

## The Pinnguaq Association Abuse Policy

### 1. Principles

1. The child's welfare is paramount.
2. All children have an absolute right to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
3. All members of The Pinnguaq Association have a responsibility to be mindful of issues related to children's safety and welfare and a duty to report and refer any concerns however "minor" they appear to be.
4. The duty to report will apply irrespective of whether the harm or abuse or allegation relating to any person inflicting harm or abuse to a child occurs on the premises or elsewhere.
5. Managing allegations is about taking a purely objective stance, even if the allegation is about a colleague.
6. The Pinnguaq Association will be proactive and take positive steps to inform staff of the conduct and behaviour expected, and about what to do to safeguard themselves against allegations of abuse.
7. A member of staff against whom an allegation has been made will be suspended automatically, until careful consideration has been given to the circumstances following Legal and Executive advice.
8. The Pinnguaq Association will have in place systems that deter possible abusers and will manage fairly, quickly and consistently any allegations of abuse made against staff.
9. Parents or carers of the child or children involved will be told about the allegation subject to legal advice as soon as possible if they do not already know of it.
10. The Director, where appropriate, providing the allegation is not about them will, subject to legal advice, keep the person who is the subject of the allegation/s informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support may be appropriate for the individual.
11. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered.

### 2. Prevention

The Pinnguaq Association will take several steps to ensure that no abuse or allegations of abuse occur.

1. Ensure that all employees working with children have a current Vulnerable Sector check on file.
2. Train employees in basic appropriate behavior when working with children, such as:
  - a. Do not work alone in a room with children with a closed, windowless door. If this is impossible due to the structure of the building, ask another adult to drop in regularly.

- b. Do not touch children below the shoulders or above the knees.
- c. The Pinnguaq Association appreciates the value of positive physical contact such as hugs but does not recommend it. At the discretion of the employee, hugs are allowable if the benefit of a hug appears to outweigh the detriment, but they are to be kept short.

### 3. Procedure

#### a) Allegations of Abuse

If an allegation of abuse is brought against an Employee or Volunteer with The Pinnguaq Association, the following procedure is to be followed:

The recipient of the allegation will determine the following:

- That an allegation has been made
- The general nature of the allegation
- When and where the incident is alleged to have occurred
- Who was involved
- Any other persons present

The alleged abuser should be suspended of their duties involving children immediately until their innocence or guilt has been established. After that verdict is returned, their continued employment will be at the discretion of the Director.

The recipient of the allegation **should not** interview the abused, the alleged abuser, or any witnesses, if possible. Interviews of this type should be performed by a professional, so as to not exacerbate any possible trauma.

The recipient of the allegation will inform the Director of the events. In the case where the Director is unavailable, the recipient should inform a member of the Board of Directors.

The recipient of the allegation should call their closest Social Services Office for direction at this point. A full list of Social Service Offices in Nunavut is available here:

<http://gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/Social-Services-Offices.pdf>

In the case where another adult unassociated with the Pinnguaq Association was the recipient of the allegations, the Pinnguaq Association employee should encourage that adult to follow the above steps.

Regardless of innocence, guilt, or personal feelings, it is the duty of all Pinnguaq Association employees to refer any allegations of abuse to Social Services.

This policy drew some material from the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board "Dealing with allegations of abuse against all staff working with children in education policy". Nov. 2013

## **b) Suspicions of Abuse**

Anyone with reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is being mistreated or is receiving inadequate care and supervision is required to report such suspicions to the local child protection authority. If there is uncertainty about information, it is prudent to consult with local child protection authorities.

1. Advise the person that you are required to and will report the occurrence to the appropriate Child Protection Authority and in circumstances involving physical or sexual abuse, police as well as the Director. No judgment statement should be made about the alleged abuser, nor should you show alarm or anger.
2. Remove the child from any further danger if warranted.
3. Advise the person they will hear further directly from the child protection authority or police.
4. Advise the child or parent that all information will be kept confidential and will only be provided to those who require it for the protection of all involved.
5. Contact the child protection authority, and in circumstances involving physical or sexual abuse, police and the Director immediately following the Discussion.
6. As soon as possible, write a more detailed report of your discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse or neglect (ie.who, what, when, where). Give your written statement to the Director.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From [Child Abuse Prevention Policy - Scouts Canada](#)