



## **1. Purpose**

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

The Township of Southgate is committed to providing services and spaces that are free from abuse. The purpose of this policy is to provide a standard of care for the safety and well-being of children, youth, and vulnerable individuals accessing public spaces that are the responsibility of the Township, or who attend recreation programs offered by the Township. The policy is also to stress the importance of the Township's commitment by providing clear guidelines and expectations, educating individuals, and outlining how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by the Township of Southgate.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all Township of Southgate staff, instructors, or volunteers.

## **3. Objectives**

- **Provide:** As staff/instructors, or volunteers for the Township of Southgate, each program offered is done so with an expectation that the Township 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 Township.
- **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 Township of Southgate is recognized as 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.

## **4. Definitions**

- a. **Child Abuse** – refers to the violence, mistreatment, or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust. There are many different forms of abuse a child may be subjected to.
- b. **Duty of Care** – is a legal principle that identifies the obligation of individuals and organization to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants.
- c. **Emotional Abuse** – involves harming a child's sense of self-worth. Includes acts that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. Examples include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, and exploitation or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes exposing the child to violence.



- d. **Harassment** - is defined as but not limited to any unwanted physical or verbal conduct that offends or humiliates, including gender-based harassment. It can be a single incident or several incidents over time. It includes threats, intimidation, display of racism, sexism, unnecessary physical contact, suggestive remarks or gestures, offensive pictures, or jokes. Harassment will be considered to have taken place if a reasonable person ought to have known that the behaviour was unwelcome.
- e. **Neglect** – involves repeated incidents and is often chronic. Involves failing to provide what a child needs for their physical, psychological, or emotional development and well-being. Examples include failing to provide a dependent child with food, clothing, shelter, etc.
- f. **Psychological Abuse** - is defined as but not limited to communication of an abusive nature, sarcasm exploitive behaviour, intimidation, manipulation, and insensitivity to race, sexual preference, or family dynamics.
- g. **Physical Abuse** – involves single or repeated instances of deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Examples include hitting, shaking, pushing, burning, etc.
- h. **Sexual Abuse** – is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a youth and an adult or between two youths. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other youth.
- i. **Staff** – means salaried, regular, hourly, seasonal and term staff employed by the Township.
- j. **Volunteers** - include all program volunteers aged 16 years of age and older.
- k. **Vulnerable Individual** – is any person, either minor, or someone who, for physical or mental reasons, is unable to look after themselves.

## **5. Zero Tolerance Statement**

The Township of Southgate has zero tolerance for any type of abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse from Township Staff to the Township of Southgate immediately and will be addressed under the applicable policy.

## **6. What is Child Protection?**

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

## **7. Preventing Abuse**

The Township of Southgate will enact measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training, practice, and monitoring.



- a. Screening: Township staff and volunteers working with children in a supervisory position will be required to provide a Vulnerable Sector Check as a condition of employment. They will be required to provide updated copies as requested by the Township.
- b. Orientation & Training: It is an expectation that staff and volunteers will receive training during orientation and may receive ongoing, mandatory training, as well as keeping any relevant certifications as they relate to a position valid as required.

## **8. Reporting Procedure and Protocol**

### **a. Suspected or Reported Abuse of a child/youth:**

- i. Reports of abuse that are shared confidentially with a staff member by a vulnerable individual requires the staff member to report the incident to the Human Resource Manager, the parents/guardians (if appropriate) and/or the police. Individuals must respond to such reports in a non-judgemental, supportive, and comforting manner but must also explain that the report may need to be escalated to the proper authority or to the Vulnerable Individual's parent/guardian.
- ii. In the event that a child discloses or there are grounds to suspect child abuse, the Township will take prompt and immediate action.
- iii. Staff and volunteers will follow the documentation and information handling procedures required under relevant child protection legislation using the Child Abuse Reporting Form (Appendix A).

### **b. Suspected or Reported Abuse of a Township staff or Volunteer:**

- i. If a staff or volunteer suspects or receives an allegation or complaint of abuse about another Township staff, volunteer, or student, they will report the incident to the Human Resource Manager immediately.
- ii. The insurer may be notified if the allegation or complaint of abuse is against the Township/Township staff/volunteers.
- iii. Staff and volunteers will follow the documentation and information handling procedures required under relevant child protection legislation using the Child Abuse Reporting Form (Appendix A).

## **9. Violation**

If staff, instructors, or volunteers violates this policy or procedures that have been laid out in this document, they may be subject to an investigation which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **10. Record Retention and Use**

- a. All records related to the allegation or complaint will be retained in accordance with the Township's records management policies.
- b. All information related to disclosure, or an allegation of abuse will be treated confidentially. Documentation regarding a report to a child protection authority must not be released to anyone unless a warrant or subpoena is provided.
- c. All personnel files, policy sign offs and training records will be retained in accordance with the Township's records management policies.



**11. Related Policies & Legislation**

- a. Child and Family Services Act, SS 1989-90, c C-7.2
- b. The Child Care Act, SS 2014, c C-7.31
- c. Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA)

**Schedule A - Child Abuse Reporting Form**



**Schedule A**  
**Township of Southgate Child Abuse Reporting Form**

*(Forms to be completed by an individual, parent or guardian who suspected the abuse. Completed forms to be forwarded to the attention of the HR Manager in a sealed envelope marked confidential with the date, child's name, and program information)*

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Date Form Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Township Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Township Staff who performed suspected abuse: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender of Child:  Male  Female  Other

Child's Address (street, city, postal code): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Parent 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 City, Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2 Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 Home/Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2 Home/Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent 1 Work Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2 Work Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for this Report:**

Physical Abuse     Sexual Abuse     Psychological Abuse     Emotional Abuse     Harassment

Describe the incident, situation, statement, or behavioural and/of physical indications of abuse:

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

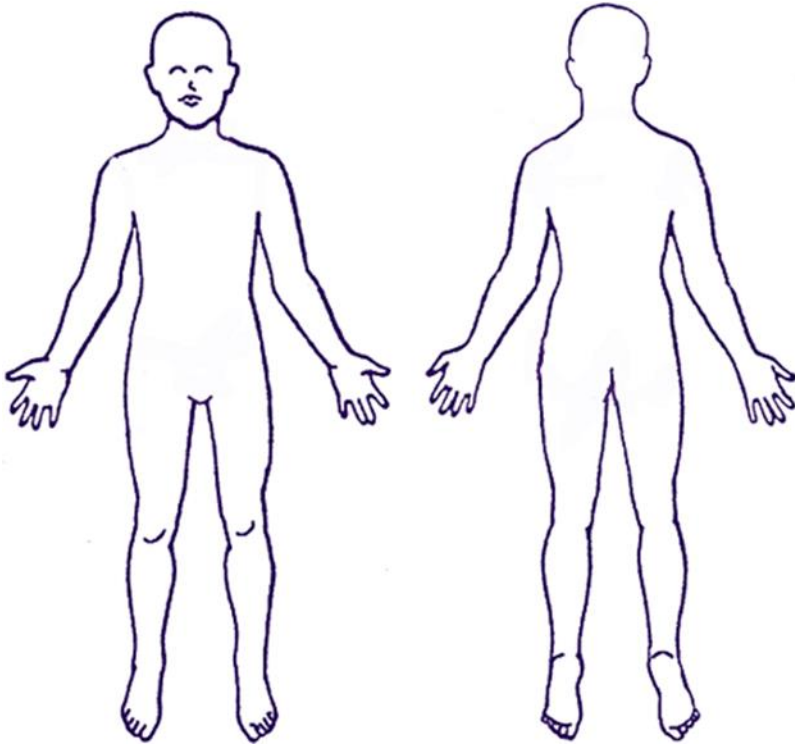
If child's explanation was sought, or offered, give details, including what was said and when:

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

If applicable - Area(s) on child's body showing indicators of abuse (or complete on body chart):

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

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHGATE**  
**Policy # 97**  
**Child Protection Policy**  
**Council Approval: September 18, 2024**



Name of Individual, Parent/Guardian Completing Report:

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Signature:

Date:

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