

West Neighbourhood House	
Policy Title:	Respectful Workplace Policy
Approved by:	West Neighbourhood House Board of Directors
Approval date:	September 2009 as Anti-Abuse Policy
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Policy Statement

Mutual respect and a discrimination-free workplace are values and priorities of West Neighbourhood House. The benefits of a respectful workplace include a positive employee, participant, student, and volunteer experience. West Neighbourhood House is committed to creating a welcoming and respectful environment, promoting ethical behaviour, and striving for professional excellence.

Everyone associated with West Neighbourhood House is accountable for conducting themselves in a civil, respectful, cooperative, and non-discriminatory manner at the workplace (as defined below), and at work-related gatherings. Everyone participating in West Neighbourhood House activities has the responsibility to refrain from and to report any disrespectful conduct. Disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated and all complaints about disrespectful conduct that are brought to the attention of West Neighbourhood House will be investigated. West Neighbourhood House prohibits retaliation of any kind against an individual reporting a complaint or providing information in connection with an investigation. Every effort will be made to keep the complaint, investigation, and action taken as a result of the investigation confidential.

This policy sets the minimum standard for West Neighbourhood House. If any laws or regulations apply, they must be followed. Where other West Neighbourhood House policies apply, they must also be followed.

The Respectful Workplace Policy shall include but not be limited to consideration of the following policies: [Code of Conduct](#), [Complaints](#), [Confidentiality](#), [Customer Service](#), [Health & Safety](#), [Privacy](#), [Psychological Safety](#), [Workplace Harassment](#), [Workplace Violence](#)

Applicability

- All Staff
- General public
- Program Participants, Clients, Members
- Volunteers
- Student Placements
- Community groups who utilize West Neighbourhood House space
- Donors
- Third Party Contractors

Definitions

“Workplace” is defined as any place that a West Neighbourhood House worker works. It includes, but is not limited to, the physical work premises (e.g. offices), work-related social functions (e.g. parties, retreats, etc.), work assignments outside West Neighbourhood House’s offices and work-related travel, conferences or training sessions. It also includes any online interactions and communications related to work.

Disrespectful conduct includes, but is not limited to, in-person or by information and communication technology:

- **Harassment** is defined as speech and/or behaviour that is known or ought to be reasonably known to be unwelcome. Such behaviour humiliates, insults, excludes or degrades another person or people, often for reasons of sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or family status or disability. It may be intentional or unintentional and can be physical or verbal, passive or aggressive and can come in the form of microaggressions. Harassment may also relate to a form of discrimination as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, but it does not have to.
- **Sexual harassment** means engaging in vexatious comment(s) or conduct against another person or people related to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. In the workplace, sexual harassment also means making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and/or the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.
- **Psychological/Emotional Abuse** is defined as, but is not necessarily limited to, an ongoing attack on an individual’s self-esteem. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, bullying, intimidating, isolating, hazing, habitual scapegoating, blaming.
- **Bullying** is deliberate behaviour that is malicious and/or cruel with the aim to humiliate, undermine or destroy the confidence or self-esteem of an individual or group of individuals. Bullying may include a disrespectful exercise of power by one person or group over another. Bullying behaviour is often persistent and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single incident. It is usually carried out by an individual, who ought reasonably to have known that their actions are unwelcome or unwanted. It can also be an aspect of group behaviour.
- **Verbal Abuse** is defined as, but is not necessarily limited to, humiliating remarks, name-calling, swearing at someone, taunting, teasing and/or continual put-downs.
- **Physical Abuse/Physical Assault** is defined as the use of intentional physical force on another individual. This force includes, but is not limited to, an act that can cause physical harm or injury. It can take any form of violence including but not limited to fighting, grabbing, pinching, striking, slapping, hitting, punching, shaking, pulling, throwing, kicking, biting, choking, strangling, or the abusive use of restraints.

- **Sexual Assault** occurs if a person is touched in any way that interferes with their sexual integrity: this includes kissing, touching, intercourse and any other sexual activity without their consent.
- **Neglect** is defined as, but is not necessarily limited to, any behaviour that leads to a failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance, or attention such as withdrawing basic necessities as forms of punishment, failing to assess and respond to changes in health status and refusing or withdrawing physical or emotional support.
- **Financial abuse** includes, but is not necessarily limited to, theft, fraud, intentionally defaulting or delaying loan repayments to vulnerable persons, high pressure sales tactics and intentionally providing misleading financial information or financial services.

Local laws or legislation applicable to this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1
- Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched.1
- Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19
- Criminal Code of Canada, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46
- Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18
- More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022, S.O. 2022, c. 16 - Bill 7
- Occupational Health & Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities- Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11
- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), 2004, S.O. 2004, c. 3, Sched. A
- Collective agreement

General Principles and Procedures

Everyone at West Neighbourhood House shares the responsibility for creating and maintaining a respectful workplace.

You have the right:

- To work or participate in a respectful work environment at West Neighbourhood House,
- To confidentiality as set out below,
- To protection from intimidation, threat, unfair discipline or unfair dismissal if you have filed a complaint honestly believing you have been confronted with disrespectful conduct or have witnessed disrespectful conduct,
- To protection from unfair evaluation if you are an employee or student and have filed a complaint of disrespectful conduct against your supervisor,
- To have a friend or support person with you during all meetings, informal and formal.

Consider taking the following action if you are confronted with disrespectful conduct or if you have witnessed disrespectful conduct:

- First and foremost, put yourself in a position where you feel safe.

- If you can, tell the person(s) the behavior is unwelcome. Ask them to STOP, if you feel you can. Some people may not understand that what they are saying or doing is wrong.
- Write down what happened and what you saw. You do not need a written record to make a complaint, but it will help you to remember the details.
- You may file a complaint of disrespectful conduct with West Neighbourhood House (see below).
- You may inform the police or need to call 911 immediately depending on the situation. When you suspect neglect, physical or sexual abuse or sexual harassment of someone who is or you suspect to be under 18, you must report the situation to a child welfare agency (e.g. Children's Aid Society). These actions must then be reported to the supervisor and Unit Director as per our incident reporting procedures.
- Program participants and volunteers may want to talk to a staff person. The staff person can go with you to see a staff supervisor or management representative who may assist you contacting the police.
- Staff may want to talk to their supervisor, union steward, a management representative or the Manager of Human Resources to assess their options.
- Staff must report any incidents of disrespectful conduct related to West Neighbourhood House to their supervisor or a management representative.
- Management will keep the President of the Board of Directors informed of serious cases of alleged disrespectful conduct and will at least annually report to the Board of Directors about the number and types of disrespectful conduct cases arising. Management may also decide to seek legal counsel.

Take the following action when program participants exhibit disrespectful conduct:

- Let the person know their behavior is unacceptable and if they wish to continue using the services of West Neighbourhood House, the disrespectful conduct must stop.
- In some cases, staff may involve the police or child welfare agencies.
- If the person continues the disrespectful conduct, call the program staff person, program supervisor, Unit Director or Manager connected to the program participant to reinforce the warning and to consider involving the police.
- If the person is asked to leave, staff present will meet to have a quick consultation to clarify who will be the lead person, be clear about what they are going to do (e.g. walk the person out the door, ask person to leave, or call the police) so that everyone understands their role.
- In consultation with the program Unit Director, the program staff may choose to restrict the participant's access to program activities or to West Neighbourhood House premises for a period of time or indefinitely, depending on the circumstances.

Follow the procedures below when making, investigating, and resolving complaints of disrespectful conduct:

Goals for addressing complaints of disrespectful conduct:

- To stop and prevent further disrespectful conduct,

- To support individuals and/or groups experiencing disrespectful conduct,
- To ensure programs and services and the work environment of West Neighbourhood House are welcoming and respectful.

A complaint can be made by:

- Any person or people who feel they have been confronted with disrespectful conduct from anyone in West Neighbourhood House community. This includes staff, board members, volunteers, students, participants, voting members of West Neighbourhood House, donors and visitors to our locations.
- A person who sees another person being confronted with disrespectful conduct.
- West Neighbourhood House as an entity can also make a complaint.

How to make a complaint:

- Anyone who thinks that they have been confronted with or has witnessed disrespectful conduct may file a complaint under the West Neighbourhood House Complaint Policy (available at all West Neighbourhood House locations).

Investigation:

- West Neighbourhood House will investigate all complaints of disrespectful conduct filed under the Complaints Policy in accordance with the procedures in the Complaints Policy.
- However, West Neighbourhood House will not investigate complaints of disrespectful conduct which have already been investigated and addressed by West Neighbourhood House. This is to avoid multiple investigations and action in respect of the same allegations.
- In order to achieve the purposes of this policy, during the investigation, West Neighbourhood House may limit the program participation of volunteers or participants accused of disrespectful conduct, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Where a disrespectful conduct complaint is against a staff person, West Neighbourhood House will consider where it is appropriate to transfer or suspend (with or without pay) the staff person accused of disrespectful conduct, pending the outcome of the investigation, and subject to the collective agreement, where applicable.

Resolution:

- If the investigation determines that disrespectful conduct has occurred by a participant, volunteer, student, West Neighbourhood House will take appropriate action including, but not limited to, reporting the disrespectful conduct to relevant authorities, suspension or expulsion from some or all of the programs offered by West Neighbourhood House or from its premises.

- In addition, if the investigation determines that disrespectful conduct has been committed by a staff member, West Neighbourhood House will take appropriate action, including but not limited to reporting disrespectful conduct to relevant authorities, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, subject to the collective agreement, if applicable, and human resource policies and procedures.
- Where possible and applicable, West Neighbourhood House will refer victims of disrespectful conduct to counselling services.

Confidentiality:

- Confidentiality is an extremely serious issue. Significant personal harm and damage to reputation could come to any party through inappropriate breaches of confidentiality, including harm created by innuendo and gossip. Trust in confidentiality also encourages people to come forward with their complaint.
- Everyone involved in a complaint under the Respectful Workplace Policy has a responsibility to ensure confidentiality in order to respect the right to fair process for the complainant and respondent. Everyone involved has a responsibility to strictly limit the number of people who share information with, and to caution such contacts on the importance of confidentiality. Contacts should only include parties who have a clear interest in the matter.
- Please refer to the West Neighbourhood House Confidentiality, Complaints and Privacy Policies for additional information.
- West Neighbourhood House also reserves the right to share information with its legal representatives, management staff, Board of Directors, and law enforcement as may be appropriate.

False allegations:

- Knowingly making false allegations of disrespectful conduct is serious wrongdoing.
- Where West Neighbourhood House determines that an employee has intentionally made a false accusation of disrespectful conduct, it will take appropriate action, including, but not limited to, disciplinary action up to and including termination, subject to the collective agreement, where applicable.
- Where West Neighbourhood House determines that a participant, volunteer, Board member or other user of the premises has intentionally made a false accusation of disrespectful conduct, it will take appropriate action including exclusion of that person from some or all services, programs or building use.

Take following action when you don't know what to do or are unsure of possible disrespectful conduct:

Please talk with a management representative in West Neighbourhood House. This includes any Unit Director, any Manager or the Executive Director.

Acknowledgement of Policy

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Respectful Workplace Policy and/or have had it explained to me.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by this policy and related policies of West Neighbourhood House as a condition of my employment.

I commit to reporting incidents of disrespectful conduct as set forth in this policy.

Date: _____

Name of Employee/Volunteer: _____

Signature: _____