



Child Abuse Prevention Plan

At Batawa Ski Hill safety is our number one priority. Camp Batawa understands that child abuse and the inappropriate contact of youth is a pervasive problem that must be managed in a pro-active manner if we are to protect those in our care. Camp Batawa's leadership have enacted the following plan to manage our programs and minimize the potential for an abuse incident to occur. If an allegation or incident does occur, we will pro-actively work with the authorities and the family to respond in a prompt and empathetic manner.

Camp Batawa believes the following policies are vital to the protection of youth in our care and will be shared with and applied to all staff, volunteers, partner organizations and guardians.

1) Hiring Practices and Screening

a. Applications

All prospective staff and volunteers will complete an application to work or volunteer that includes questions in the following areas: criminal conviction, past work history and education. The application will include a statement that Batawa Ski Hill has a zero-tolerance standard for abuse and inappropriate behavior by staff members. All applications will be signed by the individual and maintained in their personnel file.

b. Interviews

Prospective staff and volunteers will be interviewed by at least two separate staff members. All interviews will be documented on an approved interview form that ensures consistency of questions asked. During all interviews, the prospective staff member will be asked to read Batawa Ski Hill's statement on abuse prevention (appendix 1) and verify that they agree with its purpose and that they will abide by its standards if hired.

c. Criminal Record Checks

Batawa Ski Hill requires a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check to be submitted by any prospective staff member over the age of 18. This search may be through law enforcement agencies or through entities that provide such service and may include examining provincial records throughout the entire country; and searching various registered sex offender lists. Applicants who are returning staff will receive a new check if they have been away from Batawa Ski Hill for more than 90 days.

Camp Batawa is strongly committed to protecting its members and the children in their care from all harm. However, a conviction does not automatically generate a rejection of the application—all cases are individually evaluated. Camp Batawa does maintain a barrier crimes list that includes items such as felonies, violence acts such as assault, domestic violence and child abuse.

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d. Reference Checks

Camp Batawa will contact at least three references for all prospective staff. At least one reference must be a *close family member* to the applicant. The reference's responses will be documented on a Batawa Ski Hill approved form that specifies questions for uniformity of evaluation. Past employers will be asked if the person is eligible for rehire. Written and electronic references will be accepted. All reference forms must include the date and the printed name and signature of the staff member who completed it.

e. File Documentation

All applications, reference checks, Criminal Record Checks and interview notes will be kept in the individual's personnel file that is maintained in the Batawa Ski Hill Human Resources department.

2) Training and Education

a. Code of Conduct

Staff and volunteers will sign and date a copy of the Code of Conduct prior to performing any work duties. The Code of Conduct will be maintained in the personnel file. All new staff will have the Code of Conduct reviewed with them at the time of signing; the signature line should state "I have read and understand the above as explained to me; I agree to abide by all of its conditions."

All departments will review the Code of Conduct during staff training/orientation each year and will have all staff reconfirm that they understand their expectations as a Camp Batawa staff member and agree to abide by those expectations. *See appendix 2 for a copy of the document.*

b. Child Abuse Prevention Training

All staff members will participate in the child abuse prevention training that includes training on sexual abusers. Any staff member who does not complete the training as required will be suspended or terminated.

c. Electronic Communication Policy

Camp Batawa has adopted the electronic communication policy attached in appendix 3. The policy will be reviewed with all staff and volunteers before their regular duties begin and annually thereafter. The purpose of this policy is to eliminate the potential for outside contact with program participants via electronic means. Camp Batawa understands that certain communication is needed as part of program operation; the policy addresses how and when it is permitted.

d. Reoccurring Training

Camp Batawa requires that all staff working with children participate in an annual review of the abuse prevention training. Camp Batawa may perform additional training with staff on identification and prevention of child abuse throughout the year.

3) Staff Expectations

a. Reporting of Red-Flag and Inappropriate Behavior and/or Violations of the Code of Conduct

Camp Batawa staff and volunteers are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse to the jurisdiction having authority. Camp Batawa staff will report to their supervisor any indication of or warning signs concerning abuse involving a child and any instances of staff violating the Code of Conduct. Camp Batawa staff who identify suspicious behavior or a violation of policy by a fellow staff person should report the event to their supervisor immediately.

Highland Shores Children's Aid

613-962-9291

b. Being Alone with Children

At no time should Camp Batawa staff or volunteers be in a situation where they are alone with a child or children and cannot be observed by others. Camp Batawa will make every attempt to design and structure its programs to eliminate the potential for a staff member to be in a one-on-one situation. Camp Batawa staff or volunteers are not to have children enter closets or storage areas to retrieve equipment.

c. Hugging and Touching of Children

Appropriate physical contact is important in the emotional development of all youth in our care. Examples of appropriate physical touch include high five, fist bumps and side hugs. Camp Batawa staff members should not perform frontal hugs of children—hugs should be from the side. Staff and volunteers should get down to the child's physical level when possible. Staff members should not pick-up school-aged children (to reduce potential for both abuse allegations and physical injury) and should not allow children to sit on their laps. Staff and volunteers should also not wrestle with or tickle youth.

d. Babysitting and Outside Contact

Camp Batawa's staff and volunteers shall not provide care (babysit) or instruction or develop/maintain relationships with any children or families they meet through programs. If the staff member has a pre-existing relationship, e.g., for babysitting, a Camp Batawa executive must be notified of the relationship and the relationship may continue. The family will be required to sign a waiver acknowledging the family's pre-existing relationship with the staff member and relieving Camp Batawa of any responsibility for the actions of the staff member about that relationship. Camp Batawa staff may not have contact, beyond incidental, with children they meet in Camp Batawa programs outside of camp. This includes but is not limited to:

- Extra practices, coaching or tutoring
- Special occasions such as graduation, family reunions, etc.

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- Community events such as living in the neighborhood or attending the same religious institution
- Visits to any residence

e. **Diapering Policy**

- Option #1: We do not allow diapering at our facility. Should a child need a diaper change, we will contact the guardian and provide a changing table.

f. **Supervision Standards**

All youth who are registered into programs will be always supervised by Camp Batawa staff. This includes bathrooms and changing areas during day camp. At no time should one staff member have direct care of a single child. If a staff member becomes alone with a child, they should promptly move to a location where they can be observed by other Camp Batawa staff member.

4) **Program Operation**

a. **Bathroom & Locker Room Policy**

For single stall bathrooms Camp Batawa staff will be positioned outside of the bathroom to make sure no one else enters the restroom. At minimum, when multiple children are in the bathroom, Camp Batawa staff members will be standing in the doorway so they can have at least auditory supervision of the children. Staff members can and are encouraged to be inside the facilities so they can be easily seen by the children and so they are able to immediately stop any inappropriate activity. This is best done with multiple staff members so individual staff are not subjected to unwarranted allegations. Protocols that address the variety of unusual circumstances possible during outdoor or off-site activities shall be established and made part of that program/activity's operating guidelines. Counselors in training, Jr Staff and volunteers should never supervise bathrooms.

b. **Ratio Expectations**

Camp Batawa has enacted the following age group ratios for programs 10 campers to 1 counsellor. Camp Batawa has established these ratios as minimums, not goals to achieve. Certain programs and activities require more stringent ratios, e.g., bike rides and hikes. Ratios alone do not equate to effective supervision, but if established ratios cannot be maintained the activity will be changed or additional staff members added.

c. **Program Audits**

Announced and unannounced audits will be conducted of all Camp Batawa programs. These audits will look directly at abuse prevention practices. The audits will be performed by individual organizations and organizational leadership with all programs audited by Camp Batawa leadership at least once yearly.

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d. **Regular Computer Audits**

The Employee Handbook should clearly outline the access that Camp Batawa will have to all messages, email, internet usage and the like. It should also clearly specify those internet sites that are unacceptable and let the employee know that they will be terminated if they are visiting those or similar sites. Camp Batawa should have systems in place to monitor and record all Internet usage and should audit this regularly to assure compliance with the standards.

e. **Field Trips**

The risks to youth change when they are off-site. To protect them from predators who may be at field trip locations, the following standards will be enacted:

- The ratio of students to staff will be reduced when programs go off-site. The appropriate ratio will be determined based on age of the youth and the field trip activity and location.
- Staff will check all bathrooms immediately prior to use by the children and will be in the restroom (if not single stall) when being used by a child.
- Children's changing of clothes should take place prior to leaving the Camp Batawa facility and if possible, should wait until the group has returned to minimize the use of changing facilities in public locations.
- Picking up of children while on field trips should only be allowed if prearranged and recipient should be required to show proof of ID and sign a receipt for the child.

f. **Special Needs Participants**

Special needs program participants are, indeed, more at risk than others and need to be more closely supervised to prevent peer-to-peer abuse and the staff supervising them needs to be more closely supervised to prevent a predator from taking advantage of their impairment to abuse them. All youth with special needs will be evaluated against our organization's eligibility requirement to determine if a youth and family can be safely served at Camp Batawa.

g. **Adult Member Expectations Around Children**

Adult Guests are expected to use decent language and act in a positive manner. Guests who talk in a sexual manner, perform sexual gestures, sexual acts, or attempt inappropriate contact with a child will have their access suspended or terminated depending on the degree of the offense. The police may be contacted, if warranted. No use of cameras or cell phones is allowed by guests in the washroom areas.

h. **Special Program Expectations**

The following Camp Batawa programs are recognized as needing specialized controls to reduce potential for abuse. While some of the already-recommended rules may not apply (you can't ban one-on-one contact in a mentoring program, for example), other rules (like feedback systems) need to be increased in intensity or frequency to balance the threats in these programs. Please refer to the abuse prevention strategies for these programs.

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- Mentoring for Counsellors and Leaders in training

i. **Safety Committee**

Batawa Ski Hill has established a safety committee that is responsible for a wide range of topics including child abuse prevention. This committee consists of staff as well as volunteers. The committee meets a minimum of quarterly to set goals and will report annually to the board on their progress.

j. **Departing Program**

- **Option # 2:** Youth will only be released to guardians listed on the approved pick-up list. Youth aged 13 and older may leave the program if their guardian has signed the Walking Waiver. They may also accompany their younger siblings. Once they leave programming, they may not return.

5) **Guardian Education**

a. **Organization Child Protection Policy**

At the start of every program, the Camp Batawa will provide its child protection policy to guardians. The child protection policy provides guardians with the supervision policy, outside contact policy, electronic communication policy and information on child abuse. Staff contact information will be on the document in case a guardian has questions, concerns, or observes a violation.

b. **Contact Information for Violation of Policies**

Camp Batawa will provide both male and female staff contacts that guardians can call in case of concern. Staff will receive training on responding to an allegation, child abuse warning signs, and Camp Batawa policies so they can effectively respond to concerns and questions. Staff will provide guardians with important questions to ask children on a regular basis to detect abuse concerns, e.g.

- i. Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
- ii. Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
- iii. Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?
- iv. Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like?

c. **Youth Education**

Youth participating in day camp, extended care, and teen programs will be informed of the policies staff have agreed to follow regarding physical contact, gift giving and outside contact.

6) **Responding to an Allegation**

a. **Reporting Suspicious Behavior to a Supervisor**

All staff members have received specific training concerning the requirement to

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report violations of Camp Batawa policies immediately to their supervisor. If the supervisor does not effectively respond, the staff members have been trained to notify the next level supervisor. Camp Batawa staff are expected to observe other staff members' behaviors, including that of supervisors, and to report any suspicions to that a supervisor.

b. Mandated Reporter

All Camp Batawa staff members are mandated reporters with regard to child abuse. Any evidence of potential child abuse or observation of inappropriate contact by a parent, staff member or other child will be reported to Highland Shores Children's Aid.

c. Suspension of Staff or Youthful Offender

Any Camp Batawa staff member who is alleged to have abused a child will be suspended with pay pending the outcome of an investigation by the Batawa Ski Hill and appropriate authorities. If the allegation is substantiated, the staff member will be terminated. If the allegation is against a program participant, they will be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation. Depending on the severity of the incident, the participant may be terminated from the program.

d. Incident Investigation

Batawa Ski Hill will perform an investigation following any allegation of child abuse by a staff member, participant, or guest. Batawa Ski Hill may utilize its insurance company, or other agencies to interview staff, witnesses and/or children.

e. Insurance Company Contact

Immediately after an allegation of abuse Batawa Ski Hill will notify its insurance company. The insurance company will be asked to render assistance with the investigation and other items. The following individuals are approved to contact the insurance company: General Manager, Camp Director. Only in the absence of all the above identified staff members should initial contact be made by any other Camp Batawa staff member.

f. Record Retention

Following an allegation against a staff member, their personnel file will be sealed and locked in. The file will have no items removed or added. It will only be moved from the locked location at the direction of the General Manager or Board of Directors.

g. Working with the Media

Batawa Ski Hill has enacted the media plan outlined in the organization's Crisis Management Plan. When the plan is enacted, only the individuals identified in the plan should speak with members of the media. Batawa Ski Hill will develop a media statement.



Appendix

1) Appendix 1

Statement on Abuse Prevention

Camp Batawa has a policy that we explain to each of our candidates. Camp Batawa is aware that there may be people who want to work or volunteer here for the wrong reasons. To prevent access to the youth we serve, we check every applicant's criminal history and speak with applicants about their character as well as job skills. We structure our programs so that no staff member or volunteer is ever left alone with a youth. We take all allegations, including those from youth, very seriously. We refer all allegations to the authorities for investigation, and we cooperate fully with any investigation. This thorough process not only protects the people in our care, but it also minimizes the potential for false allegations against staff members and volunteers. Do you have any questions about our policy?