

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

1.0 Policy Statement

The City of Mount Pearl requests that employees are aware of the reporting requirements and procedures for handling suspected child abuse. The City of Mount Pearl shall post information on where to call and how to report suspected abuse and neglect and will make it readily available to employees. In addition, the City of Mount Pearl will also offer training to employees working with the vulnerable sector.

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies whenever any staff member has a reason to suspect that any child or youth on the premises may have been abused or neglected by anyone.

3.0 Purpose

To provide a safe environment for participants by providing policy, procedure and preventive mechanisms in City recreational programs.

4.0 Regulatory Requirements

In compliance with regulatory requirements, the City of Mount Pearl will report suspected child abuse and contact the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. According to the *Children and Youth Care and Protection Act, 2015*, under Section 11 (1): “Where a person has information that a child is, or, may be in need of protective intervention, the person shall immediately report the matter to a manager, social worker or peace officer”. In addition, as preventive measure, the City of Mount Pearl will use a screening process for criminal record and vulnerable sector check for hiring employees who will have direct contact with children and youth.

5.0 Child Abuse Mandates

At all times, City of Mount Pearl employees will be alert of potential signs of child abuse or neglect.

Child Abuse Facts

- Boys as well as girls can be victims of sexual abuse.
- Sexual abuse also includes showing young children pornographic materials
- A large percentage of abused or neglected children are abused by people known to them, either a family member, family friend, or someone who has established a trusting relationship.

It is required by law to report suspected child abuse to the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

Symptomatic Behaviour

Many children are not able to verbally express assault but may exhibit one or more of the following symptomatic behaviours that may indicate child abuse or neglect:

- Advanced sexual knowledge;
- Increased isolation from peers;
- Constant physical complaints;
- Consistently arriving without lunch or proper clothing;
- Unusual bumps, bruises or burns.

Steps to Take if Abuse is Suspected

City of Mount Pearl employees will take immediate action if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. City employees who work with children and youth will observe and listen to children symptomatic behaviour as stated in previous section.

- Employees will recognize that children may not have the vocabulary to express sexual behaviour, or he/she may not fully understand just how inappropriate the sexual behaviour may have been.
- Employees will write down the child's exact words immediately after the conversation, so reporting can be as accurate as possible.
- Employees will not express doubt or disbelief to the child as children do not have the experience to make up sexual behaviour, and cases of false reporting are extremely low.
- Employees will contact the Manager of Community Services Programs immediately without delay or discussion with other staff.
- An interview will follow where it will be required that employees are as accurate as possible in detailing the facts.

6.0 Approvals



Steve Kent, Chief Administrative Officer

August 21, 2018

Date