

West Neighbourhood House	
Policy Title:	Respectful Workplace Policy
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
Approval date:	September 2009 as Anti-Abuse Policy
Revision dates:	February 2012 / January 2014 / February 2019 / /

Policy Statement

Mutual respect and a discrimination free workplace are values and priorities of West Neighbourhood House. The benefits of a respectful workplace include a positive employee, participant and volunteer experience. West Neighbourhood House is committed to demonstrating a welcoming and respectful environment, promoting ethical behaviour and striving for professional excellence.

All persons associated with West Neighbourhood House are accountable for conducting themselves in a civil, respectful, cooperative and non-discriminatory manner at the workplace and at work-related gatherings. Everyone participating in West Neighbourhood House activities has the responsibility to refrain from and to report any disrespectful conduct. All allegations of disrespectful conduct will be investigated.

West Neighbourhood House prohibits retaliation of any kind against an individual reporting a complaint or providing information in connection with an investigation. Every effort will be made to keep the complaint, investigation, and action taken as a result of the investigation confidential.

This policy sets the minimum standard for West Neighbourhood House. Where local law or legislations apply, they must be followed. Where other West Neighbourhood House policies apply, they must also be followed.

Applicability

- All Staff
- General public
- Program Participants, Clients, Members
- Volunteers
- Student Placements
- Community groups who utilize West Neighbourhood House space
- Donors
- Third Party Contractors

Definitions

Work environment includes but is not limited to:

- Homes of clients or any other work sites;
- West Neighbourhood House-related travel or restaurants, hotels or meeting facilities that are being used for West Neighbourhood House purposes;
- West Neighbourhood House owned or leased facilities;
- Telephone, email or other communications; and
- Social events where West Neighbourhood House staff or Board members are present.

Disrespectful conduct includes but is not limited to in person or by information and communication technology:

- **Harassment** is a behaviour that humiliates, insults, or degrades another person or people, often for reasons of sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or family status or disability. It is unwelcome, unwanted and uninvited. It may be intentional or unintentional and can be physical or verbal, passive or aggressive.
- **Sexual harassment** means engaging in vexatious comment(s) or conduct against another person or people related to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. In the workplace, sexual harassment also means making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and/or the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.
- **Psychological/Emotional Abuse** is defined as but not limited to an on-going attack on an individual's self-esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, bullying, intimidating, isolating, hazing, habitual scapegoating, blaming.
- **Bullying** is deliberate behaviour that is malicious and/or cruel with the aim to humiliate, undermine or destroy the confidence or self-esteem of an individual or group of individuals. Bullying may include a disrespectful conduct of power by one person or group over another. Bullying behaviour is often persistent and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single incident. It is usually carried out by an individual, who ought reasonably to have known that their actions are unwelcome or unwanted. It can also be an aspect of group behaviour.
- **Verbal Abuse** is defined as but not limited to humiliating remarks, name-calling, swearing at someone, taunting, teasing and/or continual put downs.
- **Physical Abuse/Physical Assault** is defined as, but not limited to, the use of intentional force that can result in physical harm or injury to an individual. It can take any form of violence including but not limited to fighting, grabbing, pinching, striking, slapping, hitting, punching, shaking, pulling, throwing, kicking, biting, choking, strangling, or the abusive use of restraints.
- **Sexual Abuse/Sexual Assault** is defined as but not limited to any unwanted physical contact, verbal or written propositions or innuendos, exhibitionism or exploitation, and may involve the use of force or the threat of force.
- **Neglect** is defined as but not limited to any behaviour that leads to a failure to provide services which are necessary such as withdrawing basic necessities as forms of

punishment, failing to assess and respond to changes in health status and refusing or withdrawing physical or emotional support.

- **Financial abuse** includes but is not limited to theft, fraud, intentionally defaulting or delaying loan repayments to vulnerable persons, high pressure sales tactics and intentionally providing misleading financial information or financial services.

Local laws or legislation applicable to this policy includes but are not limited to:

- Children and Family Services Act
- Day Nurseries Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Criminal Code of Canada
- Regulated Health Professions Act
- Long Term Care Act
- Occupational Health & Safety Act
- Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act
- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)
- Collective agreement

Other West Neighbourhood House Policies related to this policy:

- Workplace Violence Policy
- Workplace Harassment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Customer Service Policy

General Principles and Procedures

Everyone at West Neighbourhood House shares the responsibility for creating and maintaining a respectful workplace.

You have the right:

- To work or participate in a respectful work environment at West Neighbourhood House,
- To confidentiality as set out below,
- To protection from intimidation, threat, unfair discipline or unfair dismissal if you have filed a complaint honestly believing you have been confronted with disrespectful conduct or have witnessed disrespectful conduct,
- To protection from unfair evaluation if you are an employee or student and have filed a complaint of disrespectful conduct against your supervisor,
- To have a friend or support person with you during all meetings, informal and formal.

Consider taking the following action if you are confronted with disrespectful conduct or if you have witnessed disrespectful conduct:

- First and foremost, put yourself in a position where you feel safe.
- If you can, tell the person(s) the behavior is unwelcome. Ask them to STOP, if you feel you can. Some people may not understand that what they are saying or doing is wrong.
- Write down what happened and what you saw. You do not need a written record to make a complaint, but it will help you to remember the details.
- You may file a complaint of disrespectful conduct with West Neighbourhood House (see below).
- You may inform the police or need to call 911 immediately depending on the situation. When you suspect neglect, physical or sexual abuse or sexual harassment of someone who is or you suspect to be under 18, you must report the situation to a child welfare agency (e.g. Children's Aid Society). These actions must then be reported to the supervisor and Unit Director as per our incident reporting procedures.
- Program participants and volunteers may want to talk to a staff person. The staff person can go with you to see a staff supervisor or management representative who may assist you contacting the police.
- Staff may want to talk to their supervisor, union steward, a management representative or the Manager of Human Resources to assess their options.
- Staff must report any incidents of disrespectful conduct related to West Neighbourhood House to their supervisor or a management representative.
- Management will keep the President of the Board of Directors informed of serious cases of alleged disrespectful conduct and will at least annually report to the Board of Directors about the number and types of disrespectful conduct cases arising. Management may also decide to seek legal counsel.

Take the following action when program participants exhibit disrespectful conduct:

- Let the person know their behavior is unacceptable and if they wish to continue using the services of West Neighbourhood House, the disrespectful conduct must stop.
- In some cases, staff may involve the police or child welfare agencies.
- If the person continues the disrespectful conduct, call the program staff person, program supervisor, Unit Director or Manager connected to the program participant to reinforce the warning and to consider involving the police.
- If the person is asked to leave, staff present will meet to have a quick consultation to clarify who will be the lead person, be clear about what they are going to do (e.g. walk the person out the door, ask person to leave, or call the police) so that everyone understands their role.
- In consultation with the program Unit Director, the program staff may choose to restrict the participant's access to program activities or to West Neighbourhood House premises for a period of time or indefinitely, depending on the circumstances.

Follow the procedures below when making, investigating, and resolving complaints of disrespectful conduct:

Goals for addressing complaints of disrespectful conduct:

- To stop and prevent further disrespectful conduct,
- To support individuals and/or groups experiencing disrespectful conduct,
- To ensure programs and services and the work environment of West Neighbourhood House are welcoming and respectful.

A complaint can be made by:

- Any person or people who feel they have been confronted with disrespectful conduct from anyone in West Neighbourhood House community. This includes staff, board members, volunteers, students, participants, voting members of West Neighbourhood House, donors and visitors to our locations.
- A person who sees another person being confronted with disrespectful conduct.
- West Neighbourhood House as an entity can also make a complaint.

How to make a complaint:

- Anyone who thinks that they have been confronted with or has witnessed disrespectful conduct may file a complaint under the West Neighbourhood House Complaint Policy (available at all West Neighbourhood House locations).

Investigation:

- West Neighbourhood House will investigate all complaints of disrespectful conduct filed under the Complaints Policy in accordance with the procedures in the Complaints Policy.
- However, West Neighbourhood House will not investigate complaints of disrespectful conduct which have already been investigated and addressed by West Neighbourhood House. This is to avoid multiple investigations and action in respect of the same allegations.
- In order to achieve the purposes of this policy, during the investigation, West Neighbourhood House may limit the program participation of volunteers or participants accused of disrespectful conduct, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Where a disrespectful conduct complaint is against a staff person, West Neighbourhood House will consider where it is appropriate to transfer or suspend (with or without pay) the staff person accused of disrespectful conduct, pending the outcome of the investigation, and subject to the collective agreement, where applicable.

Resolution:

- If the investigation determines that disrespectful conduct has occurred by a participant, volunteer, student, West Neighbourhood House will take appropriate action including, but not limited to, reporting the disrespectful conduct to relevant authorities, suspension or expulsion from some or all of the programs offered by West Neighbourhood House or from its premises.
- In addition, if the investigation determines that disrespectful conduct has been committed by a staff member, West Neighbourhood House will take appropriate action, including but not limited to reporting disrespectful conduct to relevant authorities, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, subject to the collective agreement, if applicable, and human resource policies and procedures.
- Where possible and applicable, West Neighbourhood House will refer victims of disrespectful conduct to counselling services.

Confidentiality:

- Confidentiality is an extremely serious issue. Significant personal harm and damage to reputation could come to any party through inappropriate breaches of confidentiality, including harm created by innuendo and gossip. Trust in confidentiality also encourages people to come forward with their complaint.
- Everyone involved in a complaint under the Respectful Workplace Policy has a responsibility to ensure confidentiality in order to respect the right to fair process for the complainant and respondent. Everyone involved has a responsibility to strictly limit the number of people who share information with, and to caution such contacts on the importance of confidentiality. Contacts should only include parties who have a clear interest in the matter.
- Please refer to the West Neighbourhood House Confidentiality, Complaints and Privacy Policies for additional information.
- West Neighbourhood House also reserves to right to share information with its legal representatives, management staff, Board of Directors, and law enforcement as may be appropriate.

False allegations:

- Knowingly making false allegations of disrespectful conduct is serious wrongdoing.
- Where West Neighbourhood House determines that an employee has intentionally made a false accusation of disrespectful conduct, it will take appropriate action, including, but not limited to, disciplinary action up to and including termination, subject to the collective agreement, where applicable.
- Where West Neighbourhood House determines that a participant, volunteer, Board member or other user of the premises has intentionally made a false accusation of disrespectful conduct, it will take appropriate action including exclusion of that person from some or all services, programs or building use.

Take following action when you don't know what to do or are unsure of possible disrespectful conduct:

Please talk with a management representative in West Neighbourhood House. This includes any Unit Director, any Manager or the Executive Director.

Acknowledgement of Policy

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Respectful Workplace Policy and/or have had it explained to me.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by this policy and related policies of West Neighbourhood House as a condition of my employment.

I commit to reporting incidents of disrespectful conduct as set forth in this policy.

Date: _____

Name of Employee/Volunteer: _____

Signature: _____

