

Child Abuse Prevention

The Navy League of Canada

IMPORTANT NEWS

Child Abuse

What is it?

The Navy League of Canada is committed to providing a learning and working environment for all members that is healthy, safe, productive and free from violence and abuse. Everyone has an individual responsibility to facilitate a safe, secure and abuse-free workplace.

What does this mean?

Child Abuse: means any form of physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that causes physical injury or emotional damage to a child.

This policy applies to all members of the Navy League of Canada including: National and Divisional/Branch employees; registered participants (Branch Members) including National Board, Division and Branch Council members and all categories of Associates; and volunteers including Navy League Officers. This policy also covers contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and visitors to our organization.

How do I know what is considered child abuse?

Examples of child abuse covered under the policy include:

Emotional Abuse: refers to the chronic/repetitive non-physical abuse over a significant period of time of a child's/youth's self-esteem.

Physical Abuse: occurs when a person in a position of power or trust injures or threatens to injure a child or youth and includes: hitting, slapping, punching, pushing, kicking, hair pulling, burning, shaking, asphyxia, biting and restraining. It also includes the excessive use of exercise as a form of punishment; forcing a child to exercise until he/she becomes sick or passes out from exhaustion. Physical abuse includes: hazing, abandonment, homicide and assault, assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm, and correction of a child by force.

Neglect: refers to the chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as clothing, shelter, nutritious diet, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise and fresh air.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when a young or less powerful person is used by an older or more powerful child, adolescent or adult for sexual gratification. There are two categories: non-contact and contact.

- i) **Non contact:** flashing or exposing sexual body parts to a child; watching intrusively as a child changes or showers; speaking/communicating seductively with a child; showing pornographic films, magazines or photographs to children; having young people participate in the creation of pornographic materials; forcing a young person to watch a sexual act performed by others; objectifying a child's sexual body parts; and
- ii) **Contact:** kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner; touching sexual body parts or forcing a child to touch another person's sexual body parts; oral sex; penetrating a child anally or vaginally with objects or fingers; having vaginal or anal intercourse with a child.

What should I do if I believe child abuse has occurred?

A person who believes that child abuse has occurred must report the matter to the local Child Protection Agency and ensure that the appropriate Navy League Chain of Command is informed. The Child Protection Agency will determine with police assistance if the incident being reported constitutes a criminal act or not.

What happens next?

The Commanding Officer of a Navy League Cadet Corps will inform the Branch President that a report has been made to the Child Protection Agency. An incident report form will be completed by the Commanding Officer and forwarded to the Branch President as soon as practicable but not later than seventy two (72) hours.

The Commanding Officer will take immediate and appropriate steps to separate the alleged offender from the victim pending the intervention from the Child Protection Agency. The Commanding Officer will work with the appropriate authorities to develop a safety plan.

Any parental notification, in cases of suspected child abuse, will be the responsibility of the Child Protection Agency.

What is the role of the Executive Director (or as appropriate Divisional/Branch staff or Councils)?

All leaders in the organization are responsible for facilitating a safe, secure and violence and abuse-free workplace. They are responsible for ensuring that employees/members in their area are aware of the Child Abuse Prevention Policy and participate or attend any mandatory information sessions. They are also responsible for directly addressing any issues of abuse under this policy that they witness and by taking immediate action to correct the matter.

This may include:

1. Immediately contact authorities if required and if it has not been done yet.
2. When necessary, ensure that proper medical care is provided for anyone involved in an incident.
3. Inform your supervisor and as appropriate the NL Corps CO/Branch/Division/National President.
4. Co-operate with the assigned investigators, police or other authorities as required during any investigation related to child abuse.
5. Provide support to the affected parties and engage other support mechanisms that may be deemed appropriate.
6. Uphold the decisions arising from an investigation.
7. Follow up with the affected parties to ensure there are no reprisals.

What protection do I have if I come forward with a complaint?

Any retaliation or reprisals are prohibited against anyone who comes forward with a complaint under this policy or has provided information regarding a complaint. Any form of retaliation or reprisals will be subject to further follow up inquiries, investigation and disciplinary action where it is deemed warranted. The same procedures under this policy will be used to investigate alleged retaliation or reprisals.

Any failure to intervene in matters pertaining to suspected child abuse will result in administrative or disciplinary action by anyone who was aware of a situation but who willfully or negligently failed to take appropriate action.