

Parks & Recreation  
Child Protection Policy



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PORT COLBORNE

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The City of Port Colborne recognizes children and youth as being a vital part of a healthy, growing community, and as such, desires to provide them access to quality programming in safe environments where they can learn, develop, and flourish as representatives of our future.

## What is child protection?

Child protection is the response to the different ways in which children, youth, and vulnerable persons physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health could be damaged, or threatened by the actions of another person or environment.

## Purpose

The purpose of a child protection policy is to provide a standard of care for the safety and well-being of children, youth, and vulnerable persons accessing public spaces that are the responsibility of the City, or who attend recreation programs offered by the City.

## Goals (P.E.E.R.)

- **Provide** opportunities to engage in quality recreation programs for children, youth, and vulnerable persons.
- **Enable** participants to feel safe in program environments
- **Engage** participants through lesson plans and quality instruction
- **Respect** each participant as an individual, and treat as such

## Objectives

- **Provide:** As staff/instructors, or volunteers for the City of Port Colborne, each program offered is done so with an expectation that the City is providing a service to each participant who is registered with us. Instructors will strive to provide access to positive experiences for every individual who participates in a recreation program offered by the City.
- **Enable:** Staff/instructors will do their due diligence in maintaining a safe, clean program environment at all times which includes area scanning, safety checklists, maintaining tidy workspaces, returning and storing equipment, and proper sign in/out procedures for participants.
- **Engage:** Instructors will engage their participants through lesson planning, implementation, evaluation, and incident reporting where applicable

- **Respect:** Each participant registered for a program offered by the City of Port Colborne is an individual, and will be treated with nothing but care, dignity, and respect. Every person will have the right to this treatment in an inclusive environment regardless of age, race, ability, or sexual orientation.

### **Child Protection Advocate's**

Each person who is trained and aware of the City of Port Colborne's Child Protection Policy will be deemed as a Child Protection Advocate. All staff, instructors, and volunteers who are trained on this policy and procedures will move forward advocating the following:

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- Being a point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Recreation Program Coordinator and/or contacting 9-1-1 if necessary;
- Ensuring that children, youth, and vulnerable persons are given appropriate supervision and care;
- Ensuring that each person leading program activities in a given environment is deemed to be a Child Protection Advocate.

In the event that a Child Protection Advocate violates a policy or procedure that has been laid out in this document, he or she will be subject to an investigation which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Staff Safety**

- Avoid being alone with participants at all times. If there is a need to be alone, or no other possibility, (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another worker, or program participant knows where you are and why. If no other staff or participants are present, try to move to a space where you are visible by the public. If none of the above situations are possible –an incident report must be completed as a document explaining the situation to serve, as a record should it be called to question.
- At no time should a volunteer or worker from any external organization arrange to meet a participant away from the activity without approval by a parent/guardian, or accompanied by a staff person.
- Program locations should always be known to the Recreation Program Coordinator, or another related staff person at all times. If a transition must take place from one main program area to another, it must be communicated to another party.
- Program staff are to fill out incident reports for any situation that could be questioned. Incident reporting is a fundamental safety document that serves as a record to protect staff and participants in various situations
- Staff should regularly be performing “area scans” during programs to monitor any potential threats to the safety of themselves and program participants. Area scans include things such as monitoring equipment or objects in an environment that could cause an injury, persons not designated to be in program spaces, adverse weather, and interactions amongst participants within a program.

- Behavioural incidents are often experienced by staff/instructors leading programs for children, youth and vulnerable persons. Staff/instructors must be aware of the progressive disciplinary action approach (page 5) in order to maintain a safe environment for all participants.

### **Participant Safety**

- Make sure that the program area used for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove objects, which could cause injury in energetic/active games.
- Daily environment safety checks must be signed off by an authorized staff member
- Make sure that you are always aware of the following in each different environment you are in:
  - Where a phone is and how to operate it
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book
  - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
- Staff will not release participants from a program to individuals who are unknown to the staff, or who may not be listed as a designated pickup person. Staff have the right to request photo identification for individuals they do not recognize to match up with listed persons designated for pickup.
- Staff or members of the public will not take photos of participants in the program spaces for use unless those participants have confirmed photo identification sign off forms returned to the City by parents/guardians.

### **Fire Evacuation**

- Each instructor/staff member will receive a formal walk through of fire evacuation practices relevant to the site (s) they will be leading programs in
- Best practices will have instructors/staff teach their program groups briefly about fire drills/emergency situations such as exits and meeting locations outside
- Generally, each location will have different options for fire exits and instructors/staff will respond to drills and emergency situations by:
  - Identifying the exit closest to the program group
  - Confirming that the path to the exit is free from danger
  - Lead participants out of the exit to a designated meeting spot
  - Conduct a head count/attendance check
  - Call emergency numbers as required

### **New Employees/Instructors**

The City's skilled staff/instructors and volunteers are by far the most valuable resource the municipality has for working with children, youth, and vulnerable persons. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers the following steps will be taken:

- Completion of an application form;
- A documented interview
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment, and other inconsistencies in the application;
- Taking up references prior to the person starting work;
- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies approved by the Niagara Regional Police, or other relevant Police service;

- Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record;
- Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed;
- On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers;
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children, youth, and vulnerable persons by providing appropriate training and supervision

## **Training**

It is an expectation that staff and volunteers may receive ongoing, mandatory training, as well as keeping any relevant certifications as they relate to a position valid as required.

## **Sensitive information**

1. Listen to the participants if they request to talk to you in private about something or indicate they need to tell you something
2. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the participant know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
3. Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the participants to feel safe sharing his/her own feelings. Take notes of exactly what is said to you avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
4. It is not the role of the worker to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a participant must be reported to the Recreation Program Coordinator, Niagara Regional Police, or Family and Children Services (FACS), depending on the severity of the situation.
5. Speak immediately to supervisor and action will be taken

## **What you should *not* do**

1. Staff/instructors/volunteers should not begin investigating the matter themselves.
2. Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
3. Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.

## **Things to say or do:**

- 'What you are telling me is very important'
- This is not your fault'
- 'I am sorry that this has happened/is happening'
- 'You were right to tell someone'
- What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you'
- Fill out appropriate incident report. Try to write down exactly what the young person or child said. Avoid assumptions and stick to just the facts. Report to supervisor.

### Things *not* to say or do:

- Do not ask leading questions – Why? How? What?
- Do not say ‘Are you sure?’
- Do not show your own emotions e.g. shock/disbelief
- Do not make false promises

### Suspected Abuse

As persons working with children, youth, and vulnerable persons, you may observe characteristics or traits that leave you to suspect neglect/abuse in participants. Some of these traits may include but are not limited to:

- Excessive bruising/lacerations on skin surfaces
- Irregular responses to loud or abrupt stimuli
- Vocabulary and language suggesting abuse or poor living conditions
- Strong resentment towards going home after a program
- Poor hygiene
- Insufficient clothing
- Cutting of the skin

If you as the program leader suspect any type of neglect or abuse of a participant, it is very important that you file a report with the necessary organizations such as the police, or Family and Children Services. Reports are **NOT** to be discussed with any other participants or staff. It is of great importance that any case investigations are kept as confidential as possible, and that information reported is detailed with clear observations and free of speculation. It is not the role of the staff member/instructor to conduct investigations, but to follow up with the appropriate channels such as the police, or Family and Children’s Services (FACS) on any expected abuse/neglect.

### Filing a case report

It is important to keep information confidential, and to yourself. If you have filed a report, please notify the Recreation Program Coordinator that you have done so and only indicate the organization that you filed a report with e.g. Niagara Regional Police or FACS. Do not report on any details regarding the participant’s identity, or conditions that caused you to file the report. If you require any support whatsoever, the organization that you contacted will most likely be able to answer questions related to the case. Please refer to the list of important contact numbers (page 7) for appropriate organizations.



## CITY OF PORT COLBORNE

Municipal Offices  
66 Charlotte Street  
Port Colborne, Ontario  
L3K 3C8  
[www.portcolborne.ca](http://www.portcolborne.ca)

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### PARKS & RECREATION

#### Progressive Disciplinary Action – Recreation Programs (All Ages)

In an effort to provide high quality programming that is inclusive and safe for each participant, the following progressive disciplinary actions will be used to address undesirable behaviours that are disruptive, violent, or have potential to harm any individual in the program environment.

##### *Step 1: Verbal Communication*

Verbal communication from instructor/staff to participant of any undesirable behaviour(s). If undesired behaviour persists through class, an incident form is completed and filed. If multiple incident forms have been documented for any one participant in successive classes, it may be deemed necessary to move into next step.

##### *Step 2: Written Contract*

A written contract will be issued to the participant's emergency contact as indicated in registration. Written contracts will indicate behaviours that have been persisting, and the associated reasons why such behaviour cannot be accepted in the program environment. It will be indicated that at this point in time if the behaviour continues to persist, that the participant will be removed from the program for a specified period (situational and on a case to case basis). Written contracts that have been issued will also include this document for review.

##### *Step 3: Removal from program*

Final action will be to remove the participant from the program for the period indicated in any contract that was previously issued. A refund will not be issued, unless otherwise approved upon by the Recreation Program Coordinator. On a case to case basis, there will be a recommended time frame where the participant will not be welcome to attend any recreation programs offered by the City of Port Colborne.

##### *Step 4: Integration back into programs*

After the period has passed (specified at step 3) for a participant's absence from program attendance, they will be welcome to schedule a meeting prior to registration in any programs of interest. During this meeting, an action plan will be developed for the participant to ensure that previous incidents do not re-occur, and if so, the consequences that are to be expected. As all incidents are different in nature, this process is a general protocol for staff/instructors to follow to address undesirable behaviours as they arise in a program environment. These processes are subject to change at any point, and are not a guaranteed order of actions/outcomes.

Sincerely,

Blair Holinaty  
Recreation Program Coordinator/Supervisor of Nickel Beach

## **Important contact numbers**

### **Niagara Regional Police Services**

**Emergency: 9-1-1**

**Non-Emergency: 905- 735-7811**

### **Family and Children's Services** (Suspected neglect/abuse)

**905-937-7731**

### **Port Colborne Fire Department**

**Emergency: 9-1-1**

**Non-Emergency: 905-834-4512**

### **Recreation Program Coordinator**

**905-932-0454**

### **Events and Sports Coordinator** (If Recreation Coordinator is away)

**905-359-2731**

\*\* The Recreation Program Coordinator will provide participant information sheets with subsequent emergency contact information prior to program starts.



**CITY OF PORT COLBORNE  
INCIDENT REPORT FORM FILED BY STAFF**

This form is to be completed by incident occurrence.

staff members reporting a citizen

**Staff Member Reporting Details:**

Name (Staff): \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street Number) (Street Name) (City) (Postal Code)

Phone Number: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Personal information – address, date of birth, etc., is only required if Emergency Services are involved.)

**Party Involved:**

Name (Citizen): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street Number) (Street Name) (City) (Postal Code)

Phone Number: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: If there are more parties involved, please attach extra pages.)

**Incident Information:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of this Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Conditions Upon Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly Summarize Actions Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parties Notified of the Incident:**

Police: Yes  No  Officer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occurrence No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry of Labour  (see Incident Reporting

SOP): Yes  No

Ambulance: Yes  No  Fire Dept.: Yes  No

Supervisor: Yes  No  Name of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Details:**

Footwear of Party Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Value of Loss: \_\_\_\_\_

Photos Taken: Yes      No  (If yes,  please ensure photos are attached.)

**Incident Type:**

Slip and Fall

Automotive

Tree Limbs

Trip and Fall

Property Damage

Bodily Injury

**Witness 1:**

**Witness 2:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: If there are more witnesses, please attach extra pages.)

**Signature:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Relevant Information:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any person who, with intent to defraud or knowing that he/she is facilitating a fraud against an insurer, submits an application or files an incident report form containing a false or deceptive statement is guilty of insurance fraud.

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The information will be used solely for the purpose of processing your incident report and will be supplied to the City of Port Colborne's insurance adjuster. Questions about the collection of this information should be directed to the City Clerk, 66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne, Ontario L3K 3C8 or 905-835-2900 ext. 106.

Revised: 09/28/11

More information to be completed on reverse. Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

Additional Information Attached: Yes

No

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.