

ANTI BIASED POLICY AND STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

It is the policy of Yonge Hearts Child Care Centre that families and staff are entitled to a care and work environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

This includes discrimination or harassment by an employer, employee or parent because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, record of provincial offences, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or disability.

We endeavor to ensure that the centre's policies, procedures, practices and equipment are free of racism and bias. Some of the methods that we use to achieve this are: asking for parent input into the programme and exploring various cultures, religions, abilities, gender/family structures through bias free toys, books, music, food, displays and activities, etc.

Our primary goal is to provide a high quality programme in a nurturing, secure environment that is available to all children. Children come to child care with a range of needs and abilities. Some children may require extra support while in care. This may include: consultation from a special needs resource agency, speech and language services or occupational therapy. This support may be short or long term.

It is our goal, while continuing to provide a quality programme for all, to facilitate the successful integration of all children in to our centre and to create a partnership between families, staff and, if necessary, specialized services in order to meet the individual needs of each child within the group.

Harassment for the purpose of this policy includes:

- (i) engaging in a course of vexatious verbal or physical conduct in respect of another person in circumstances in which the person is so engaged knows or ought reasonably to know that such conduct is offensive to, or considered unwelcomed by, the person to whom it is made, and
- (ii) a sexual solicitation or advance and a reprisal or threat of reprisal, made in the circumstances as set out in the Human Rights Code.

Examples of harassment are:

- derogatory jokes, innuendoes, taunts, insults, comments, threats or jeers about a person's race, colour, national or ethnic origin or about the adornment and rituals associated with cultural or religious beliefs.

Examples of sexual harassment are:

- unwelcome remarks including jokes, innuendoes, advances, invitations or taunting about a person's body, attire or gender; leering (suggestive staring) at a person's body; unnecessary physical contact such as touching, patting or pinching; compromising invitations; practical jokes of a sexual nature which cause awkwardness or embarrassment; displaying offensive or other demeaning material; requesting sexual favours, refusing to work or converse with another employee solely on the basis of their gender.

The Director/designate, as the supervisory staff in a position to receive complaints alleging infringement of the policy, is required to assist in its fulfillment, to be accessible to receive such complaints, and to take steps to facilitate the proper, fair and expeditious investigation, resolution and disposition of such complaints.

A person who feels that he/she is the victim of harassment should immediately make known to such a person that the conduct is unwelcome or offensive. It is important that this message should be clear and unambiguous. The person making the complaint may wish to keep a written record of the harassment.

If the conduct persists, the person should continue to advise the other of the unwelcome or offensive nature of the conduct. All incidents should be reported as follows:

- to the Director
- if it is not appropriate to complete step 1, the matter should be reported directly to the President of the Board of Directors.

Investigation of Complaints:

- 1) The Director shall conduct or arrange for an immediate investigation of the complaint. Such investigation shall include interviewing both the person who is alleged to have harassed the complainant and same shall be documented.
- 2) Every person receiving a complaint or conducting an investigation shall maintain all information received in strict confidence, consistent with the necessity of completing an effective investigation and taking appropriate steps arising therefrom.
- 3) Where an investigation discloses cause for concluding that harassment has occurred, discipline should be imposed, where appropriate, from a full range of disciplinary sanctions from written to verbal reprimands to suspensions and ultimately to termination for an employee and involuntary withdrawal from the centre for an individual or family.
- 4) Should an allegation be found not to be supported, no record of such shall appear in The personnel file of the person against whom the claim was made.

- 5) Every person who receives the complaint or who is involved in an investigation shall take steps to ensure that no reprisal or threat of reprisal is made or taken against any person by reason of such person having made a good faith complaint of harassment.

Nothing contained herein is intended to detract from or otherwise affect the right or decision of any individual to seek any remedy available under civil or criminal law, or to seek redress by contacting his/her lawyer, the Ontario Human Rights Commission or the Police.

Nothing contained herein is intended to interfere with voluntary relationships or stifle or discourage mutually accepted contacts (within the confines of staff professional obligations). The intent of the policy is to encourage individual freedom of choice and responsibility and to maintain a harmonious environment for all employees and families, free of discrimination and harassment.

If a child/parent speaks to a staff member regarding biased remarks that are made by another child or a staff member overhears or is present for such an exchange, the staff member must handle the situation by:

- 1) immediately apologizing to the child/parent, explaining that situations of this nature are taken very seriously.
- 2) talk to the child that made the remark, explaining that it is not appropriate and will not be tolerated. Ensure that the discussion is age appropriate, keeping in mind that some children repeat remarks that they overhear.
- 3) notify the Director, who will follow up with the child's family and follow the necessary reporting procedures (Serious Occurrence).
- 4) Staff will use resources, such as, multicultural materials, books, music, puppets, outings, etc to teach children to have respect for each other and each other's differences. Experiences will be age appropriate
- 5) The Director will source workshops for staff and parents on discrimination and harassment.

All incidents of harassment or of a racial nature must be reported to Toronto Children's Services within twenty four hours. Serious Occurrence Reporting procedures will be followed.

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