

Snowflake House Respite Foundation

Code of Conduct

1.0 Introduction:

Snowflake House Respite Foundation has developed this Code of Conduct in accordance with our core values: Family Centred, Respect/Integrity, Teamwork, Caring, and Safety. Snowflake House clients are some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and Snowflake House has worked hard to gain the respect and trust of parents and other members of the community. This Code of Conduct allows us to continue to be a credible, ethically operated agency in Lloydminster, AB/SK and area.

This Code of Conduct will be updated as needed.

2.0 Communication:

Communication is a cornerstone of the services Snowflake House Respite Foundation provides. The following gives policies and procedures for employees to follow.

2.1 With Parents:

Respite Providers working for Snowflake House are expected to communicate electronically with parents through phone calls and texts. Employees may initiate communication with parents, in order to set up times and dates for shifts, and to communicate information about the shift they worked with the clients. Employees should keep a professional boundary with parents, not sharing information about each other's personal lives unless it pertains to the child.

2.2 With Clients:

For any client under the age of 18, the expectation is that electronic communication happens with parents ONLY, and does not happen between Respite Providers and their clients. Communication with clients is to be in person only, and not to be extended outside of work hours. In addition, it is NOT acceptable to allow clients, of any age, to have access to any Employee's phones, even with direct supervision. This means it is also not acceptable to allow the client to use the Respite Provider's phone to play games.

2.3 With Supervisors:

Respite Providers are expected to keep open communication with their Supervisors. This includes phone calls, texting, emailing, and Facebook private messaging. This communication is expected to be confidential, unless otherwise stated in the communication. In addition, Supervisors will communicate with the staff as a group through email, GroupMe, and our Facebook Page. Please remember that these forms of communication, while closed to the

public, are seen by ALL staff. At times, members of these groups may be asked to take a conversation to a more private format.

2.4 With Other Respite Providers:

Respite Providers may communicate with each other about their clients at Staff Meetings and Trainings as well as during shared shifts. At times, more than one Respite Provider may be assigned to a family. In these cases, Respite Providers may communicate with each other through text message, emails, or through a private GroupMe thread about dates/times for shifts, and information about the shift they worked with the clients. Respite Providers may meet with each other, or call each other, outside of these times/formats. However, Respite Providers may NOT discuss their clients outside of these times/formats.

2.5 With Social Workers:

Some of our clients may be in the care of the Ministry of Social Services. In these cases, Respite Providers may initiate communication with the Social Workers involved in their client's cases by email, and may answer the phone if the Social Worker calls them. All emails must be CC'd to the Supervisor. Outgoing calls to the Social Worker should be made by the Supervisor. Communication with Social Workers should be kept to times and dates for shifts, and to communicate information about the shift they worked with the clients.

2.6 With Schools:

Respite Providers may be responsible for transporting clients to and from school. Communication at these times should be limited to the school staff that comes to the door. If there isn't a school employee at the door, Respite Providers may go to the office and speak to the office staff. The content of this communication should be limited to information about that client, that day. Any information directed from parents to school staff and from school staff to parents should be in written format. Respite Providers can deliver these written messages, but Respite Providers are NOT expected to be "middle men" for verbal communication between parents and school staff.

2.7 With Other Agencies:

Respite Providers may be included in group emails about upcoming meetings regarding their clients. Respite Providers may "Reply All" to these emails with information about dates/times of meetings. In addition, Respite Providers may attend meetings about their clients if invited by the organizer of the meeting, or by the Supervisor. In those meetings, they may communicate information about their direct work with the client. ALL other communication with outside agencies will ONLY be done by the Supervisor.

2.8 Confidential Information and Nondisclosure:

By continuing employment with Snowflake House Respite Foundation, employees agree that they will not disclose or use any of Snowflake House Respite Foundation's confidential information, either during or after their employment. Snowflake House Respite Foundation sincerely hopes that its relationship with its employees will be longterm and mutually rewarding. However, employment with Snowflake House Respite Foundation assumes an obligation to maintain confidentiality, even after an employee is no longer under Snowflake House Respite Foundation's employ.

2.9 Inappropriate Communication:

All Employees of Snowflake House Respite Foundation will refrain from inappropriate communication topics during their shifts with clients as well as during staff meetings, trainings, other meetings, and functions. Inappropriate Topics include such things as sexual innuendo's, explicit violence, swearing, religion, and politics. Snowflake House employees will remember that humor is personal, and that others may not share the same sense of humor. Adding "LOL" to electronic communications does NOT make inappropriate messages okay. For example: texting "I need a drink" to parents while on shift with their children is NOT made better with the addition of "LOL".

2.10 Harassment/Sexual Harassment:

Snowflake House Respite Foundation does not tolerate workplace harassment. Workplace harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to, words, signs, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, e-mail jokes or statements, pranks, intimidation, physical assaults or contact, or violence. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when such conduct creates an offensive, hostile, and intimidating working environment and prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position.

3.0 Expenses:

This section provides policies and procedures for purchases that may or may not be made by Respite Providers for their clients and families.

3.1 Activity Fund:

Snowflake House Respite Foundation fundraises towards an Activity Fund for its clients. This fund allows Respite Providers to use UP TO \$15/week per client towards activities to do with their clients. The purpose of this fund is to allow clients access to activities that they would not normally have access to, such as going to the multiplex, swimming pool, movie theatre, etc... This fund may also be used to enrich shifts done in the client's home through the purchase of craft supplies, etc.... The expectation is that the crafts be done WITH the client. Please note: this fund is per client. Clients who have more than one Respite Provider will require clear communication among the team to so everyone knows who is doing what. As often as possible, aim to do things that are free or low cost.

3.2 Food Costs:

Parents are responsible for making sure their children are fed. Parents need to either provide the food, or provide money to purchase the food. On rare occasions, the Activity Fund may be used to purchase cooking ingredients to make a special item WITH the client. Ex: cupcakes for their birthday. Or, it may, at the discretion of the Supervisor and/or Board, be used for outings to a coffee shop for a small treat.

3.3 Respite Providers Use of Their Own Personal Funds:

Snowflake House Respite Foundation believes that it should not cost money to be employed with us. Respite Providers may be asked to use their personal money to pay for an activity, keep the receipts, and be reimbursed at payday. At times, Respite Providers may feel as

Created On: March 18, 2017

Last Updated: _____

Created By: Lily Belland, Executive Director

Updated By: _____

though they want to buy their client a treat or fill a need for the client such as a winter jacket or food for the client's family. Before using personal money for these purchases, Respite Providers should contact the Supervisor to discuss the situation. Other solutions can sometimes be found, such as Coats for Kids or Jumpstart. Snowflake House cautions against the use of personal money, as families may become dependent and their other workers may not be as financially able to do this. Exceptions can be made, but only with the permission of the Supervisor AND the Parents.

4.0 Place of Respite:

This section outlines the policies and procedures for where respite is expected to occur.

4.1 In the Client Home:

Respite may occur in the clients' homes, if that is what the family prefers. Respite providers will respect the privacy of the parents by not entering the parent's bedrooms and/or any other areas of the homes the parents indicate are "off limits". Overnight respite may occur in the clients' homes ONLY in the case of a family emergency. In these cases, the Respite Provider will ensure the clients are asleep before they go to sleep, and Respite Providers will sleep on the couch in the living room/family room, or on the floor in another public part of the house. Respite Providers will NOT sleep in the same bedroom as their clients, unless there is a documented MEDICAL reason to do so.

4.2 In the Community:

When not in the client home, respite is to occur in a place that is potentially public at all times. Respite is NOT to occur in the Respite Providers' homes. This protects both the client and the Respite Provider. Overnight respite may be provided in a situation such as camp or retreats, where other adults and children are potentially present at all times. When Snowflake House Respite Foundation has its own permanent location, respite may occur at that location, provided that at least 2 adults, who are not related to each other, are present.

4.3 Driving:

Respite Providers are often responsible for driving clients. This can include going to and from outings, visitations, and placements. It is the expectation that Respite Providers will go from Point A to Point B in a direct manner. It is recommended that clients ride in the back seat for safety reasons. Before driving with a client in the front seat, Respite Providers MUST have permission from the Supervisor and the parent.

5.0 Attendance:

Employees are expected to be aware of their work times, and communicate clearly with all involved about any changes.

5.1 Work Schedule:

Work schedules will vary based on family/client needs and funding. Once a matchup between Respite Provider has been made, Respite Providers and parents will arrange a schedule that is acceptable to both parties. Some families may have regular hours each week or month, other families may have more varied needs.

Created On: March 18, 2017
Last Updated: _____

Created By: Lily Belland, Executive Director
Updated By: _____

5.2 Absence and Lateness:

From time to time, it may be necessary for an employee to be late or absent from work. Snowflake House Respite Foundation is aware that emergencies, illnesses, or pressing personal business that cannot be scheduled outside work hours may arise. It is the responsibility of all employees to contact all affected parties if they will be absent or late. Respite Providers are expected to offer an alternate time to the parents. If the family needs respite at a time the Respite Provider is unable to provide, the Respite Provider will contact the Supervisor to make other arrangements.

5.3 Unscheduled Absence:

Absence from work for three (3) consecutive shifts, without notifying the parents and/or Supervisor, will be considered a voluntary resignation.

6.0 Dress Code:

Employees of Snowflake House Respite Foundation are expected to present a clean and professional appearance while conducting business, in or outside of the office. Dressing in a fashion that is clearly unprofessional, that is deemed unsafe, or that negatively affects Snowflake House Respite Foundation's reputation or image is not acceptable.

7.0 Substance Use:

Employees will refrain from the use of substances that will negatively impact their ability to conduct their responsibilities during their shift.

7.1 Smoking:

No smoking of any kind is permitted inside any Snowflake House Respite Foundation property or client home. Smoking may occur outside, provided it is not done in the immediate presence of clients.

7.2 Alcohol and Substance Use:

It is the policy of Snowflake House Respite Foundation that the workplace be free of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages, and free of their use. In addition, Snowflake House Respite Foundation employees will NOT work while impaired by alcohol consumption, even if the alcohol was consumed before their shift began. Snowflake House employees will refrain AT ALL TIMES from illegal drug use.

8.0 Physical Contact:

It is incredibly important that all physical contact with clients is appropriate. This section provides important guidelines for gauging whether contact is appropriate or not. It is important to note that physical contact with clients may be necessary for their physical, mental, and emotional health. Any time physical contact is used with a child, the employee should be asking

themselves: **“Is this behavior something that a Reasonable observer would consider to be within the client’s reasonable boundaries?”**

8.1 Meeting the Needs of the Client:

All physical contact should be used to meet the needs of the child/youth, not the needs of the adult. Ex: If a child falls, it may be appropriate for the Respite Provider to help the child back to their feet and give them a hug. However, it would NOT be appropriate for the Respite Provider to ask the child for a hug because the Respite Provider has had a tough day. Respite Providers are Role Models for their clients, and at times, may need to model appropriate physical boundaries for children/youth that have not learned these yet.

8.2 Physical Restraints:

Physical Restraints must ONLY be used when they are ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. This means only when the risk of NOT restraining overrides the risk of restraining. For example, it may be necessary to hold a child’s hand or wrist if crossing the street or a busy parking lot and the child is unaware of the safety risk. Physical Restraints must ONLY be used by Respite Providers who have been trained in Non-violent Crisis Intervention by an approved Snowflake House Respite Foundation Trainer.

8.3 Violence in the Workplace:

Snowflake House Respite Foundation has adopted a policy prohibiting workplace violence. Consistent with this policy, acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion, which involve or affect Snowflake House Respite Foundation or which occur on Snowflake House Respite Foundation or client property, will not be tolerated.

Exception: Snowflake House Respite Foundation recognizes that some of the special needs exhibited by some of its clients include behavioral deficits and can result in aggression and violence. Snowflake House Respite Foundation will work very closely with the families/caregivers of these clients as well as partnering outside professionals and agencies to put in place a plan that will include proactive and reactive strategies for the respite worker to follow with these particular clients. If aggression or violence occurs, it will be documented in detail. A debrief with all involved may occur. Follow-up by a Supervisor will be done.

9.0 Reporting Inappropriate Behavior

Making Supervisors aware of Inappropriate Behavior is important for protecting clients, Respite Providers, as well as the Foundation. It is important to note that there is NO HARM in reporting inappropriate behavior and that inappropriate behavior does not necessarily mean that misconduct or abuse is happening.

9.1 Another Respite Provider’s Inappropriate Behaviour:

If a Respite Provider becomes aware of inappropriate behavior from another employee, they may approach the other employee to find out more information. Whether they ask for more information or not, they MUST report all inappropriate behavior to that employee’s Supervisor. It is NOT the Respite Provider’s job to decide if the behavior is true misconduct, or simply

inappropriate. The Supervisor will look into the matter further and decide what the appropriate action may be.

9.2 A Supervisor's Inappropriate Behaviour:

If a Respite Provider is aware of inappropriate behavior of their Supervisor, they MUST report it to a designated member of the board. The Board will look into the matter further and decide what the appropriate action may be.

9.3 Reporting Inappropriate Behavior to Authorities:

Respite Providers are in a good position to notice changes in their clients and client families that may suggest that deeper problems may exist. Snowflake House Respite Foundation employees who have a reasonable suspicion that a child's welfare may be, or has been, at risk due to neglect or abuse of any kind, MUST report this suspicion to the appropriate Ministry of Social Services and/or RCMP. Please note: If a call to Social Services is placed, it MUST be made by the person who observed the abuse, disclosure of abuse, or changes in behavior relating to the suspicion of abuse. If at all possible, the Supervisor or a designated member of the Board should be present for this phone call and/or meeting. The Duty to Report overrides professional confidentiality codes when there is reason to believe that a child may be abused or neglected.

10.0 Corrective Procedures:

Options for corrective procedures include but are not limited to: verbal correction, written warning, client freeze, reporting to Social Services/RCMP, suspension, or termination. If the Supervisor becomes aware of inappropriate behavior of a Respite Provider, the Supervisor will look into the matter further, and choose which option best suits the situation. If the Board becomes aware of inappropriate behavior of a Supervisor, the Board will meet and choose the appropriate option.

10.1 Verbal Correction:

Verbal Corrections may or may not be documented. The Supervisor and/or Board member(s) may meet with the Respite Provider and brainstorm ideas of what could be done differently in a similar situation. Or, the Supervisor may simply remind the Respite Provider of the policies in place. Correcting behavior is an opportunity for growth and professional development for all staff.

10.2 Written Warning:

A written warning is a documented warning that will be placed in the employee's file. The warning will include a plan to prevent inappropriate behavior going forward, and an opportunity for employees to make comments. A written warning will be used in cases that warrant immediate attention, or, at the discretion of the Supervisor and/or Board, for minor transgressions that have not improved through Verbal Correction. The person who writes the warning will meet with the employee in person to read through the written warning, and both will be required to sign it. Employees who receive three (3) written warnings within 12 months will be terminated immediately.

10.3 Client Freeze:

Created On: March 18, 2017
Last Updated: _____

Created By: Lily Belland, Executive Director
Updated By: _____

A Client Freeze is where an employee is not offered opportunities for new clients. This may be done in cases where the employee is engaging in behavior that is not misconduct, but is also not adding value to the organization. Example: a Respite Provider is not following appropriate Time Keeping procedures. A Client Freeze may be used as a corrective procedure in a Written Warning. A Client Freeze may ONLY be used if the current clients are still satisfied with the work of the Respite Provider.

10.4 Crisis Suspension:

An employee who commits any serious violation of Snowflake House Respite Foundation policies at minimum will be suspended without pay pending an investigation of the situation. Following the investigation, the employee may be terminated without any previous disciplinary action having been taken.

10.5 Termination:

After the application of disciplinary steps, if it is determined by the Supervisor and/or the Board, that an employee's performance does not improve, or if the employee is again in violation of Snowflake House Respite Foundation practices, rules, or standards of conduct, employment with Snowflake House Respite Foundation will be terminated.

10.6 Return of Company Property:

Any Snowflake House Respite Foundation property issued to employees, such as computer equipment, keys, parking passes or company credit card, must be returned to Snowflake House Respite Foundation at the time of termination. Employees will be responsible for any lost or damaged items.

11.0 Conduct Outside of Work Hours:

Snowflake House Respite Foundation encourages all Employees and Board Members to remember that they are ambassadors of Snowflake House Respite Foundation in our community, even when not currently with a client or at a Snowflake House function. Employees are expected to try their best to act in public in a way that is respectful of the organization they work for.