

Policy: Anti - Abuse Policy

Policy # 8 **Number of Pages:** 3 **Date of Approval:** Sept 2005

Approved By: Board of Directors, Management **Review Date:** April 2017

References: Program Policies and Procedures

Statement:

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Toronto Central Council (hereinafter referred to as the Society) is committed to ensuring that all residents, clients, staff, volunteers and Vincentians are safe and secure in our homes and programs.

Any acts of abuse or situations which may be physical, verbal, sexual or psychological in nature, and which demeans, harms or infringes upon the personal rights or dignity of a person, or places an individual at risk regarding personal health and safety will not be tolerated.

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to report any suspected or observed acts of abuse immediately to their supervisor. Information regarding an alleged abuser shall be treated with the utmost discretion and confidentiality.

In addition, the Society has agreed to abide by the City of Toronto's Anti-Abuse Policy. Programs funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services shall also abide by the program specific policies.

Procedure for Reporting

Any employee or volunteer encountering an abusive situation shall follow these steps:

1. Intervene to ensure the resident's health, safety and well-being, following the principles of Crisis Intervention and the Society's Serious Occurrence Protocol.
2. Notify another employee in the vicinity of the situation, if possible.

3. Immediately provide First Aid and physician care to the abused resident
4. Immediately contact the supervisor or Director or, if unavailable, the Executive Director and state the situation. Should the alleged abuser be the supervisor, contact the Director. Should the alleged abuser be the Director, contact the Executive Director.
5. Management will meet with the person reporting the incident as soon as possible. Appropriate external authorities (e.g. the Police) shall be contacted depending up on the situation. Parents or guardians will be notified by the Director where appropriate, as soon as practical.
6. The Society will investigate all reported allegations.
7. An interview shall be conducted with all those involved in the incident. Where the investigation warrants further steps, the following apply:
The alleged abuser shall immediately be removed from the resident contact. Be mindful that the alleged abuser is innocent until proven guilty.
Pending the completion of the investigation by the appropriate internal or external authorities, the alleged abuser shall:
 - a) work in an administrative capacity with no client contact; or
 - b) not work and receive full pay until resolution of the matter; or
 - c) not work and not receive pay.
8. Any proven occurrence of resident abuse or neglect by employees of the Society shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Purpose of Investigation

The Society will not tolerate abuse of any kind, having particular regard for the nature of the vulnerable group place under the care and trust of the Society.

Procedures for Investigation

1. Any person in management receiving information regarding alleged abuse shall act upon such information immediately.
2. The investigative team shall be comprised of the alleged abuser's supervisor, the Director, the Executive Director and the Committee chairperson. This investigation shall begin within two business days of the allegation being reported. Detailed written notes of this meeting shall be maintained. Confidentiality will be honoured during this process.
3. Be aware that the alleged abuser is innocent until proven guilty. It is critical that they receive appropriate support during the process.

4. Only the Executive Director, the President or designate of the Society is authorized to interact with the media.
5. In the event of inconclusive findings, and out of respect of the residents and employees, the Society may consider transferring the employee involved to another area of its operations.