child Involving an Employee/Volunteer of the organization or a Third Party.**

Disclosures or allegations of unlawful behavior reported to an employee by a child regarding either:

- a) another employee /volunteer of the organization; or
- b) someone other than an employee/volunteer of the organization (e.g. parent, teacher, babysitter, coach);

must be reported to child welfare and/or police in accordance with the Reporting and Documenting Complaints Policy re: Potentially Unlawful Behavior.

**2. Unlawful Behavior Witnessed by an Employee/Volunteer of the GDRC. Any incident of alleged unlawful behavior either:**

- a) witnessed by an employee/volunteer regarding another employee/volunteer of the organization; or
- b) witnessed by an employee/volunteer regarding someone other than an employee/volunteer of the organization (e.g. parent);

must be reported to child welfare and/or police in accordance with the Reporting and Documenting Complaints Policy re: Unlawful Behavior. If you do not know the identity of the child, take steps to find out who the child is—depending on the situation, steps may need to be taken to protect that child from additional harm, the child may need to make a statement to police, etc.

**3. Inappropriate Behavior Involving a Centre Employee/Volunteer.**

Inappropriate behavior that is either:



- a) reported to the employee/volunteer by a child or third party regarding another employee/volunteer of the organization; or
- b) witnessed by the employee/volunteer and involving another employee/volunteer;

must be reported to the organization in accordance with the Reporting and Documenting Complaints Policy re: Inappropriate Behavior. In addition to reporting, if you witness the inappropriate behavior you should take steps that can safely be taken to stop or disrupt the interaction, as outlined in #2 above.

**4. Inappropriate Behavior Involving Third Parties.** Inappropriate behavior that is either:

- a) reported to the employee/volunteer by a child or third party regarding a third party; or
- b) witnessed by the employee/volunteer and involving a third party;

must be reported to the organization in accordance with the Reporting and Documenting Complaints Policy re: Inappropriate behavior. In addition to reporting, if you witness the inappropriate behavior you should take steps that can safely be taken to stop or disrupt the interaction, as outlined in #2 above.

## Consequences of Failure to Adhere to Child Protection Standard Policy:

Depending on the circumstances, failure to adhere to these Child Protection Standard Procedures by a GDRC employee/volunteer may result in:

- follow-up by the organization to (1) gather information about what happened and (2) determine what, if any, disciplinary action is required; and/or
- a report to child welfare or law enforcement (or both).

Consequences, disciplinary or corrective actions will be as determined by the **Executive Directors of the GDRC** and will be based on the nature and severity of the incident, as well as information learned during follow-up, and any past behavior of concern.



If, in following up on a concern, we believe the behavior exhibited by an employee, volunteer or a third party may constitute unlawful behavior we will report the behavior to child welfare and possibly law enforcement.

In addition, in circumstances where multiple behaviors are reported, where inappropriate behavior is recurring, or where one instance of inappropriate behavior is of serious concern, the organization may refer the matter to child welfare, law enforcement or the employee's licensing body for investigation. Failure to adhere to the Child Protection Policy by any employee/volunteer will result in follow-up to look into the situation and disciplinary action if necessary. Appropriate consequences/disciplinary actions are to be determined by management, and will be based on the nature and severity of the incident.

I agree to comply with the Child Protection Standard Procedures for **the GDRC (Gagetown & District Recreation Council Inc.)**

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Name (Print)

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Employee/volunteer's signature

Date