

# CODE OF CONDUCT

Prairie Nature Children's Centre Inc.  
*(name of facility)*

600 Hoka Street, Winnipeg MB, R2C 2V1  
*(location address of facility)*

Last Revised: May 2024

Last Reviewed: May 2024

Reviewed and Approved by:

Child Care Coordinator  Board of Directors

Copies provided to:

All Directors and Community Program Leaders (those using our space)

Child Care Coordinator

Posted in staff communication area in Centre for easy reference by staff and authorities

# CODE OF CONDUCT

At Prairie Nature Children's Centre Inc., we strive to provide a safe, caring, learning environment for children, staff and families. While every employee/volunteer is valued and unique, we come together as an organization in the best interests of children and their families. The safety, rights, and well-being of children we served are at the core of our daily operations. We nurture supportive relationships with children while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries. We believe in equality and respect diversity including gender diversity.

The following people are expected to behave in a respectful manner and comply with this code of conduct:

- Board, Management and staff members
- Children
- Parents/guardians of children enrolled
- Parents/guardians/children/staff of any group operating programs within our space.
- This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Therapists, professionals / para-professionals

- Volunteers
- Practicum students
- Contractors/maintenance service providers
- Community Programs personnel and parents
- Licensing coordinators and inspectors
- Courier drivers
- Westview School Parents and Staff

## Guiding Principles for Appropriate Behaviour

### **Be Responsible**

We are responsible for our actions and words. We treat others as we want to be treated. When we make a mistake, we make amends rather than excuses. We are also committed to establishing, respecting, and maintaining age appropriate boundaries with all children. It is our responsibility to report any and all allegations or suspicions of sexual misconduct, and to take all such allegations seriously.

### **Be Respectful**

We are respectful of ourselves, other people, and pets. We are respectful of the ideas and feelings of others. We are respectful of the environment, equipment and materials. We take care to treat all children with respect and dignity.

### **Be Safe**

We work to responsibly balance risk with the developmental benefits and the well being of children. We work to prevent situations that have a high risk of serious harm. We work and play in a manner that encourages challenge, risk-taking, exploration and participation. Our philosophy might be described as creating an environment that is “as safe as necessary not as safe as possible”.

### **Be Cooperative**

We solve our problems by talking and listening to each other respectfully to find a solution. When we cannot solve a problem ourselves, we ask for help.

In order to achieve the above, it is imperative that each and every individual who is associated with our Centre abides by this Code of Conduct and conducts themselves in a respectful manner. This includes, Board of Directors, managers, all other employees, children, parents, guardians, caregivers, and family members of children enrolled in our Centre.

We will actively strive to create and maintain an environment that supports the health, safety and well-being of everyone associated with our Centre by employing pro-active strategies and appropriate policies and procedures. This includes:

- Developing positive relationships, including making time to talk and listen.
- Establishing clear, consistent, simple limits and stating limits in a positive way.
- Providing explanations for limits, rules, procedures and policies.

- Role-modeling and encouraging appropriate behaviour.
- Working together in partnership to solve problems.
- Having realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour.
- Ensuring our environment, our program and all materials used in our program meet the needs and interests of children and others associated with our program, and that they encourage appropriate behaviour and reduce the potential for inappropriate behaviour
- Establishing consistent, yet flexible schedules and routines that help children gain trust, security and self control

## **Developmental Capabilities of Children**

We recognize the varying developmental capabilities of children and understand that it is normal for children to display inappropriate behaviour at times for a variety of reasons. The developmental capabilities of each child will always be considered when determining both expectations for appropriate behaviour and consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

## **Unacceptable Behaviours**

Employee/volunteer misconduct will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children in our organization's care. Misconduct refers to inappropriate behavior in our organization and includes, but is not limited to, any/all of the following:

- All forms of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, social or cyber-bullying including comments, actions or visual displays that are intentional, hurtful and repetitive. This includes spreading rumours or gossip either in person or by using social networking internet sites, public networking/ file sharing sites or any other type of internet website.
- Harassment, including behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses someone, or that a reasonable person would know is unwelcome. This includes touching, name-calling, offensive jokes, yelling, etc.

- All forms of abuse (sexual, physical, or psychological) including verbally, in writing or otherwise
- Discrimination against any person or group because of their race, colour, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, ethnic background, religion, age, sex, gender-determined characteristics, sexual orientation, marital or family status, source of income, political belief, and physical or mental disability.
- Actions that put another person at risk of harm including violent physical acts (with or without a weapon) and threatening someone.
- The inappropriate use of technology, including e-mail, the internet and other technology, in keeping with the Centre's policy on the use of technology.
- Communication with a child (will refer to a child (enrolled or not) with whom the staff is acquainted with through their employment at Prairie Nature Children's Centre.) that goes beyond the employee/volunteer's employment responsibilities with the child and/or does not occur within the context of their duties and responsibilities (such as those listed below). If such communication is desired, prior written authorization by two members of the administrative staff (ED & AD) and the parent will be required.
  - Writing personal letters or text messages to a child
  - Engage in Social Media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) communication with children or parent/guardian of Prairie Nature Children's Centre
  - Making personal phone calls to a child
  - Giving or sending personalized gifts to a child
  - Having personal Internet exchanges with a child (email, instant messaging, chatting, social networking, etc.)
- Offering unauthorized rides to an individual child.
- Spending time with a child outside of designated work times except if parent initiated, and without prior written authorization by two member of the administrative staff (ED & AD) and the parent.
- Favouring a child.
- Telling sexual jokes to a child.
- Showing a child sexually explicit or sexist material, signs, cartoons, calendars, literature, photographs, or displaying such material in plain view.
- Engaging in any activities that endanger a child or make a child feel uncomfortable.
- Engaging in any activity that goes against (or appears to go against) our organization's mandate, policies, or code of conduct, regardless of whether or not they are serving our organization at that moment.
- Making any sort of remark, comment, or joke to/regarding a child that is in any way suggestive, explicit, or sexual.
- Engaging in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child feel uncomfortable, or that violates reasonable boundaries.

- Conducting their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual misconduct - it is an employee/volunteer's duty to report, not to investigate.
- Placing a child in danger from anyone, either within or outside of our organization.
- Offering any child "special" treatment that falls outside of our organization's mandate, or that may (or may appear to) place a child at risk of exploitation.

## Proactive Strategies

We actively strive to create an environment that supports the health, safety and well-being of the children by:

- Having realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour.
- Setting up the environment and materials to encourage appropriate behaviour and reduce potential for inappropriate behaviour.
- Planning a program based on children's interests and developmental needs.
- Establishing consistent yet flexible schedules and routines that help children gain trust, security and self-control.
- Following established procedures when reporting any allegations of misconduct or potential policy violations.

Employees/volunteers of Prairie Nature Children's Centre should consider whether:

- The activities they are engaging in with a child are known to, or approved by, supervisors and/or parents. Child interactions should not be kept secret; rather, they should be transparent.
- Activities would raise concerns in the mind of a reasonable observer as to their appropriateness.
- Our organization may be detrimentally affected by an employee/volunteer's activities.
- The activity may be reasonably regarded as posing a risk to the personal integrity or security of a child.
- The activity may contribute to a child's discomfort.
- The activity may appear inappropriate to our organization, the child's family, or the public.
- The final outcome of any behavior may embarrass, shame, or humiliate the child involved, and work to avoid that outcome

We create a positive environment for children, parents, staff and others involved in our centre by:

- Developing positive relationships, including making time to talk and listen.
- Establishing clear, consistent, simple limits.
- Setting limits in a positive way and periodically reminding people.

- Providing explanations for limits.
- Working together to solve problems.
- Modelling and encouraging appropriate behaviour.

## Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour

Individuals found breaching the Code of Conduct or for displaying any form of inappropriate behaviour as outlined in this Code will be subject to an investigation, and disciplinary action, if necessary. The disciplinary action and resulting consequences will depend on the severity, the nature, the circumstances, and the frequency surrounding the inappropriate behaviour. The Centre recognizes the importance of ensuring any consequences are pre-planned, fair, consistent and, in the case of children, based on the level of a child's development. We also recognize that consequences should be an opportunity to learn, not primarily one of discipline. In keeping with this, we will ensure, whenever practicable, that any resulting consequences are based on discussion and a cooperative approach and that they provide opportunities for the person to change their behaviour.

In the case of Staff, Practicum students, volunteers or other adults associated with our Centre, typical steps will include:

- Reminding individuals of expectations and limits
- Giving a verbal or written warning outlining concerns and the consequences if the inappropriate behaviour continues
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Prohibiting individuals from being on the premises

In the case of children participating in our program, typical steps will include:

- Reminding children of expectations and limits
- Expecting family members to engage in discussions related to their child's inappropriate behaviour and/or developmental concerns
- Accessing outside resources (i.e. Child and Family Services, Mediation Services, therapists etc.)
- Having a meeting to discuss concerns and to develop an action plan for the future
- Developing a written contract (in the case of older children) outlining specific expectations and consequences

- Giving a written warning outlining concerns and the consequences if the inappropriate behaviour continues
- Suspending or withdrawing child care services because of a child's or family member's behaviour

## Appropriate Use of Technology

This policy is meant to ensure that people's privacy and the confidentiality of information about the Centre, children, parents/guardians/caregivers and staff is upheld. Everyone involved with the Centre must adhere to this policy. Failure to do so can result in consequences and disciplinary action.

Staff may use the internet when appropriate to access information needed to conduct Centre business and are responsible for using the Internet in a manner that is ethical and lawful. E-mail is to be used for business purposes only unless permission is granted by the Executive Director. Staff, children and all others using the Centre's computers and electronic devices must respect and protect the privacy of others and must respect and protect the integrity of all electronic resources. All intellectual property (ideas, creations and copyrights) of others must be respected and protected. All communication must be in a respectful manner and the use, or discovery of the use of any threatening or inappropriate material, must be reported.

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- Intentionally accessing, transmitting, copying or creating material that violates the confidentiality of children, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff, or the Centre itself
- Intentionally accessing, transmitting copying or creating material that violates the Centre's Code of Conduct which includes messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, harassing, bullying, or discriminating
- Intentionally accessing, transmitting, copying or creating material that is illegal, such as obscenity, stolen material or illegal copies of copyrighted works
- Using the Centre's technological resources for personal use without permission, or for personal gain.

In order to maintain their full attention to their surroundings and supervisory duties, staff may not use cell phones, iPods, or other personal electronic devices when they are caring for and supervising children. Anyone who may need to contact a staff person during the staff person's regularly scheduled working hours must contact the Centre's direct line.

If, for safety purposes, it is necessary for staff to take a personal cell phone during the course of outings with children, it must be used only for emergency contact with the Centre or the children's parents/guardian caregivers.

When taking pictures of children, it is recommended that two adults be present.

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When using another type of personal device such as a cell phone (with Ed or AD's prior permission only), the data must be downloaded to the Centre's computer/server and deleted from the personal device. These transfers of data to the Centre's computers need to be made within two working days from which they were taken. Personal devices shall not be taken home until the date has been downloaded and deleted from the personal device. Staff may at no time share, copy or disclose the photos or videos to others. All exception to this will require written authorization by two members of the administrative staff (ED & AD) and with parental permission.

Information about staff, children, parents/guardians/caregivers and the Centre (including photos or videos) must not be posted on a staff person's personal web space, any social networking site (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter), any public networking or file sharing site (e.g. Photobucket, Flickr, YouTube) or any other type of public internet website, unless authorized in writing by two management staff. In the case of producing DVD's or videos that will be distributed outside the centre, written authorization by two management staff will also need to be in place prior to duplicating of the centre version of these DVD's.

Staff must not accept children (which refers to a child (enrolled or not) with whom the staff is acquainted with through their employment at Prairie Nature Children's Centre as "friends" or "buddies" when using social networking sites (such as Facebook or MSN) unless authorized by two management staff. It is also not allowed (and illegal) to have any children under the age of thirteen as a "friend" on Facebook/Instagram, etc.

Authorized employees of the facility have the right to monitor the use of information technology resources and to examine, use and disclose any data found. They may use this information in disciplinary actions, and release to the police if it is criminal in nature.

## **Touch Policy**

Here at Prairie Nature Children's Centre Inc., we believe in the importance of positive touch (from both male and female caregivers) for the healthy development of young children. Touch reduces stress, aids healthy brain and emotional development, and demonstrates love for the children in our care. Appropriate touch in early education settings can be defined as non-intrusive and causing no feelings of discomfort or confusion for the child. Such contacts should also not cause feelings of discomfort or confusion for caregivers, and take into consideration a child's right to make choices about their participation.

Each child should be allowed to determine what kinds of touches he or she finds acceptable. With support from families and appropriate guidance and instruction, teachers can help develop children's understanding of appropriate touch. Training on teaching children about appropriate touch is offered to our teachers at the time of employment and periodically thereafter.

Prairie Nature Children's Centre regards physical contact and closeness with children as natural and essential. Touching shows that the caregivers are at ease with a child who wants to sit on their knee hold their hand or share a hug. In play you may see children getting piggy-backs (we discourage school age children to sit on adults laps, receive piggy back rides, etc.) or being lifted up to reach a ball from a tree. You may see a teacher with his/her arm around a child while reading a book. You will see children sometimes get a congratulatory hug when they have a personal achievement. Non-mobile children especially may be carried (if less than 40 lbs) and given lots of physical interaction and touch when they are not having floor play/exercise time.

## **Harassment Prevention Policy**



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Prairie Nature Children's Centre is promoting a safe free environment for our staff.

**Harassment** means any objectionable conduct, comment or display by a person that:

- Is directed at a worker in a workplace;
- Is made on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender determined characteristics, political activity, marital status, family status, source of income, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place or origin; and
- Creates a risk to the health of the

worker At Prairie Nature Children's Centre

Inc.

1. Every worker is entitled to work free of harassment
2. The employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable that no worker is subjected to harassment in the workplace
3. The employer will take corrective action respecting any person under the employer's direction who subjects a worker to harassment.
4. The employer will not disclose the name of a complainant or an alleged harasser or the circumstances related to the complaint to any person except where disclosure is.
5. A worker has the right to file a complaint with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.
6. The employer's harassment prevention policy is not intended to discourage or prevent the complainant from exercising any other legal rights to pursuant to any other law.

Should there be a complaint; an investigation will be carried out by the Executive Director and Assistant Director. Disciplinary actions will follow. (See **Parent Policies**-Suspension Policy and the **Personnel Policies**-Progressive Discipline).