

Procedures for Respectful Treatment – CFUW

All members, staff and volunteers are expected to uphold the CFUW Respectful Treatment policy. This procedure is written to provide information on steps that may be taken to ensure that the policy is followed within our organization. Failure to follow the policy may result in the actions described below. The procedure is presented in sections to address the different levels of operation in CFUW, but endeavors to apply the same actions at each level. At all levels of dealing with disrespectful behavior, it is important that they are done in a confidential manner.

There is a “Questions and Answers” section below which will help in clarifying the policy and procedures around respectful treatment. Although the wording for some of the questions has been formatted for clubs, the content can apply to all levels of our organization.

These procedures should not contravene any provincial legislation in regard to subject.

Appendix 1 contains is form that may be used to document incidents of disrespect.

When an instance of disrespectful behavior is identified:

Section 1: At the Club Level

1. A verbal warning from the Club President or other designated authority, in consultation with the club executive
2. A written warning from the Club President or other designated authority, in consultation with the club executive
3. Withdrawing the membership of the individual or disallowing the volunteer from working for the club. If this is done, it will be in writing by the Club President or other designated authority, in consultation with the club executive. A report of the incident must be sent to the appropriate next level in the organization as soon as possible (e.g. reports from clubs to RD and regional VP; regional/provincial bodies to national president; national bodies to HR Committee)
4. In the case of the behavior being that of the Club President, the Club Executive may decide to take the above three steps.
5. Regional Directors and Regional Vice Presidents are available to assist in this process.
6. If a person feels she/he has been wrongly accused of displaying disrespectful behavior as described in CFUW’s Respectful Treatment Policy, the individual may request help from a Regional VP in resolving the matter.

Section 2: At the Regional/Provincial Council Level

1. The first three steps as described above may be used by the President of the regional/provincial council with the reporting being sent to national president. The HR Committee is available to assist in this process.
2. In the case of the behavior being that of the Regional/Provincial President, the regional/provincial executive may decide to take the first three steps listed in Section 1.
3. In the case of the behavior being a member of a Regional/provincial committee, the Chair of the committee may decide to take the first three steps listed in Section 1.
4. If a person feels she/he has been wrongly accused of displaying disrespectful behavior as described in the CFUW’s Respectful Treatment Policy, the individual may request help from the HR Committee.

Section 3: At the National Board Level

1. The first three steps as described in Section 1 may be used by the President of the Board with the reporting being sent to the HR Committee.
2. The HR Committee is available to assist in this process.
3. In the case of the behavior being that of the President, advice should be sought from the Chair of the HR Committee and VP Communications & Governance. They may decide to take the first three steps listed in Section 1.
4. In the case of the behavior being that of a member of a national committee, the Chair of the committee may decide to take the first three steps listed in Section 1.
5. In the case of the behavior being a Chair of a national committee, the VP to whom she reports may decide to take the first three steps listed in Section 1.
5. If a person feels she has been wrongly accused of displaying disrespectful behavior as described in the CFUW's Respectful Treatment Policy, the individual may request help from the HR Committee.

An operational procedure for staff based on the same approach is available in the Personnel Binder.

Questions and Answers

1. What is a respectful organization?

A respectful organization is one that values:

- diversity and the human rights of others related to their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, any physical or mental disability and sexual orientation
- the dignity of the person
- courteous conduct
- mutual respect, fairness and equality
- positive communication between people
- collaborative working relationships

2. What is disrespectful behaviour?

Disrespectful behaviour includes, but is not limited to the following:

- offensive or inappropriate remarks, gestures, material or behaviour
- inappropriate jokes or cartoons including racial or ethnic slurs
- grouping or isolating (example: on race or ethnic origin)
- yelling or shouting
- belittling
- reprimanding in the presence of others
- aggressive or patronizing behaviour
- embarrassing or humiliating behaviour
- discrimination as defined under human rights legislation

- sexual harassment
- unwanted physical contact
- damaging gossip or rumours
- covert behaviour, i.e. inappropriately withholding information, undermining, underhandedness

3. To whom does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all club members, staff and volunteers. It applies to club meetings as well as to activities connected with the club such as travel, conferences, club related social gatherings and interest group settings and the many forms of written and spoken interactions (e.g. telephone calls ,emails). It applies to relationships and interactions between members, staff, volunteers and the general public.

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**Note: These following questions have been formatted for clubs, but the content does apply to all levels of our organization.**

### **4. How can club presidents and club executive ensure a respectful organization?**

**They can:**

- model respectful behaviour
- recognize and value diversity in the organization
- create an environment that supports the resolution of respectful organizational issues
- inform club members and volunteers that the organizational environment is one based on respect
- orient all members and volunteers to the organizations' respectful treatment policy
- monitor the club to ensure respectful behaviour is practiced

### **5. What are members' responsibilities?**

- treat others with respect
- set an example by respecting the dignity and human rights of all

- recognize and refrain from actions that offend, embarrass or humiliate others, whether deliberate or unintentional
- raise the issue of disrespectful conduct with the person displaying it or with a person in authority (club president) as soon as possible. If you witness disrespectful behaviour you may wish to approach the individuals involved
- do not make frivolous or vindictive allegations of disrespectful behaviour
- make every effort to resolve respectful treatment issues, where possible, in an informal manner

## **6. What is a club president's responsibility if an issue arises?**

A club president or designated authority, in consultation with the club executive, is responsible to take action immediately upon becoming aware of any situation involving disrespectful behaviour.

She will:

- recognize and address actions that offend, embarrass or humiliate others, whether deliberate or unintentional
- treat each situation as a serious matter
- manage the situation towards a resolution between the parties if possible, with a view to correcting behaviour and preserving long term relationships
- safeguard against further incidents
- provide support to members/volunteers who are experiencing the effects of disrespectful behaviour
- consult with the regional RD/VP if the situation cannot be resolved between the parties

## **7. What are the roles of the regional VP?**

Regional VPs in concert with the regional RDs have the following responsibilities:

- promote awareness of CFUW's Respectful Treatment Policy
- consult with and provide advice to club presidents
- receive complaints from club presidents and ensure appropriate action is initiated
- conduct investigations, as required
- work collaboratively with others involved

## **8. What should you do if you are accused of disrespectful behaviour?**

- attempt to resolve the situation by listening and trying to understand the concern
- be open to the other person's perspective. For example, something which you consider to be humorous might be offensive to someone else
- consider the impact of your actions on the other person
- be willing to make reasonable changes that could make a difference. Often a sincere apology and a commitment to refrain from disrespectful behaviour is sufficient to resolve the situation in an informal manner
- if necessary, seek assistance from your regional VP to mediate the issue.
- keep your involvement and nature of the complaint confidential

## **9. What can you do if you are treated in a disrespectful manner?**

Every situation is unique, but whenever possible, informal resolution of an issue as soon as possible is preferable. At all levels of dealing with disrespectful behaviour, it is important that these dealings are done in a confidential manner.

### Informal Process – Level 1 to 3

#### Level 1

Be proactive. Try to resolve the problem on your own. Do not wait until a recurrence or assume the problem will go away. Approach the member/volunteer who made you feel uncomfortable, explain how it affected you and ask them to stop. Do this calmly, respectfully, and in confidence. Often, a club member/volunteer may not be aware that her or his behaviour is offensive, and most will change the behaviour once they are aware of the problem. If another club member/volunteer approaches you regarding an issue of respect, careful listening, respectful discussion and honesty will often lead to a resolution.

#### Level 2

If you have attempted to resolve the problem without success or if you are not comfortable addressing the problem on your own, discuss the problem and possible solutions with your club president. If the problem is with the club president, contact one of the club executive members. Confidentiality considerations should be discussed and agreed upon.

#### Level 3

If for any reason you are unable to discuss the problem with your club president or club executive, other avenues are available to help you resolve the problem. You may contact your regional RD. In the case of the other levels of CFUW, go to your immediate higher in the chain of command. Whether a formal or informal process is used, members are encouraged to take notes which reflect, as much as possible, the dates, times, nature of the behaviour, any witnesses, and what was done. These notes will be useful for anyone assisting in resolving the problem.

#### **10. What is involved in a formal process?**

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved between the parties involved, with subsequent monitoring by the club president and club executive to ensure that there is no recurrence. However in situations where allegations are denied, an investigation may be required. An investigation generally includes the following:

- interviewing the person who has raised the concern
- interviewing witnesses
- meeting with the person alleged to have acted disrespectfully to present the complaint and hear the response determining the facts
- maintaining confidentiality amongst the individuals involved and within management
- providing findings to the national HR Committee
- recommending an appropriate response, which may include disciplinary action

#### **11. What support is available to VPs, RDs and Committee Chairs?**

The Human Resources Committee may provide support and can be contacted through the National Office.

#### **12. How should a club president or other designated authority communicate with the individual raising the concern and the person alleged to have committed the disrespectful behaviour?**

She will communicate with the individual raising the concern by:

- listening and taking the issue seriously
- discussing the process to be followed
- directing the individual to keep the matter confidential

- informing and supporting the individual throughout the process
- informing the individual of the investigative findings and actions taken by the club, ensuring the situation is documented appropriately (see Appendix 1 for the form). She will communicate with the person alleged to have committed the disrespectful behaviour by:
  - informing the person of the complaint
  - giving them an opportunity to respond to the allegations
  - discussing the process to be followed
  - directing them to keep the matter confidential
  - informing the person throughout the process
  - informing the person of the outcome of the investigation

### **13. Are complaints kept confidential?**

Club presidents and executive will keep the details of a complaint confidential to the best of their ability. However, confidentiality does not mean anonymity because witnesses may be involved.

### **14. What if a club member/volunteer makes a false allegation?**

If the investigation proves that the complaint was deliberately made for frivolous or vindictive reasons, the club member/volunteer making the false allegation is subject to action as decided by the club president or designated authority in consultation with the club executive. This does not apply to complaints made in good faith but which are not proven.

**DISRESPECTFUL INCIDENT FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ Informal Report

\_\_\_\_\_ Formal Report

Please note: Keep a copy of an Informal Report at the local level. A copy of a Formal Report should be sent to the Human Resources Committee This can be done by email. Send it to the Executive Director at National Office with Subject line: HR Committee Confidential with the documentation attached as Word documents. She will forward the email with attachments to the Chair of HR Committee.

WHAT HAPPENED? (objectively state details)

WHO WAS INVOLVED? (include names of parties involved and witnesses, if any)

WHEN AND WHERE DID THE INCIDENT TAKE PLACE (specify the specific location, date and time of incident)

WHAT REDRESS IS BEING SOUGHT

WHAT CONCLUSION WAS REACHED

NEXT STEPS, IF NECESSARY

REPORTING OFFICER

SIGNATURE-----DATE-----