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ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE POLICY

INTENT:

We believe that all people have the right to be free of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological and financial abuse. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and respectful environment to people with a developmental disability and their families receiving supports and services.

PURPOSE:

This policy and procedures have been developed in order to protect and safeguard the people to whom, we provide supports and services. They are intended to provide clear procedures and guidelines to prevent, identify and report abuse. This policy will provide direction on how we respond to the supported person, where abuse of that person has been alleged, suspected or witnessed, as well as direction in responding to the perpetrator who has abused or is alleged to have abused a person(s) with developmental disabilities.

POLICY – ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Child Abuse Reporting (16 years of age or younger)

In compliance with the Child and Family Services Act, employees of Durham Association for Family Respite Services who believe that they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse of a child under the age of 16, must report such concerns to the Children's Aid Society. The Police and/or Children's Aid Society are the only authorized bodies to conduct a criminal investigation of an allegation of abuse if the alleged victim is a child.

Duty to report – CFSA s. 72 (1)

Subsection 72(1) of the Child And Family Services Act provides that if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering, may be suffering or may have suffered abuse, the person shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a Children's Aid Society.

"Reasonable grounds" has been defined as what an average person given his/her training, background and experience and exercising normal and honest judgment would suspect.

Duty to report Directly – CSA s.72 (3)

The person, who has the reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, must make the report directly to the Children's Aid Society. The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.

See Schedule 1 for more information.

Allegations of abuse towards an Adult (16 years of age and older)

These policies and procedures are in compliance with Regulation 299/10 of the Social Inclusion Act (2008). Abuse, neglect and exploitation will not be tolerated under any circumstances or to any degree. This policy includes definitions of abuse, training requirements, identification and prevention of abuse and required reporting protocols for all employees, students and direct support volunteers.

The Durham Regional Police Department has the primary responsibility for the criminal investigation of abuse and the Office of the Crown Attorney has responsibility for the criminal prosecution of abuse offenders. There may be people supported by the Durham Association for Family Respite Services who, as a result of personal experiences or as an act of communication, may demonstrate disruptive responses and, at times, challenging behaviours. The reporting procedures in this policy do not apply to persons whom we support and where the behaviour is considered to be responsive and/or reactive, in the moment. Durham Association for Family Respite Services is committed to protecting the safety, security, and dignity of the people we support and their families. To this end, DAFRS will provide relevant information, education and training to minimize risk to people receiving services, families, employees, students and direct service volunteers.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE:

For the purposes of this policy, abuse is defined as an action or a behaviour that causes or is likely to cause physical injury or psychological harm to a person or results or is likely to result in significant loss or destruction of their property, including neglect.

Abuse can be an action that is deemed to be a criminal offence, or it may be an action that may be deemed abusive but not criminal.

See Schedule 2 for definitions and examples

General Information on Disclosure, Identification and Prevention of Abuse:

Disclosure of any kind of abuse can be difficult for the person disclosing as well as the person he/she is sharing this information with. Every opportunity must be provided to an individual to disclose abuse and/or alleged abuse and for the employee, student and direct support volunteer to listen attentively and offer support. If an allegation of abuse is made, the individual shall be heard, and the allegation taken seriously.

When a disclosure has been made giving reasonable suspicion and/or an incident has been witnessed where a person receiving services has been allegedly abused, a DAFRS employee, student and/or direct service volunteers **MUST NOT** initiate an interview or discuss the incident with the person beyond a general discussion of the person's current welfare.

Reasonable Suspicions of abuse must be reported to the police.

REASONABLE SUSPICION of abuse includes:

- First person account or a witnessed report of alleged abuse
- Tangible, documented evidence (i.e. bruising, bleeding etc.) that cannot be otherwise explained;
- A documented, significant change in the person's behavior;
- Tangible evidence that financial abuse is taking place.

All suspicions of abuse must immediately be reported to the DAFRS employee, student or direct service volunteer's immediate Supervisor. The Immediate Supervisor and/or Executive Director will provide support and guidance to the employee, student and direct support volunteer reporting the alleged abuse.

See Schedule 3 - Do's and Don'ts if someone discloses possible abuse. What other signs to look for when there is suspicion of abuse.

DUTY TO REPORT:

Failure to respond in accordance with policy when an employee, student, or direct support volunteer becomes aware of an incident of alleged abuse involving a person receiving support could lead to civil liability on the witness' part and on the part of the agency. Anyone who does or omits to do anything for the purpose of aiding anyone to commit a criminal offence may be charged with the offence.

PROCEDURE – WHAT TO DO:

1. It is the responsibility of all Employees, Students and Direct Support Volunteers to:

A. In the case of a witnessed or alleged abuse, where there is **immediate risk**, (e.g. physical or sexual) or perceived **immediate risk** to a person receiving services:

- i. Intervene to ensure the health, safety and well- being of the person.
- ii. Contact the Police immediately without further investigation.
- iii. Report the incident immediately to Immediate Supervisor or designate. Should the alleged offender be the supervisor, contact the Executive Director. Should the alleged offender be the Executive Director, contact the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.
- iv. Cooperate with the Police.
- v. Remain calm, present and thoughtful in your assistance to the supported person.
- vi. The Immediate Supervisor will contact the alleged victim's family or next of kin if consent is provided by the person, unless otherwise directed by the police or unless the alleged perpetrator is family or next of kin.
- vii. An Incident Report is to be completed by the reporting employee and given to the Immediate Supervisor as soon as possible. No further interviewing of the victim by the employee is to occur.

Where the incident involves an injury and/or is of a sexual nature, clothing and other articles involved in the occurrence may provide evidence to police investigators. An alleged victim of physical or sexual abuse may require an expert medical examination. An employee, student or direct support volunteer must remain mindful of these issues, refrain from unnecessary disturbing potential crime scenes and contact police before unnecessarily altering or disposing of potential evidence.

B. In the case of suspected or alleged abuse where there is **no immediate risk** to the person's well-being (e.g. physical, sexual) and this may include, but not be limited to, financial abuse.

- i. The Employee, Student and Direct Support Volunteer should support the person to ensure she/he feels safe.
- ii. Report the incident **immediately** to the Immediate Supervisor or designate. Should the alleged offender be the supervisor, contact the Executive Director.
- iii. Contact the Police if there is **reasonable suspicion** that abuse has occurred without further investigation.
- iv. Remain calm, present and thoughtful in your assistance to the supported person.
- v. The Immediate Supervisor will contact the alleged victim's family or next of kin if consent is provided by the person, unless otherwise directed by the police or unless the alleged perpetrator is family or next of kin.
- vi. An Incident Report is to be completed by reporting employee and given to the Immediate Supervisor as soon as possible. No further interviewing of the victim by the employee is to occur.

Internal Investigation Procedures:

Executive Director or their Designate shall:

- Complete the Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy and send to the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

Once Police have completed their investigation, an internal inquiry team will be coordinated to conduct an investigation. The inquiry team will be made up of representatives who do not work directly with the victim or the accused.

- Board Member(s)
- Executive Director
- Senior Team member

Notification

The supported person's family or next of kin will be notified if consent is provided by the person, unless directed by the police not to notify.

If the person is not able to give consent:

The person(s) acting on behalf of the supported person shall be notified unless directed by the police not to notify or unless the alleged perpetrator is the family or next of kin. Throughout the investigations, the family or next of kin will be notified at various check points with progress reports.

There will be an Action Plan developed by the inquiry team.

Please See Schedule 4 - Action Plan details.

Additional Information

1. Individuals witnessing, reporting or having suffered abuse will be provided with appropriate support, with assistance of the immediate supervisor.
2. At all times DAFRS will strive to maintain the confidentiality of all persons involved within the limits of investigation and reporting requirements.
3. Incidents that are reported will be investigated promptly and corrective action taken. When there is police involvement DAFRS shall not initiate an internal investigation before the police have completed their investigation.
4. Any form of abuse by staff constitutes a disciplinary infraction and will be subject to a range of disciplinary sanctions and can result in criminal charges.
5. DAFRS will strive to provide a safe, nurturing and respectful environment for persons whom we support.
6. All staff has an obligation and responsibility for persons whom we support to protect them from harm and abuse.
7. It is DAFRS's intent that all employees, students and direct support volunteers receive the ongoing support, training ("Protecting the Vulnerable"), and assistance necessary to take action in the prevention, detection and response to abuse and neglect. Training and education will be reviewed yearly.
8. DAFRS will provide education and awareness-building on abuse prevention and reporting for persons whom we support and/or their designate in a language and manner that is appropriate to the capacity of the person with a developmental disability at the time the person begins to receive services and supports from the service agency and every year thereafter.
9. DAFRS will minimize the vulnerability of individuals by ensuring staff competency in the use of direct care practices and training/teaching interventions.
10. DAFRS will undertake to hire staff with positive and valuing skills and attitudes towards persons with disabilities.
11. Vulnerable Persons Screening will be required for all employees, students and direct support volunteers. The organization is unable to offer employment or placement to any applicant with a criminal charge of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation.
12. New staff, students, board members and direct support volunteers will be oriented as soon as possible after placement, to DAFRS's policy regarding abuse (*refer to Employee Orientation, Personnel Policy 06-01*).
13. DAFRS will require all employees, students, and volunteers to a yearly review of agency policy regarding abuse (*refer to Employee Orientation, Personnel Policy 06-01*).
14. As advocates of people who have intellectual disabilities, employees, students and direct support volunteers will share their knowledge of the person's level of support needed to participate in the process. Assisting with accommodations and communication barriers that will assist the person and the police in their investigation, as appropriate.
15. DAFRS will assess yearly whether changes to its policies and procedures may be necessary to prevent occurrences of abuse and promptly implement the changes that are determined to be necessary as a result of the review.

Annual Report

DAFRS shall prepare an Annual Report of its review of its policies and procedures to promote zero tolerance of abuse and of any changes to the policies and procedures that are determined to be necessary as a result of the review.

Media

The Executive Director or designate will be the media contact. Under no circumstances will information be provided to the media "off the record". Unless a criminal conviction has been determined by the court, the term "alleged" is to be used when referring to the alleged offender and alleged victim in any statement to the media.

Schedule 1: Child Abuse Reporting

In compliance with the Child and Family Services Act, employees of DAFRS who believe that they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse of a child under the age of 16, must report such concerns to a Children's Aid Society.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Duty to report – CFSA s. 72 (1)

Subsection 72(1) of the Child And Family Services Act provides that if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering, may be suffering or may have suffered abuse, the person shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a Children's Aid Society.

"Reasonable grounds" has been defined as what an average person given his/her training, background and experience and exercising normal and honest judgment would suspect.

Duty to report directly – CSA s.72 (3)

The person, who has the reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, must make the report directly to the Children's Aid Society. The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.

Special responsibilities of professionals and officials, and penalty for failure to report – CFSA ss. 72(4) and 72 (6.2)

Pursuant to subsection 72(1), even DAFRS Employees that do not fall under the heading of "person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children" have a duty to report child abuse suspicions. However, subsections 72(4)

and 72 (6.2) provide that any "professional" or "official" who fails to report a suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection, where the information on which that suspicion is based was obtained in the course of his or her profession or official duties, is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1,000.

Professional or officials affected – CFSA s.72 (5)

Pursuant to subsection 72(5) persons who perform "professional" or "official" duties with respect to children include but are not limited to the following:

- Health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and psychologists;
- Teachers, and school principals;
- Social workers and family counsellors;
- Priests, rabbis and other members of the clergy;
- Operators or employees of day nurseries;
- Youth and recreation workers (not volunteers);
- Peace officers and coroners;
- Solicitors;
- Service providers and employees of service providers; and
- Any other person who performs professional or official duties with respect to a child.

Penalty for Failure to Report – CFSA s. 72(4)

(6.2) Any professional or official who fails to report a suspicion that a child is or maybe in need of protection, where the information on which that suspicion is based was obtained in the course of his or her professional or official duties, is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1000.00.

Situations that need to be reported:

Section 72 (1) states that to suffer abuse, when used in reference to a child, means to be in need of protection are outlined below:

1. The child had suffered physical harm inflicted by the person having charge of the child or resulting from that person's,
 - a. Failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
 - b. Pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
2. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer physical harm inflicted by the person having child or caused by or resulting from the person's,
 - a. Failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
 - b. Pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
3. The child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child.
4. There is a risk that the child is likely to be sexually molested or sexually exploited as described in paragraph 3.
5. The child requires medical treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, the treatment.
6. The child has suffered emotional harm, demonstrated by serious,
 - a. Anxiety
 - b. Depression
 - c. Withdrawal
 - d. Self-destructive or aggressive behaviour, or
 - e. Delayed development, and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the emotional harm suffered by the child results from the actions, failure to act or pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
7. The child has suffered emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph a), b), c), d), or e) of paragraph 6 and the child's parent having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses, or is unavailable or unable to consent to, services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm.
8. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph a), b), c), d), or e) of paragraph 6 resulting from the actions, failure to act or pattern neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
9. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph a), b), c), d), or e) of paragraph 6 and that the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide or refuses or is unavailable to consent to, services of treatment to remedy or alleviate the condition.
10. The child suffers from a mental, emotional or developmental condition that, if not remedied could seriously impair the child's development and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, treatment to remedy or alleviate the condition.

11. The child has been abandoned, the child's parent has died or unavailable to exercise his or her custodial rights over the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care and custody, or the child is in a residential placement and the parent refuses or is unwilling to resume the child's care and custody.
12. The child is less than 12 years old and has killed or seriously injured another person or caused damage to another person's property, services or treatment are necessary to prevent a recurrence and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, those services or treatment.
13. The child less than 12 years old and has on more than one occasion injured another person or caused loss and damage to another person's property, with the encouragement of the person having charge of the child or because of that person's failure or inability to supervise the child adequately.

Ongoing Duty to report CFSA s. 72(2)

The duty to report is an ongoing obligation. If a person has made a previous report about a child and has additional reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, that person must make a further report to Children's Aid Society.

Professional Confidentiality CFSA s. 72(7), (8)

The professional's duty to report overrides the provisions of any other provincial statute, specifically these provisions that would otherwise prohibit disclosure by the professional or official.

Thereby, the professional must report that a child is or may be in need of protection even when the information is supposed to be confidential or privileged. (The only exception for "privileged" information is the relationship between a solicitor and a client.)

Protection from liability CFSA s. 72(7)

If a civil action is brought against a person who made a report, that person will be protected unless he or she acted maliciously or without reasonable grounds for his or her suspicion.

What will the Children's Aid Society do?

Children's Aid Society workers have the responsibility and the authority to investigate allegations and to provide services to protect children. A Children's Aid Society worker may, as part of the investigation and plan to protect the child, involve the police and other community agencies.

How to contact a Children's Aid Society:

Check the telephone directory for the **office closest to you**. In some communities, the Children's Aid Society is known as "family and children's services." The emergency pages in most Ontario telephone directories have the number to call to report to a Children's Aid Society. All the children's aid societies and family and children's services have emergency service 24 hours a day, so that you can call anytime.

For more information

Contact your local Children's Aid Society or family and children's services. If you suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, contact a Children's Aid Society immediately. Your co-operation is vital to making Ontario's child protection system work.

Schedule 2: Definitions and Examples of Abuse

Physical Abuse: Acts of assault or threats of assault (physical harm).

Examples of Physical Abuse include but are not limited to, hitting, slapping, shoving, pushing spanking, pinching and burning that cause or could cause physical injury or fear of physical injury; inappropriate handling and/or inappropriate use and/or unauthorized use of a physical restraint; deliberate exposure to extreme weather conditions; misuse of prescription medications, including over medicating; or using these medications as a chemical restraint or psychotropic medication for any purpose not ordered by a physician.

Threat: Expression of an intention to cause harm or pain.

Examples of Threats include but are not limited to, physical threats (pointing of fingers), verbal threats (if you don't do what I say I will hit you).

Sexual Abuse: Is the unwanted touching of a person's sexual body part. The lack of consent is the defining feature; it is against the person's will and without his/her consent. Due to the perceived position of power, there can never be consent between the person being supported and their service provider/caregiver.

Sexual abuse also includes the denial of a person to be engaged in a consensual sexual behaviour.

Examples of Sexual Abuse include but are not limited to, ignoring the sexual objections of another person; causing another person's intoxication or impairment through the use of drugs or alcohol for the purposes of gaining sexual gratification; taking advantage of another person's state of intimidation, helplessness, vulnerability; as well as the inability to consent to a sexual relationship; unwanted kissing or forcing someone to kiss another person; touching of intimate or sexual parts directly or through clothing, unwanted displays of sexual parts; sexual intercourse or other genital, oral or anal penetration by alleged offender's body part or an object manipulated by the alleged offender; forcing or coercing* a person to masturbate; exposure to sexual materials (pornography); or removing or attempting to remove a person's clothing without his/her consent.

Sexual harassment: is the use of any comments, conduct or gestures of a sexual nature undertaken with the intent of causing offence or humiliation.

Coercion: Is the use of power, threats, promises and/or intimidation to force another person to do something that they would otherwise not want to do or engage in.

Examples of Coercion include but are not limited to, constantly putting pressure on someone (pleading, repeatedly asking); making someone feel guilty (if you really care about me, you will), threatening to withhold information or do something (I will break up with you); making false promises (if you do this, I won't ask for anything else); or implied threats (blocking the path to the door, use of physical size)

Neglect: Is the failure to provide the necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, care or supervision. It is an act of omission. Neglect can be *intentional* whereby the perpetrator is deliberately withholding care; or it can be *unintentional or passive* whereby the perpetrator fails to offer supports or care as a result of lack of knowledge, experience or ability on the part of the person providing the support.

Examples of Neglect, intentional or unintentional include but are not limited to failure to provide medical care or other professional expertise on behalf of a person who may displaying signs of anxiety, depression, mania or other ongoing emotional distress; failure to provide protection, shelter and clothing; person having insufficient food and/or water; person left alone without support for a period of time; living in unsanitary conditions; being lonely; isolation from family and/or friends; solitary confinement; inappropriate response times to a person's basic needs; misusing mechanical lifts; or failing to treat recurring bedsore that are preventable.

Exploitation: Is taking advantage of a person through trickery or manipulation for personal benefit. It is persuading the person to do things that are illegal or not in the person's best interest. Exploitation happens when someone exercises control over another person; their property; their resources; their relationships; their time; or their skills for his/her own benefit.

Examples of exploitation include but are not limited to a support staff conducting personal errands while they are scheduled to be supporting someone such as the staff buying their own groceries or paying their personal bills.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse: is the misuse of power to cause a person to lose respect for self. It is an action that negatively affects a person's self-esteem, self-image, dignity, work and overall wellbeing.

Examples of Emotional/Psychological abuse include but are not limited to constant criticism, insulting, degrading, humiliating, intimidating or terrorizing of a person; ignoring a person; harassing or bullying a person; instilling fear; disapproving what a person says ...or does without being respectful; threatening to take away something that the person values if they do not cooperate; or denial of information, privacy, and rights to practice one's religion.

Mistreatment: Is when a person is being treated wrongly or badly by another person. This is also considered to be emotional and psychological abuse.

Examples of Mistreatment include but are not limited to ridiculing a person.

Financial Abuse: Is the misuse or misappropriation of someone's financial assets for personal gain. It is impossible to "borrow" money from someone who is under your care as the power imbalance makes it difficult for the person supported to simply say 'no'.

Examples of Financial Abuse include but are not limited to theft, misuse or mishandling of a person's money, property, possessions; a person being forced to change his will or power of attorney; a person's cheques cashed without the person's permission; forging signatures; or money being used for purposed other than those intended by the person.

Verbal Abuse: Is any communication towards a person that may be perceived by that person to be demeaning, suggestive, exploitive, insulting, derogatory or humiliating to him/her.

Examples of Verbal Abuse include but are not limited to sarcasm, swearing, racial slurs, teasing, banter, name calling, insults, disrespectful language and inappropriate tone of voice.

Schedule 3: Do's and Don'ts If Someone Discloses Possible Abuse and What Other Signs to Look for When There Is Suspicion of Abuse.

Do:

- Stay calm and control your expression as well as your voice – don't overreact;
- Listen attentively;
- Allow the person to speak at their own pace and use the form of communication that they are most comfortable with;
- Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure;
- Document the conversation that you have had remembering as accurately as you can the words and phrases used by the person to describe what has happened to them;
- Ask open ended questions

Examples of Open-Ended questions are:

- What happened?
- What happened next?
- Can you tell me more?
- Have you told anyone else about this?
- Where did this happen?
- When did this happen?
- Where does it hurt?
- What do you mean by, "he/she hurt you"?

Don't:

- Demand details: you are not investigating the allegation;
- Don't promise to keep the information a secret;
- Don't share the information with anyone other than the appropriate personnel within Durham Association for Family Resources and Support and the Police
- Don't ask leading questions

Examples of Leading Questions are:

- Did he/she take his/her shirt off?
- Did this happen in the bathroom?
- Did this happen last night?
- Did he/she tell you to...?
- Did he/she hit or scream at you?
- Did he/she touch you?

Any employee suspecting abuse should look for direct evidence, which may include, but may not be limited to: bruising, torn clothing; bleeding.

Certain areas of bruising are highly suspicious, as well as repeat bruising or injuries on a person that is physically unable to move independently themselves. Areas of suspicious bruising include, but are not limited to:

- Inner thighs; back of legs;
- Eyes;
- Upper arms; upper back.

Avoid going over the information time and time again - you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable suspicion to determine whether or not you need to report this.

Once you have established that the person has been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure.

Schedule 4: Internal Investigation Procedures - Action Plan

An Action Plan will be developed by the team and must include the following:

- Who will be interviewed and when (A Timeline Chart)
- Who will be conducting the interviews?
- Questions to be asked during the interviews. (See Abuse Inquiry Team Guideline)
- The appropriate forms to be completed during the inquiry process.
- A summary to be drafted upon completion of the inquiry.

The Executive Director, Immediate Supervisor, and Board President will decide upon any disciplinary action, which will result from the inquiry.

- During an investigation by the Inquiry Team, the following actions may occur concerning the alleged offender.
- Support that person to leave DAFRS property or work location for the duration of the investigation. An alleged offender must not have access to the alleged victim, or any other person supported by DAFRS until the investigation is complete.
- An alleged offender can be relocated within the Agency.
- An alleged offender can be suspended with or without pay until the investigation is completed.
- An alleged offender's extended benefits status may be maintained during the time of the investigation.

During the investigation by the inquiry team, the alleged offender has the following rights:

- The right to know the specific allegation that has been made against him/her.
- The right to have his/her confidentiality and dignity safeguarded.
- The right to the opportunity to respond to the allegations, and to be listened to objectively.
- The right to ask the Inquiry Team for information regarding the progress of the inquiry.

If the investigation substantiates the allegations against the alleged offender, he/she will be disciplined up to and including dismissal. Criminal charges may result.

Witnesses failing to report acts of abuse are considered accessories to the abuse. If the abuse is substantiated, the witness who failed to report the abuse will be disciplined up to and including dismissal.

Where an individual discloses abuse, every effort will be made to protect the victim from the alleged offender, and to be provided appropriate support throughout the investigation.

All victims have a right:

- To speak to a police officer
- To immediate medical attention if required.
- To immediate removal of the alleged offender from their setting.
- To have a request for relocation be considered.
- To be listened to in an unbiased manner
- To be provided with alternate modes of communication as needed. (e.g. sign, pic book etc.)
- To have someone with whom they feel comfortable present during interviews re: alleged incident.
- To any psychological and/or psychosocial counseling
- To seek legal council