
Dealing with Complaints

1 It may be that members of the Danube Seniors Leisure Centre are not pleased with the actions of other members of the Centre. Those members have the right to have their concerns heard, and if considered accurate, to be acted on.

2 Members should be advised that their complaints/recommendation:

- a) must be in writing
- b) must be direct to a Vice-president who is not party to the complaint
- c) should suggest a solution to the problem

3 The Vice-president will:

- a) consult with other members of the Administration Board to determine the severity of the complaint
- b) gather information on the complaint from other Danube Centre members to determine if the complaint is widely held
- c) determine a course of action to settle the complaint - a course of action that may result in the need to remove that person from the membership roll and bar access to the Centre
- d) take necessary action
- e) meet with the member who made the complaint and explain what has been done to resolve his or her concern.

Removal of Members

1. If a member has a proven complaint of ABUSE in accordance with our definition he or she shall be immediately dismissed.

i A person may forfeit membership in the Danube Seniors Leisure Centre for a number of reasons including:

1. conduct that leads to serious conflict within the organization
2. misuse of Danube Centre property
3. non-payment of membership dues
4. Foul language or harassment

It is expected that this abuse policy, a Climate for Safety, will be reviewed by all members when they apply for the following year membership card and pay the annual membership fees..

By-Law 20

Our Commitment

The Bradford West Gwillimbury Seniors Association is committed to providing a safe environment for all persons who are members of the Association and for others who have reason to attend events and activities at the Danube Seniors Leisure Centre.

We will not tolerate any abuse of any kind of abuse (i.e. psychological, or harassment)

Our definition of **ABUSE** is as follows:

1. **Misuse of Power** is defined as but not limited to any unwanted advances by members of board towards any general member of the club.
3. **Sexual Abuse:** is defined as but not limited to any unwanted touching, fondling, observations for sexual gratification, any penetration or attempted penetration with a penis, digital or object of the vagina or anus, verbal or written propositions or innuendos, exhibitionism or exploitation for profit including pornography.
4. **Verbal Abuse:** is defined as but not limited to humiliating remarks, name calling, swearing at, taunting, teasing, continual put downs.
5. **Physical Abuse:** is defined as but not limited to the use of intentional force that can result in physical harm or injury to an individual
6. **Emotional Abuse:** is defined as but not limited to chronic attack on an individual's self esteem such as but not limited to name calling, threatening etc.
7. **Psychological Abuse:** is defined but not limited to communication of an abusive nature, sarcasm, exploitive behavior, intimidation, manipulation, and insensitivity to race, sexual preference or family dynamics.
8. **Harassment:** is defined as but not limited to unwanted physical or verbal conduct that offends or humiliates, including gender-based harassment. It can be single incident or several incidents over time. It includes threats, intimidation, display of racism, sexism, unnecessary physical contact.
9. **Neglect:** is defined as but not limited to not providing a safe environment for members to participate in activities.

Action Statements

The following action statements describe both the reasons for this policy and the Bradford West Gwillimbury Seniors Association active commitment to it:

- We will **prevent** abuse to all those vulnerable persons using our premises. Prevention includes having good processes in place in order to prevent opportunities for abuse, neglect and harm from arising.
- We will **protect the vulnerable in our midst**. The Bradford West Gwillimbury Seniors Association affirms that the protection of all children, youth and vulnerable adults is spiritual, ethical and legal imperative.
- We will **report** incidents of abuse, neglect and harm. such incidents wherever and whenever they are encountered on our premises, will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies in accordance with civil law requirements in Ontario
- We will **provide opportunities for training** to members of the Administration Board in order to develop skills in the recognition of abuse and ways to ensure that such abuse does not take place at the Danube Seniors Leisure Centre.

While this policy encompasses safety and prevention as well as training and support, the major purpose of **A Climate of Change** is anticipating problems and dealing with them before they occur.

Accordingly the Administration Board of the Bradford West Gwillimbury Seniors Association will ensure that:

1. all members of the Administration Board are familiar with this Pamphlet.
2. a committee of the Administration Board, headed by one of the Vice-presidents, becomes active in determining if any current examples of abuse are prevalent at the Danube Seniors Leisure Centre.
3. the general membership has been informed about the Climate for Change Policy and has had an opportunity to read it.
4. the general membership has an opportunity to hear from a recognized authority in the field of abuse of the vulnerable.

5. the route to have an alleged abuse investigated is known by members of the Bradford West Gwillimbury Seniors Association.
6. ensure that members whose 1st language is not English, and who may have a language barrier, are knowledgeable about the Climate of Safety Policy.
7. each member has been encourage to examine his/her own behaviour to see if there is any reason to suspect any tendency towards abuse. The most common form of emotional abuse is being put down-something the abuser may not realize he/she is doing,
8. the Climate of Safety Policy will be evaluated to see haw it is working six months after it has been in place and at least once per year after that. Any problems that have been detected will be worked on to remedy.
9. complete a list of activities/situations in which there is an element of risk to vulnerable persons. Implement ways to diminish/overcome that risk.
10. ensure that interactions among Senior and children or youth take place in a public area either inside or outside the Danube Centre where all participants can be easily seen.
11. find out if abuse in any form has encouraged members of the Association to no longer attend or take part in the Danube Centre activities.

Reporting Abuse:

There are two important points to note:

1. This Climate of Safety policy is not about us as individuals. It is about us as a group that make up the Bradford West Gwillimbury Seniors Association trying to ensure the highest quality of care by offering our best working to ensue that the worst does not happen.
2. A policy that does not take appropriate action when abuse takes place is worthless.

When a vulnerable person is upset or distressed about a situation, he/she may turn to a trusted friend for support and advice. Often, those persons may be hesitant about discussing what has happened. Feelings of guilt and shame are not uncommon among the abused. That friend or another person needs to be sensitive to what is being related. The following points should be considered by the person asked to look into the incident he or she should:

1. be supportive and pay strict attention to what has been related;
2. "listen more, talk less"
3. be cautious about asking questions as those questions can invalidate future statements to police and the courts.
4. accept the story as told and not dispute or debate it - investigating an incident is the responsibility of the police.
5. try to be calm, supportive and hopeful
6. not make promises that cannot be kept.
7. **not promise** to not report the incident to the authorities

This policy is written in accordance with the following legislation:
Human Rights Act RSO 1990, c H.19
Criminal Code of Canada, RSC 1985, c C-46
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act, RSO 1991, c M.26

