

	<b>Policy:</b> <b>Protecting Vulnerable People</b>	
	<b>Prepared by:</b> <b>Policy Committee</b>	<b>Date Prepared:</b> <b>October 16, 2013</b>
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	<b>Approved by:</b> <b>Board of Directors</b>  <hr/> <b>Chair</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>  <b>January 16, 2020</b>
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## **Protecting Vulnerable People**

### **Purpose**

Westben has a duty of care towards vulnerable persons. In addition, many funders require arts organizations to develop a safe programming policy and practices that should include a process to protect vulnerable participants.

### **Definitions**

A vulnerable person is defined in Canada's Criminal Records Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-47) as:

*a person who, because of his or her age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent,*

*(a) is in a position of dependency on others; or*

*(b) is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of trust or authority towards them.*

This includes children, youth, senior citizens, people with physical, developmental, social, emotional or other disabilities, as well as people who are victims of crime or harm. The vulnerable condition may be temporary or permanent.

### **Responsibilities**

Westben's Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented. This responsibility will be exercised by the designated board member having lead responsibility for Health and Safety, reporting to the Board of Directors. The designated board member will be responsible for applying and maintaining the policy as described below.

To establish a safe environment in which vulnerable persons can attend, learn, develop, and participate in Westben events and activities, the Health and Safety Lead will ensure that Westben Management:

1. Creates an environment where vulnerable people feel secure, are encouraged to participate and are listened to.
2. Clearly identifies people in the organization who can be contacted by vulnerable people if they have concerns about the organization.
3. Ensures that staff and volunteers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the organization for the protection of vulnerable persons.

To raise awareness of protection issues for vulnerable persons amongst staff and volunteers, Westben Management will:

1. Ensure that all staff and volunteers know the name of the designated board member responsible for this policy.
2. Ensure staff and volunteer training/orientation covers Westben's ethical behavior expectations (Code of Conduct) and the special challenges working with the vulnerable sector.
3. Ensure that staff and volunteers know their role in promoting and ensuring a secure environment.
4. Post a copy of this policy on the Westben web site. Paper copies of the policy will be supplied to anyone on request.

To practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who may work with persons in the vulnerable sector, Westben Health and Safety Lead will:

1. Recognize the potential danger of recruiting new staff and volunteers without knowing their background.
2. Ensure that a rigorous recruitment process is conducted for staff and volunteers, including personal interviews and reference checks.
3. Assess the role of each staff member and volunteer to determine the level of risk related to exposure to vulnerable persons as follows:
  - a. High Risk: unsupervised contact with vulnerable persons

Those staff and volunteers who are deemed to be at high risk will be screened to determine their suitability for working with vulnerable people by undergoing a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC). Such roles include:

Artistic and Managing Director  
Advancement and Marketing Director  
Business Manager  
Digital Marketing Engagement Manager  
Production Coordinator  
On-site Coordinator  
Technical Associate  
Temporary and part-time staff e.g. students  
Any staff working in children's programs

- teachers
- billeters
- nurses
- volunteer coordinators

Those individuals required to provide a satisfactory VSC will submit the form to the Artistic and Managing Director, who will, in consultation with the designated board member, review to determine suitability for working with vulnerable persons. The form will be maintained in a confidential manner, locked in a secure location, in accordance with the protection of privacy of personal information requirements.

b. Medium risk: supervised contact with vulnerable persons

Those staff and volunteers who are deemed to be at medium risk will require Police Background Checks. Such individuals include volunteers not listed in a. who have supervised contact with vulnerable persons or who may handle money.

c. Low risk: minimal or no contact with vulnerable persons

Those staff and volunteers who are deemed to be at low risk have no requirement for any police checks. Such individuals include volunteers who have minimal or no contact with vulnerable persons.

Any additional roles will be assessed as they are created.

4. Ensure that subsequent to providing a satisfactory VSC, high risk staff and volunteers sign an annual declaration affirming that they have not been charged with any criminal offence since their last check. Those with a significant gap in service (12 months) will be required to produce a new VSC. Similarly, subsequent to providing a satisfactory Police Background Check, medium risk staff and volunteers will sign an annual declaration affirming that they have not been charged with any criminal offence since their last check.

To develop and then implement procedures for preventing, identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse, the Board will ensure that:

1. The Board has a designated member who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
2. All staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to be alert to the signs of suspected abuse at Westben and for referring any concerns to the designated board member.
3. Westben seeks the guidance of the local authorities when necessary;
4. the designated board member maintains effective links with relevant agencies and co-operates as appropriate with their enquiries regarding vulnerable sector protection matters.
5. Westben Management keeps written records of reports of suspected abuse. Any such records are confidential and kept securely in a locked location.
6. Westben Management develops and then follows procedures where an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer.