

Bedrock Playschool

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

DEFINITION:

“Abuse” means sexual, physical, psychological or emotional abuse, molestation or harassment, including corporal punishment.

Examples of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- physical contact such as striking, pinching, kicking, shoving and including any threatened or attempted acts of this nature;
- harassment or discrimination;
- the use of inappropriate language, gestures, shouting or threats;
- inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints;
- sexual contact, activity or behaviour;
- belittling or insulting.

POLICY

Purpose of policy:

- to provide full protection and support to clients who may have been abused by ***Bedrock Playschool*** personnel
- to provide support and protection to staff or volunteers who may have been subject to unfounded allegations
- to enable ***Bedrock Playschool*** to assist with thorough and transparent investigation of allegations

Bedrock Playschool is committed to ensuring that its programs provide atmosphere and safety for clients. No emotional, physical, or sexual abuse of clients will be tolerated.

All allegations of abuse will be thoroughly investigated, according to the requirements of the Child Welfare Act. ***Bedrock Playschool*** will take all steps to facilitate an immediate and thorough investigation, undertaken by the appropriate authorities. In recognition of the seriousness of such allegations and the distress caused by an investigation, ***Bedrock Playschool*** will assist in a timely conclusion to the Investigation. All

reasonable steps will be taken to protect the complainant and other clients while the Investigation is in process.

Bedrock Playschool also recognizes that due to the traumatic life experiences of some clients, staff may be subject to unfounded allegations. Unfounded allegations not only pose a great risk to the well being and career development of individual staff, they can threaten the effective functioning of programs. It is therefore essential that **Bedrock Playschool** ensure an investigation process which not only protects children, but assists and supports staff who are subject to unfounded allegations.

Scope of Procedure

This procedure applies to all allegations of abuse made about another **Bedrock Playschool** staff or volunteer, except in situations where a special protocol related to allegations has been approved in advance. It does not apply to general complaints about individuals.

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

1. All personnel

Any employee or volunteer receiving information of an allegation of child abuse by a **Bedrock Playschool** staff person or volunteer identified as being part of **Bedrock Playschool** shall:

- a) Immediately document, according to Incident Reporting guidelines; what the youth has related, including the date and time, where the incident occurred, the youth's effect, the words the youth used in describing what occurred, and anything else the youth has said about the incident and/or others who may have been at risk. This report must be completed before personnel leave their shift.
- b) Refrain from questioning the youth about the alleged incident, or asking clarifying questions. This is essential in order to avoid contaminating the youth's testimony, or interfering with the investigation.
- c) Show support and acceptance for the youth, without indicating belief or disbelief of their statement.
- d) Inform the youth that you are required to report the allegation.
- e) Inform the Program Director of the allegation. If the immediate supervisor cannot be contacted, call the Executive Director
- f) Immediately contact Child and Family Services. If applicable and/or known contact should be with the youth's worker, his/her supervisor, or with night duty if after hours.
- g) Do not inform the accused person, or any other personnel (except those to whom you are required to report) of the allegations. The person accused is not to be advised of the allegations until the report to the mandated

authority has been made and direction sought. Only after the investigation agency is consulted, and the Executive Director, Program Director or designate gives instruction, can the subject of the allegations be informed.

- h) Be available if needed to provide additional information regarding the incident.

2. **Program Director/ Teacher**

The ***Bedrock Playschool*** Program Director/ Teacher:

- a) Ensure that the Executive Director is informed as soon as is reasonably possible. This should be the same day, or if at night, by morning of the following day.
- b) Seek direction from the authorities regarding any communication with the youth's family, and what to say to the youth.
- c) Receive the written documentation by the next working day, or sooner as required. Submit the report to the Executive Director along with written documentation of the procedures which have taken place.

3. **Executive Director or Designate (i.e. Board President)**

The Executive Director will

- a) Ensure that the person accused is informed of the allegation in a manner consistent with legal agency requirements and in a timely manner.
- b) **Removed the accused from direct contact with youth during the investigation.**
- c) Ensure that other personnel are informed in an appropriate and timely manner of the allegations.
- d) Ensure that a strategy for informing other agency worker's or other youth is developed where applicable.
- e) Report the situation to the Board of Directors in all cases where there may be legal or public relations consequences for the agency.

4. **Reporting to Police**

Child and Family Services are to contact the police. In the rare instance where there may be an immediate safety issue, ***Bedrock Playschool*** personnel are to call the police according to procedure for any other incident requiring police intervention. Each program is to have such phone numbers readily accessible.

- a) Report the incident in the jurisdiction in which it occurred.
- b) Obtain the incident number of the police report after making the report, and record it for future references.

- c) Ensure that the Program Director and immediate supervisor are aware of the report.

5. **Confidentiality**

All information regarding the allegation is to be confidential and may NOT be discussed with the accused by any person other than with the investigating agency, the police, the Program Director, and the Executive Director. No other employees may be given information other than by the direct authorization of the Executive Director, and will be on a need to know basis. Where personnel have been informed that an allegation had been made, no details of the allegations are to be shared.

The Board of Directors of ***Bedrock Playschool*** recognizes responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of all the children in our care.

Name of Board President

Date

Signature of Board President

Bedrock Playschool

CHILD ABUSE PLEDGE

I, _____, understand and agree that as an employee, volunteer or student at ***Bedrock Playschool***, the children entrusted to our care are our central focus and as such will be treated with respect and dignity; abuse of any kind to a child is intolerable and cannot be condoned.

I understand that child abuse is defined in the Child Abuse Policy of the Association as sexual, physical psychological or emotional abuse, molestation or harassment, including corporal punishment.

I agree that I will not subject the children to abuse of any kind. Furthermore, I agree that should I witness or become aware of child abuse that it is my responsibility to report this incident to my immediate supervisor.

I understand that should I abuse a child, or fail to report child abuse that this action may result in my dismissal from my position with ***Bedrock Playschool***.

Dated at Drumheller, this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Witness _____ Employee/Volunteer/Student _____