

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VAUGHAN

CORPORATE POLICY

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

Section:	Recreation		
Effective Date:	September 22, 2025	Date of Last Review:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Approval Authority: Council		Policy Owner: DCM, Community Services	

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Vaughan (the “City”) is committed to ensuring a respectful environment, free from harassment and discrimination throughout all its recreational facilities and programming. The City will not tolerate or condone Discrimination, Harassment, Violence, Verbal Abuse or Vandalism.

The principles which guide the City in promoting respectful recreation spaces are as follows:

1. The City recognizes that the most effective way to deal with Harassment and Discrimination is through action, including education, awareness and, if required, investigation.
2. The City will promote a diverse, equal and inclusive environment.
3. The City will take all reasonable steps to provide a healthy and safe environment, free from any form of Discrimination or Harassment.
4. The City is committed to an environment that respects the dignity, self-worth and human rights of every person.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure an inclusive and respectful environment within City-operated Recreation Facilities and programming. This Policy:

1. Establishes a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals using or working in City-operated Recreation Facilities.

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

2. Aims to prevent and address any form of Abuse, Discrimination, Harassment, Vandalism or Violence including Sexual Violence in City-operated Recreation Facilities.
3. Ensures the provision of essential information, training, and tools to all Employees.
4. Promotes the importance of positive behaviours in City-operated Recreation Facilities.
5. Works in cooperation with other Stakeholders and the public to foster and support the prevention and response to Abuse, Discrimination, Harassment, Vandalism or Violence including Sexual Violence in City-operated Recreation Facilities.
6. Seeks to hold accountable and obtain restitution and reclaim damage cost from parties responsible.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all City of Vaughan Employees (permanent, full-time, part-time, contract, seasonal, and temporary), students and interns, volunteers, contractors, visitors and participants at City-operated Recreational Facilities. This policy applies in all verbal and/or written communications.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

1. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
2. Human Rights Code (the “Code”)
3. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (the “AODA”)
4. Trespass to Property Act
5. Young Offenders Act
6. Criminal Code of Canada
7. Occupational Health and Safety Act (the “OHSA”)
8. Age of Majority and Accountability Act

DEFINITIONS

1. **Appeal Process:** The appeal process is a formal procedure that allows individuals, who have been subject to a decision or penalty under this Policy, to challenge the decision. Appeals must be submitted within 30 days from notification of Suspension from Programs or Trespass Ban.

2. City-Operated Recreation Facilities:

- 2.1. Indoor and outdoor pools
- 2.2. Community Centres, recreation spaces,
- 2.3. Parks, playgrounds, and splash pads
- 2.4. Arenas & outdoor rinks
- 2.5. Heritage buildings, theatre and Vaughan Studios & Event Space
- 2.6. Outdoor sports fields
- 2.7. Leased space for programs operated and/or under the direction and control of the City.

3. Inappropriate Behaviour: Inappropriate behaviour means conduct that is unwarranted and is reasonably interpreted to be demeaning or offensive. Persistent, repeated inappropriate behaviour can become a form of harassment and thereby become disruptive.

4. Level 1, 2,3 Offences: Describes the types and severity of behaviours outlined in this Policy:

- **Level 1 Offence:** Minor offences that include Inappropriate Behaviour, Harassment, smoking or vaping in facilities, foul language, rough or boisterous play or minor scuffles that could lead to injury, misuse of emergency exits, non-threatening obscene gestures, and not following rules in City-operated Recreation Facilities.
- **Level 2 Offence:** Escalated or repeated Level 1 incidents and can include verbal assault, discrimination, sexual harassment, threatening behaviour, deliberate damage to facilities, and trespassing at City-operated Recreation Facilities.
- **Level 3 Offence:** Serious violations such as escalation from lower-level incidents, criminal activities including hate crimes, physical and Sexual Violence, robbery, drug and alcohol-related infractions, and possession of weapons.

5. Minor: Has the same meaning as set out in the *Age of Majority and Accountability Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.7, which currently defines a minor as any person under the age of eighteen years.

6. People Leader: Means a senior team member responsible for the development, engagement and performance of City provided recreational services. Provides effective people leadership and guidance to ensure consistent service delivery, conflict resolution, and adherence to corporate policies, customer service standards, and health and safety regulations under the OHSA.

7. “Respectful Workplace Policy (Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination/Harassment)” applicable definitions:

7.1 Code-Based Harassment: *engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome based on one or more of the Prohibited Grounds set out in the Code.*

7.2 Discrimination: *is any practice or behaviour, whether intentional or not, which has a negative impact on an individual or group based on a protected ground set out in the Code by excluding, denying benefits, or imposing burdens upon them. Discrimination may arise as a result of differential treatment, or it may result from treating a group of people in the same way that results in unequal treatment.*

7.3 Employee: *includes a City employee, contracted vendors, student, intern, or volunteer.*

7.4 Harassment or Non-Code-Based Harassment: *engaging in a pattern or a course of vexatious comment or conduct directed toward an individual or group, that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment includes sexual harassment as defined below. Harassment also includes creating or contributing to a poisoned work environment as defined below. Harassment includes offensive comments or jokes; intimidation, threats, bullying or aggressive behaviour; inappropriate staring; or conduct such as isolation or avoidance because of a person’s race, sex, disability, gender identity or other prohibited ground. Single acts of sufficient severity may constitute harassment. Provisions regarding harassment are included in both the Code, referred to as “Code-based Harassment,” and HSA, referred to as non-Code-based Harassment*

7.5 Prohibited Grounds: *For behaviour to be considered discrimination or harassment under the Code, the comment or conduct must be directed toward one of these aspects of a person’s background: age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, record of offences, sex, or sexual orientation.*

7.6 Sexual Harassment: *is a form of discrimination based on the prohibited ground of sex under the Code and form of harassment under OHSA. Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against an employee in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the employee where the person making the solicitation or the advance knows or ought reasonably to*

know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome. Sexual relationships between a person in a position of power and a subordinate employee may also be considered sexual harassment or a poisoned work environment when the person in power can confer, grant or deny benefits or advancement, or otherwise influence the subordinate employee's employment.

- 8. Supervisor:** An individual who holds a position of authority in Recreation Services and is responsible for assigning and directing the work of other employees. The Supervisor reports to People Leader.
- 9. Suspension from Programs:** A suspension from programs is a temporary removal or prohibition of an individual from a specific program or membership service.
- 10. Trespass Ban:** An escalation of the progressive discipline process in which a formal trespass notice prohibiting access to City-operated Recreation facilities is provided.
- 11. Vandalism:** Vandalism is mischief which the *Criminal Code* defines as conduct that:
 - 11.1 Destroys or damages property.
 - 11.2 Renders property dangerous, useless, inoperative, or ineffective.
 - 11.3 Obstructs, interrupts or interferes with the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property; or
 - 11.4 Obstructs, interrupts, or interferes with any person in the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property.
- 12. Verbal Warning:** A verbal warning is an early resolution step in which staff seek to educate the public and convey the expectation verbally, indicating that certain behaviour is in contravention of the Safe Recreation Policy.
- 13. Violence:** Any exercise of or attempt to exercise physical force by a person, that causes or could cause physical injury, or a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a person to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against a person that could cause physical injury to a person. Includes Sexual Violence. Examples of violence may include:
 - 13.1 Throwing articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner with the intent to cause personal injury, or property damage.
 - 13.2 Physical intimidation or striking of another individual.
 - 13.3 Attempts to incite violence in others.
 - 13.4 All unwanted physical contact including inappropriate touching, sexual assault.

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

14. “Workplace Violence Policy” applicable definition:

14.1 Sexual Violence: Any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person’s consent and includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation.

15. Written Warning: A written warning is formal documentation provided by staff detailing the behaviour or actions that are inappropriate, as per examples provided in the policy.

POLICY

The City is committed to providing an environment that respects the dignity, self-worth and human rights of every individual. As such, all visitors to City-Operated Recreation Facilities must act in a manner that upholds a safe, healthy and respectful environment, free from Violence, Harassment and Discrimination.

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Users/ Patrons

- 1.1.1. Ensure conduct is always in line with the Policy while utilizing City-operated Recreation Facilities. This includes respecting other patrons and staff, adhering to facility rules, and avoiding any actions that are contrary to the Policy.
- 1.1.2. Follow all guidelines and instructions given by Recreation staff regarding safety and proper use of City-operated Recreation Facilities.
- 1.1.3. Promptly report to Recreation Services any observed or experienced Inappropriate Behaviour.
- 1.1.4. Promptly report unsafe conditions to City staff.

1.2 Employees:

- 1.2.1 Notify their Supervisor and complete the necessary documentation when they are a witness to, or are aware of, a Policy violation.

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

1.2.2 To be aware of this Policy and fully cooperate in any investigation.

1.3 Supervisor:

1.3.1 Promote a respectful environment, free from Violence, Harassment and Discrimination for staff and the public. This duty includes the obligation to be familiar with and uphold this Policy and related procedure.

1.3.2 Reporting incidents immediately to People Leaders.

1.4 People Leaders:

1.4.1 Take all reasonable steps to promote a respectful environment, free from Violence, Harassment and Discrimination for staff and the public. This duty includes the obligation to be familiar and uphold this Policy and related Procedure, including the responsibility of training Employees on its implementation.

1.4.2 Lead by example by not tolerating, engaging in, or condoning Violence, Discrimination or Harassment or other violations of this Policy.

1.4.3 Reporting incidents immediately to the Human Resources department, where an incident of Violence involves an Employee.

1.5 Recreation Supervisors, Community Centres:

1.5.1 Responsible for responding to Level 1 incidents.

1.5.2 Report Level 2 and 3 incidents to the Recreation Manager, Community Centres.

1.5.3 Provide guidance on this Policy and Procedure to Employees.

1.5.4 Investigate and apply this Policy as appropriate, where the incident does not involve an Employee. Where an Employee is involved, Human Resources department should be notified.

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

- 1.5.5 When necessary, consult with the Manager, Inclusion and Community Outreach for Code-Based Harassment.
- 1.5.6 Involve the City Solicitor or their designated Legal Counsel if the incident relates to a legal or anticipated legal proceeding, including (for example) a civil or Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claim, or a Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario application. Report critical injury or work refusal incidents immediately to the Human Resources department.

1.6 Recreation Manager Community Centres:

- 1.6.1 Responsible for responding to Level 3 incidents.
- 1.6.2 Report Level 3 incidents to the Director of Recreation Services and to the Office of the City Solicitor
- 1.6.3 Actively involved in the investigation process, if the incident does not involve an Employee.
- 1.6.4 Provide guidance on the administration of this Policy and the Procedure.

1.7 Director of Recreation Services:

- 1.7.1 Responsible for the administration of all Appeals.

2. CONSEQUENCES

2.1 The consequences are at the discretion of the City of Vaughan and may vary depending on offence severity and/or repeat offences by an individual. Inappropriate actions and behaviours towards staff will be treated as more severe.

- 2.1.1 Level 1: A verbal warning to the offender indicating that the behaviour is inappropriate.
- 2.1.2 Level 2: A letter of reprimand to the offender or a Suspension from Programs or Trespass Ban.
- 2.1.3 Level 3: A Suspension or a Trespass Ban.

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

Nothing in this Policy limits the authority of City staff to take enforcement action under applicable City by-laws.

3. APPEAL PROCESS

3.1 If a patron disagrees with a consequence/decision, including but not limited to Suspensions or Trespass Bans, they may file an Appeal within 30 days.

3.1.1 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Director of Recreation Services.

3.1.2 The Director of Recreation Services will consider the grounds of the appeal and any additional evidence or statements provided by the appellant.

3.1.3 The decision of the Director of Recreation Services is final and cannot be appealed further and will be communicated to the appellant in writing.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES

4.1 This Policy aligns with the City of Vaughan Workplace Violence Policy 13.C.03. and the Respectful Workplace Policy – 13.C.01 and Procedures.

4.2 In the event of a conflict between this Policy and the Workplace Violence Policy or Respectful Workplace Policy, the Workplace Violence Policy and Respectful Workplace Policy will prevail.

ADMINISTRATION

Administered by the Office of the City Clerk.

Review Schedule:	5 Years If other, specify here	Next Review Date:	September 22, 2030
Related Policy(ies):	13.C.03 Respectful Workplace, 13.C.03 Workplace Violence, 13.C.01 Respectful Workplace, HR-11 Occupational Health and Safety, 13.A.02 Employee Code of Conduct, RC-001 Alcohol Policy for Community Centres and Parks ,01.C.01 Accessibility		
Related By-Law(s):			
Procedural Document:	PRC.55 – Safe Recreation		

Revision History

POLICY TITLE: SAFE RECREATION

POLICY NO.: 18.C.05

Date:	Description:
22-Sep-25	Approved at Council. Report No. 28 Item No. 11
Click or tap to enter a date.	
Click or tap to enter a date.	
Click or tap to enter a date.	
Click or tap to enter a date.	