

**VAUGHAN GYMNASTICS
LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

POLICY STATEMENT

As required by law under the provincial child welfare legislation, leaders report suspicions or disclosures of child abuse to the local child welfare agency.

PURPOSE

To ensure that leaders and the organization are clear on the legal obligation to report child abuse, and that the appropriate action is taken when reporting child abuse.

PROCEDURE

A) The Process

-Develop procedures for internal and external reporting of suspected child abuse in accordance with the requirements of the local child welfare agency and the applicable Child and Family services protection legislation. Document reporting procedures in policies and procedures manuals, along with the name and phone number of the child welfare organization in the program jurisdiction.

When a child discloses abuse or when abuse is suspected, leaders are required to:

-Be cautious about the types of questions they ask the child and the tactics they use to gather information. Inappropriate “leading” questions could be seen as influencing the child’s perception of the situation.

-Notify their supervisor in a confidential manner immediately.

-With the guidance of a supervisor, document their observations and / or what was disclosed by the child in a detailed, accurate and factual manner.

Supervisors should:

-Provide guidance and support throughout the reporting procedure.

-Inform their manager of suspected abuse and any related proceedings in progress.

-Contact the local child welfare organization to make a report once information has been gathered and documented.

Following the report to the child welfare agency:

- The supervisor writes a follow-up report containing the name and phone number of the child welfare agency contacted, the name of the person to whom the report was made, and the time and date of the report.

- Additional information discussed by the supervisor and leader is also documented.

- Both the supervisor and leader sign the follow-up report.

- A file containing all documentation regarding the case is forwarded to the appropriate senior manager for review and signature.

- Any further developments with respect to the abused child or to the case, such as receipt of follow-up information from the child welfare agency, is documented in the same file.

- All documentation is filed in a confidential location, such as centralized child record files with restricted access, where it cannot be viewed freely by others.

B) Communication

All staff related to the provision of recreation, sport or child care at Vaughan Gymnastics should be aware of this policy and all related implications.

This policy should be contained in leader training materials and all leaders, and staff must attend training specific to the detection and reporting of child abuse.

C) Policy Support

- When developing policies and procedures for dealing with and reporting child abuse, it is worthwhile to consult with the local child welfare agency to ensure that they meet with all documentation and process requirements, and reflect the most current legislation.

- The supervisor should support the leader through the reporting process. The supervisor and leader should discuss the needs of the child, the strategies for continuing to work with and support the child within the program, and issues around confidentiality and dealing with the suspected abuser.