



## **BIAS-FREE POLICY**

**Reviewed & approved by Childspace Day Care Corporation Board: January 2021**

Childspace endeavors to provide a bias-free learning environment for children: especially in regard to language, teaching materials, response to specific incidents and other facets of the program. We discourage and will not tolerate any expression of discrimination, harassment or racism by children, service users (parents/guardians, family members), and Childspace personnel (staff, board members, students and volunteers).

We recognize that families within our program come from a wide variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. We ensure that all people are treated with respect, dignity, acceptance and understanding.

### **Definition of Discriminatory Incidents**

Any incident involving discrimination against people based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, culture, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender identity, marital status, same sex partners, family status, age, economic status, record of offences, or physical/mental ability and appearance. Bias may be expressed or manifested by the following behaviours: verbal, physical, exclusion or avoidance, written and/or inactive/passive behaviours. Examples may include name-calling, slurs, racial jokes, taunting, discourteous treatment, stereotyping, threats, abuse, intimidation, racist material or discriminatory employment practices. All incidents of racism, discrimination, and harassment will be reported as a Serious Occurrence (See Serious Occurrence Policy). It is management's duty to report any E.C.E. alleged to have committed the above infractions to the College of E.C.E.

### **Procedures to Address Incidents of Discrimination**

#### **Handling Discriminatory Incidents**

When a discriminatory incident happens or there is a perception of discrimination, it becomes the responsibility of those involved, including witnesses, to take action. In general, the process is a complaint procedure approach, where a complaint is lodged, and efforts are made to address the concern in the least intrusive and simplest way possible. Some people may not be aware that their actions are hurtful or discriminatory. They should be informed of this and given the opportunity to stop their behaviour. Therefore, the first step is an informal approach. If this is not satisfactory to those concerned, progressively formalized steps are taken until the complaint is satisfactorily resolved.

#### **Procedure for Child-to-Child Incidents**

When a child, either through his/her words or actions contradicts our bias-free learning environment, staff will respond immediately and treat the incident seriously. We believe these incidents are learning opportunities. The staff will address the issue with the initiator, the recipient, and the group. The "initiator" is defined as the child who initiates a verbal comment



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or behaviour that is inappropriate according to our Bias-Free Policy. The “recipient” is the person or persons the comment or behaviour was directed towards. The “group” constitutes the remainder of the children who were witnesses to the comment or behaviour, who need an explanation to ensure that no misunderstandings occur. All follow-up and responses involving children must recognize the individual child’s age and stage of their understanding, and should be handled in a manner intended to foster self-worth of all children involved.

1. The staff will talk with the initiator individually to explain to the child the inappropriateness of his/her behaviour/words. The child will be assisted in seeking appropriate ways to express him/herself. Depending on the incident, the recipient may take part in the discussion with staff and the initiator.
2. If it is an individual who is the recipient of any wrongful behaviour the staff will offer emotional support and comfort. The staff will explain that the behaviour was not deserved and reinforce that the offence was wrongful.
3. Whether the incident was towards one individual or a general comment made in the presence of the group, the teaching staff will use the incident as a learning opportunity to explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour or comment. Children will be taught that inappropriate behaviour is hurtful and an explanation will be given.
4. The incident and its resolution will be discussed with each child’s parent/guardian. The staff will use this as an opportunity to re-orient the parent(s)/caregiver with our Bias-Free Policy.
5. The children will be monitored by the staff to see if their newly acquired skills are being used and any efforts they make should be praised.
6. The incident will be documented indicating who was involved, using first names only (including witnesses) and including as much detailed information as possible on how the incident was resolved. This report is to be signed by the parent/guardian/party involved. All incidents will be reported as a Serious Occurrence. (Refer to Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy).
7. The Supervisor will review the frequency/type of incidents and staff annually and long-range plans set accordingly. Group activities, group problem solving, curriculum development or the teaching of conflict resolution skills to children may be some of the suggested follow-up.

### **Procedure for Incidents where the Service User is the Accused**

This procedure applies to incidents involving allegations of discrimination against parents/guardians, or family members in relation to other user families, staff, volunteers, students and board members. All incidents will be reviewed by the Board annually and long-range plans set accordingly. The HR Committee may set up meeting between the parties involved; conflict resolution skills discussed and follow up managed by the HR Committee/Board.



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### **Step 1 – Informal Resolution**

The person directly involved and/or witness may approach the service user whose behaviour was seen as discriminatory, ask them to stop the behaviour and explain why the actions are seen as discriminatory and violate the Childspace policy. A Serious Occurrence Report is completed on-line.

### **Step 2 – Report to Supervisor/Designate**

All incidents are immediately reported to the Supervisor/Designate. The incident report will be in writing and include dates, names, and pertinent information.

The Supervisor/Designate will, as soon as possible, review the information and discuss/investigate the incident with all the people involved: the alleged victim, the accused service user and any witnesses. The Supervisor/Designate will inform the Executive Director who will discuss with the Human Resources (HR) Committee.

A record of the incident and resolution will be signed by the person found to have been discriminatory and by the Supervisor/Designate. The incident, investigation of incident and staff/service user meeting will be recorded/placed in a sealed envelope. For confidentiality, the sealed opening of the envelope is signed by Supervisor/Designate and placed in the Serious Occurrence File along with Serious Occurrence Report.

### **Step 3 – Report to Human Resources Committee**

If the problem is not resolved at the Step 2 level, the situation will be referred to the HR Committee for review. The HR Committee may wish to meet with the initiator, the recipient, the Supervisor, and witnesses, and review any written reports. If the incident is resolved, a record of the incident and resolution will be signed by the person found to have been discriminatory and a member of the HR Committee. If a resolution is still not possible, the HR Committee makes a final decision that will be communicated in writing to the individuals involved. The Supervisor will complete a Serious Occurrence Report on-line and follow up with any new information as required (see Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy for details).

### **Procedure for Incidents Where a Childspace personnel is the Accused**

This procedure applies to incidents involving allegations of discrimination against staff, volunteers, students and Childspace Board members in relation to another Childspace personnel or service user.

Follow the same procedure Step 1, 2 and 3 with the following exceptions:

- a) In the case of an allegation made against the Director, Supervisor, or a Board Member, the Chair of the Board of Directors (if not involved) will carry out Step**



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- 1- to talk to people involved and witnesses; ask the party involved to stop the behavior that was seen as discriminatory and explain to him/her that it violates Childspace's policy.**
- b) He/she may assign the Director or one of the other Supervisors to do a Serious Occurrence Report on-line.**
- c) If the Chair cannot perform this duty, the Vice-Chair, a signing officer, or an HR Committee member will.**

If a child/parent/board member/staff/volunteer/student fails to follow the steps outlined in the Bias-Free Policy, the HR Committee will make a final decision (as per our Parent Manual, Bias-Free Policy, Staff Manual and Code of Conduct). The following may occur use of our services terminated/removal from the Board of Directors/employment/placement is terminated.

If the staff behaviours towards children are biased these incidents may be dealt with in accordance with the *Bias-Free Policy* and all applicable policies (e.g., the performance review process, the Behaviour Management Policy, the Child Abuse Policy, the College of E.C.E.) and the applicable policies will outline possible but not limited consequences to staff. If the investigation supports the allegation of bias, appropriate labour practices and College of E.C.E. Code of Ethics & Standards will be followed.

### **Resolutions of Discriminatory Incidents**

Ideally all resolutions will enable people to continue using Childspace services and enable people to continue to work together. Resolutions will strive to be fair, leaving people with a sense of respect, comfort, and clarity about what is expected and acceptable in workplace behaviour and in the provision of childcare services.

### **Records: Storage, Retention and Destruction**

All records involving discriminatory incidents will be kept in sealed envelopes in the Childspace personnel/service user files of those involved. Each person has access to his or her file only. After one incident-free year from the resolution date, the record will be destroyed in the presence of the person(s). The contents of a destroyed record cannot be introduced or used as evidence when investigating and reviewing any subsequent allegation against the service user/Childspace personnel.

**This policy will be reviewed with all staff, student, and volunteer prior to employment and annually thereafter. Staff, students, and volunteers will sign to demonstrate they have read and understood the policy.**