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Anti-Abuse Policy

Intent

Every Bluewater Respite Inc. sub-contractor, volunteer or user of our services shall be free from physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse or harassment by any Bluewater Respite Inc. sub-contractor, volunteer or user of our services in the course of performing any duty on behalf of Bluewater Respite Inc.

Bluewater Respite Inc. takes every reasonable precaution to reduce the risk of abuse and/or neglect.

Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse

A person has suffered physical harm either inflicted by a person supporting the individual or is caused by failure to adequately care, supervise, provide for or protect the individual.

Sexual Abuse

A person has experienced sexual assault, molestation, harassment or exploitation.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

A person has been exploited, intimidated, threatened, subjected to degrading, humiliated, verbally assaulted, confined or punished.

Neglect

A person has been knowingly and willfully neglected or deprived either physically, emotionally or mentally.

Financial Abuse

A person has been financially exploited or harmed by the improper or unauthorized conduct of another individual.

Guidelines

Bluewater Respite Inc. provides short-term activity-based or skill-development programs, such as summer day camp within community-based settings. All support and teaching procedures must be acceptable to the broader community. Accordingly, no procedure defined as intrusive by MCSS and MCYS guidelines will be used or recommended by any Bluewater Respite Inc. sub-contractor or user. Although Bluewater Respite Inc. is not bound by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services regulations regarding intrusive procedures, their definitions are useful in understanding the use of behavioural services that are considered intrusive as per CFSA. (An intrusive procedure is defined as an action or series of actions resulting in the restriction of freedom or movement, or reduction of visual, auditory or physical stimulation, or pain, or discomfort, or the risk of pain or discomfort. Such action is designed to affect a specific behaviour identified as impairing the child or causing him/her to suffer, and is employed with the goal of modifying or controlling the behaviour(s). Furthermore, those procedures identified as potentially intrusive or conditionally intrusive will not be used in any circumstances that are not naturally occurring and appropriate within the community context.

Preventing Abuse

1. To prevent abuse and neglect, Bluewater Respite Inc. requires all prospective Sub-Contractors and volunteers to have a Vulnerable Sector Police Check completed prior to hiring or starting to volunteer. The Vulnerable Sector Police Check must have no issues flagged and be repeated every three years.
2. Bluewater Respite Inc. also provides information to staff/volunteers at time of hire/volunteering on our Anti-Abuse Policy, aimed at prevention, reporting and eradication of abuse.

3. Whenever Bluewater Respite Inc. advertises a recreational or social activity specifically provided to families and their children, promotional advertising should indicate that childcare, for minors or dependent adult children with ASD, during the event is the responsibility of the child's parent, legal guardian, or parent designate.

4. The following information is gathered on any child or dependent adult and their family who is obtaining respite services. This information is kept in a secure location indefinitely. Sharing of this documentation with other organizations is solely at the discretion of the parents, and responsibility of Bluewater Respite Inc. Sub-Contractors.
 - a. Parents' and children's full names, address, phone numbers for home and work, and email if appropriate.
 - b. For the participating child or dependent adult: DOB, medical conditions, current medications and possible side effects, allergies, food sensitivities, or dietary restrictions; a brief profile of child's strengths and abilities, methods of expressive and receptive communication, sensory sensitivities, common patterns of behaviour relevant to the program in which the child will be participating, and any uncommon or unusual behaviours that may be exhibited by the child (such as running or other responses consistent with heightened anxiety in the child).

Reporting Abuse and/or Neglect

Bluewater Respite Inc. recognizes that abuse and neglect can have serious and even lethal consequences. Behaviours such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological intimidation and neglect can be disruptive and harmful to the victim.

Users of Services or Volunteers

- Any client of Bluewater Respite Inc. may come forward and report an act of abuse or neglect that they have experienced or witnessed.

- Bluewater Respite Inc. will ensure that they are protected from any reprisal or negative action resulting from the report.

- Bluewater Respite Inc. will thoroughly investigate all claims / reports of abuse and/or neglect.

Sub-Contractors

As a Sub-Contractor of Bluewater Respite Inc., you have the following responsibilities to our workplace:

- We trust that all Sub-Contractors will help us eliminate the threat of abuse and/or neglect from our workplace.
- All Sub-Contractors are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of abuse and/or neglect.
- If you witness any action related to abuse and/or neglect in the workplace, you must immediately report the incident to your supervisor.

Respite Coordinators

- Respite Coordinators are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace free from abuse and/or neglect.
- Respite Coordinators must be sensitive to the climate in the workplace and address potential problems before those problems become serious.
- If a Respite Coordinator becomes aware of abuse and/or neglect in the workplace and chooses to ignore it, that Owner and the Company risk being named co-respondent in a complaint and may be found liable in legal proceedings brought about by the complainant and/or government representatives.
- Support the complainant without prejudging the situation.
- Work with the complainant and document the action(s) and have them sign and date an official complaint.

Bluewater Respite Inc. will immediately report to the Police, the Children's Aid Society, and the parent of the child, every suspected, alleged, witnessed or confirmed incident of abuse or neglect regardless who did the abusing, or caused the neglect if the victim is a child.

Bluewater Respite Inc. will ensure that the child's legal guardian(s) are immediately notified of the results of the investigation if the victim is a child.

Investigation of Abuse or Neglect

Bluewater Respite Sub-Contractors will follow the investigation process outlined below.

Obtain a Description of the Incident / Claim

- Listen to the victim or witness, and ensure that they provide a full account of the incident(s).
- Ensure that you treat the matter seriously, using a professional manner and avoid discounting their difficulties in coming forward and telling the story.
- Contact the company legal department where it appears that the situation may require legal action.
- Obtain a written, signed and dated statement from the claimant.
- Inform them that they may wish to file a complaint with the authorities.
- Immediately report to the Police, the child's legal guardian(s), and Children's Aid Society if the victim is a child every suspected, alleged, witnessed or confirmed incident of abuse or neglect regardless of who did the abusing, or caused the neglect.

Conduct an Investigation into the Incident / Claim

- Conduct your investigation immediately after learning of the complaint.
- Ensure that the investigation remains confidential, and that all information gathered remains confidential. Information should be shared only where necessary, and with appropriate parties (who must also be informed of the need for confidentiality).
- Investigate all claims seriously.
- Document all information appropriately.
- Contact the authorities where appropriate.

Interviewing the Complainant

- Obtain a full account of the incident, and document all details provided.
- Determine any potential pattern involved, or if the incident was a singular occurrence.
- Determine if the incident was influenced by any contextual factors.
- Identify any reporting relationships, or hierarchical structures that may have influenced the incident(s).
- Determine a timeline of events associated with the incident, and what the job duties of each party were at the time of the incident, and what their expected locations were.
- Examine the potential of a charge made under false pretences, and any motivating factors that may be involved. Work to rule out these potential elements.
- Inform the complainant that a thorough investigation will take place.
- Obtain a written, signed and dated statement from the claimant.
- Ensure that the user of our services, owner, contract staff, volunteer or employee is free from retaliation as a result of their coming forward.

Interviewing Witnesses

- Obtain written, dated and signed statements from any witnesses.
- Ensure that the witness is free from retaliation as a result of their coming forward.

Resolve the Complaint

- Where disciplinary action is required, determine the level of discipline based on the severity of the incident, previous action taken in similar circumstances, the sub-contractors previous history, and the frequency.
- Review, revise and re-communicate company policy on abuse and/or neglect.

- Place documentation of the complaint, investigation, rulings, discipline imposed, and any actions taken into confidential files.
- Follow up with the involved parties to provide details of the actions being taken in response to the findings of the investigation.
- Ensure that the child's guardian(s) are immediately notified of the results of the investigation if the victim is a child.

Mandatory Reporting

Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that any of the following has occurred or may occur must immediately report that suspicion and the information upon which the suspicion is based to Owner whom will notify the authorities (Police and Children's Aid Society if the victim is a child).

Whistle-Blowing Protection

Bluewater Respite Inc. offers protection against retaliation to any person who discloses information to the Police, or Children's Aid, or who gives evidence in legal proceedings. This protection is known as the `whistle-blowing` protection.

Specifically, the whistle-blowing protection ensures that Bluewater Respite Inc, our Sub-Contractors and Respite Coordinators will not retaliate against any person, whether by action or omission, or threaten to do so because anything has been reported regarding abuse and/or neglect.

In addition, no person will encounter retaliation because evidence has been or may be given in a legal proceeding.

Neither Bluewater Respite Inc. nor its Sub-Contractors nor its Respite Coordinators will do anything that discourages, is aimed at discouraging or that has the effect of discouraging a person from doing anything mentioned above. Nor will Bluewater Respite Inc. nor its Sub-Contractors and Respite Coordinators do anything to encourage a person to fail to do anything mentioned above.

For the purposes of the whistle-blowing protection, "retaliation" includes, but is not limited to, dismissing an employee, contract staff or volunteer, imposing a penalty upon any person, or intimidating, coercing or harassing any person. A user of our services shall not be barred from, or have their child removed from care at Bluewater Respite Inc, be threatened with expulsion,

or in any way be subjected to discriminatory treatment (e.g. any change or discontinuation of any service to or care of a child or the threat of any such change or discontinuation) because of anything mentioned above. Further, no user of our services shall be threatened with the possibility of retaliation.

Disciplinary Measures

If it is determined that any Sub-Contractor has been involved in the abuse or neglect of any person under our care, immediate disciplinary action will be taken. Such disciplinary action may involve the reporting of the incident(s) to the authorities, possible legal action, and could result in immediate dismissal without further notice.

This Anti-Abuse Policy must never be used to create fraudulent or malicious complaints. It is important to realize that unfounded/frivolous allegations may cause both the accused person and Bluewater Respite Inc. significant damage. If it is determined that any Sub-Contractor has knowingly made false statements regarding an allegation related to abuse and/or neglect, immediate disciplinary action will be taken. As with any case of dishonesty, disciplinary action may include immediate dismissal without further notice.

Special Circumstances

All records of abuse and/or neglect reports, and subsequent investigations, are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone except to the extent required by law.

In cases where criminal proceedings are forthcoming, Bluewater Respite Inc. will assist police agencies, attorneys, insurance companies, and courts to the fullest extent.

Confidentiality

Bluewater Respite Inc. will do everything it can to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure that complainants and respondents are treated fairly and respectfully. Bluewater Respite Inc. will protect this privacy so long as doing so remains consistent with the enforcement of this policy and adherence to the law.

Neither the name of the person reporting the facts nor the circumstances surrounding them will be disclosed to anyone whatsoever, unless such disclosure is necessary for an investigation or

disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be determined by Bluewater Respite Inc. and will be proportional to the seriousness of the behaviour concerned. Bluewater Respite Inc. will also provide appropriate assistance to any Sub-contractor who is a victim of discrimination or harassment.

Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, (Sub-Contractor Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the Anti-Abuse Policy of Bluewater Respite Inc. I agree to adhere to this policy and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules of this policy, I may face corrective action, up to and including termination of contract.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____