

FURTHER TO AUTHORITY MEETING #11/06
To be held Friday, January 26, 2007

Pages

FURTHER TO:

9. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF THE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING #7/06, TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2007

Due to lack of quorum all items will go straight to the Authority for consideration at Authority Meeting #11/06, to be held on Friday, January 26, 2007, including the following changes that were discussed at the Business Excellence Advisory Board meeting.

9.6 PREVENTION OF SUSPECTED ABUSE OF CHILDREN UNDER TRCA CARE POLICY

53-55

Members requested clarification on the policy in terms of what "under TRCA care" encompasses. Pages 53-55 is the amended staff report clarifying the intent of the policy.

TO: Chair and Members of the Authority
Meeting #11/06, January 26, 2007

FROM: Brian Denney, Chief Administrative Officer

RE: **POLICY ON REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

KEY ISSUE

Approval of the policy on Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) policy on Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect be approved.

BACKGROUND

The Child Family Services Act (CFSA) recognizes that everyone has a responsibility for the welfare of children. It clearly states that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to report promptly to a children's aid society if they suspect that a child or youth under the age of 16 is, or may be, in need of protection. Staff is proposing this new policy to ensure staff and volunteers know their obligations to report suspected abuse and neglect of children and their responsibilities.

RATIONALE

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff recommend the approval of the Policy on Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect as outlined in Attachment 1 to ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities and know their obligations to report suspected abuse and/or neglect of children to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Manager, Human Resources (HR). If the CAO or Manager, HR are not available the employee should contact the Children's Aid Society directly.

Report prepared by: Victoria Kinniburgh, extension 5288
For Information contact: Catherine MacEwen, extension 5219
Date: December 15, 2006
Attachments: 1

Attachment 1

POLICY ON REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) provides education, outreach and recreation programs to many young people in a variety of settings and groups. TRCA is committed to an environment that protects the rights of these young people to be free from abuse. Abuse is defined as physically abusing a child, sexually molesting a child, failing to provide proper care or depriving a child of support and affection. TRCA is committed to the prevention and reporting of all types of abuse and neglect of children.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of TRCA. Adherence to this policy is mandatory and all employees and volunteers are expected to be familiar with it.

The signs and indicators of abuse and neglect may include but are not limited to the following:

Physical Abuse of a Child

Physical abuse is any harm to a child caused by an action or omission of action by the child's caregiver. Injuries may include:

- bruises;
- welts;
- cuts;
- fractures;
- burns; or
- internal injuries.

Physical abuse can be one or two isolated incidents or can occur over a prolonged period of time.

Sexual Abuse of a Child

Sexual abuse is any sexual exploitation of a child by an older person where the child is being used for a sexual purpose. The Criminal Code of Canada identifies a number of types of sexual abuse, including, but not limited to:

- sexual interference;
- an invitation to sexually touch;
- parent or guardian procuring sexual activity from a child;
- householder permitting sexual activity
- exposing genitals to a child; and
- incest.

The following are some examples of child sexual abuse:

1. Fondling/touching a child's genitals.
2. Having intercourse with a child.
3. Having oral sex with a child.
4. Having sex in front of a child.
5. Having a child touch another person's genitals.

6. Using a child in pornography.
7. Showing x-rated books or movies or magazines or websites to a child.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation includes the act of taking advantage of the vulnerability of a child with whom there is a relationship of trust, for one's own pleasure or gain. Sexual exploitation includes any form of sexual contact or invitation for sexual contact with a child by an adult in a position of authority or power over the child whether or not there is consent from the child.

Emotional Abuse of a Child

Emotional abuse includes all acts of omission or commission which result in the absence of a nurturing environment for the child. It occurs when the caregiver continually treats the child in such a negative way that the child's concept of "self" is seriously impaired. Emotionally abusive behavior by the caregiver can include constant yelling; demeaning remarks; rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child; or terrorizing the child. Emotional abuse can be the most difficult to identify and prove.

Neglect of a Child

Most caregivers do not intend to neglect their children. It usually results from ignorance about appropriate care for children or an inability to plan ahead. Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, supervision, clothing or medical treatment.

OBLIGATIONS OF TRCA EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

When a person suspects on reasonable grounds that a child is, or may be, in need of protection, they must promptly report this suspicion and the information upon which it is based to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Manager, Human Resources (HR) or if they are not available, the Children's Aid Society directly. You do not need to be certain a child is, or may be, in need of protection to report your suspicion. "Reasonable grounds" refers to the information that an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgement, would need in order to make a decision to report. The CAO and Manager, HR will review the reported suspicion and report it to the local Children's Aid Society.