Kirkland Parks & Community Services Department Participant Safety Policy

The purpose of the Kirkland Parks & Community Services (PCS) Department Participant Safety Policy is to help ensure the safety of PCS participants, including those under 18 years of age ("children" or "child" in the singular) and vulnerable adults as defined by RCW 74.34.020, (collectively referred to as "vulnerable person(s)") by stipulating the proper qualifications, training and requirements for the PCS staff and volunteers who manage and operate PCS facilities and programs.

Applicability

The PCS Participant Safety Policy applies to the following individuals:

Employees

All PCS Employees (full-time, part-time, on-call, year-round contingent and seasonal) are responsible for the welfare of vulnerable persons and may come into direct contact with vulnerable persons, including, but not limited to:

- Director, Deputy Director, Managers, Supervisors, Coordinators, Program Assistants, Parks Grounds Persons, Senior Grounds, Lead Grounds, Administrative Assistant, Office Specialists, Account Associate, Instructors, Summer Camp staff, Program Leads, Sports Officials, Lifeguards, Water Safety Instructors, Facility Attendants, and all Seasonals and Interns.

Contractors

PCS Vendors, Concessionaires and Personal Services Contractors who provide services to or come into contact with vulnerable persons, including:

- Program Instructors
- Summer Camp Vendors
- Park Vendors and Concessionaires

Volunteers

PCS Volunteers (ages 18 yrs. and older) who are volunteering to assist with programs, serving as a volunteer lead or ongoing volunteer and who come into contact with vulnerable persons, except the exemptions below.

Exemptions

The following individuals and groups are exempt from the category of PCS Volunteer:

- One-time event volunteers, such as, but not limited to, Green Kirkland Partnership 1-day restoration events or park community clean-up events.
- Independent organizations and their associates **visiting** or **renting** PCS facilities, not associated with a PCS-operated program or event (i.e., a public or group event involving vulnerable persons and conducted in a facility or park by an organization). Examples include special event organizers, sports organizations or other non-profit groups engaged in a permitted activity.

It is noted that those individuals and groups exempt from this PCS Policy still have a responsibility for the safety of vulnerable persons as provided in all applicable state and federal laws.

Never Be Alone With a Vulnerable Person Rule
It is the intent of this PCS Participant Safety Policy that at no time shall a vulnerable person be alone in the presence of only one adult during a PCS-operated program or activity. Private, one-on-one contact between an employee, contractor or volunteer and a vulnerable person is prohibited at all times except as provided for below.

All employees, contractors or volunteers interacting with vulnerable persons should ensure that the interactions are done with another adult present or are in a publicly visible location where other adults can see them (e.g., lobby of the community center). City staff will provide training on various practices to help ensure adherence to this rule.

If personal contact with a vulnerable person is necessary for some reason, it should be in full view of other adults and/or vulnerable persons. An exception would be a circumstance where a vulnerable person's safety were in jeopardy by a lack of action as a result of following this rule, such as finding a lost or injured vulnerable person.

PCS Hiring
Background checks will be required by Human Resources and PCS when a job offer (employee, contractor or volunteer) is made. All offers are conditional pending the results of the background check. Additionally, obtaining at least two references is required.

Any break in service will require all clearance documents to be updated.

Each employee, contractor or volunteer will be required to read and sign the Code of Conduct for Programs.

Reporting Violations or Suspicious Behavior
In order to help maintain a safe environment for vulnerable persons, PCS employees, contractors and volunteers must be aware of each individual's responsibility to report *any* questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is or reasonably may be a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate or suspicious behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor or any PCS supervisory or managerial staff.

Consequences of Prohibited or Harmful Act
Any person accused of violating this policy, the Code of Conduct for Programs, or any act considered to be harmful to a vulnerable person, will be immediately placed on leave from duty with PCS in order to maintain safety during any review or investigation. This leave will continue during any review or investigation by City officials, law enforcement or other appropriate oversight agency.

Any person found to have violated this policy or the Code of Conduct for Programs will be removed from future participation as a staff member, contractor or volunteer in all activities and programming with PCS. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment from PCS.

Failure to report a violation of this policy or the Code of Conduct for Programs is grounds for discipline up to and including termination of an employee or dismissal of a contractor or volunteer.

Mandatory State Reporting

Washington State Law, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 26.44 requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to Child Protective Services (CPS) or appropriate law enforcement agency.

RCW 74.34 requires that any person having cause to believe a vulnerable adult has been abandoned, abused, exploited, or neglected, or experiencing self-neglect must make a report to Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Adult Protective Services (APS) or appropriate law enforcement agency.

PCS prefers individuals to whom these policies apply to report suspicions of abuse or neglect to an immediate supervisor or any PCS supervisory or managerial staff, who will then pursue the mandatory state reporting. However, in no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate CPS, APS or law enforcement agency.

Lynn Zwaagstra, Director 10/26/26

Kirkland Parks & Community Services Department Code of Conduct for Programs

All Kirkland employees, contractors and volunteers of the Kirkland Parks & Community Services (PCS) Department who participate in programs must follow the Code of Conduct for Programs below, in addition to any program-specific procedures for working with vulnerable persons, including those under 18 years of age, and vulnerable adults as defined by RCW 74.34.020, that are in place for that particular program.

As an authorized employee, or contractor or volunteer working in programs for vulnerable persons, I hereby agree as follows:

- I will always maintain appropriate physical boundaries. Brief, encouraging forms of personal contact such as high fives, shoulder pats, fist bumps or side hugs is considered appropriate.
- I will adhere to the Never Be Alone With A Vulnerable Person Rule.
- I will not meet with vulnerable persons alone outside of established program locations or outside of established times without parents or guardians present.
- I will not invite vulnerable persons to my home or other private location or accept their invitations for the same unless provided with authorization by a parent/guardian.
- I will not touch or speak to a vulnerable person in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- I will not make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or allow vulnerable persons to access sexually explicit materials.
- I will not engage or allow vulnerable persons to engage me in romantic or sexual conversations.
- I will not engage in private communications with vulnerable persons to include communications via text messaging, e-mail, phone, internet chat, on-line games, or other forms of social media. Communicating with these methods is authorized if there is a programmatic purpose and/or the communication is issued to a group of individuals.
- I will not accept or give personal gifts to vulnerable persons without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.
- I will not inflict any physical or emotional abuse on vulnerable persons to include, but not limited to, striking, humiliating, ridiculing, or degrading.
- I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with vulnerable persons.

- I will not provide or knowingly allow vulnerable persons to possess or consume alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
- I will not use profanity, vulgarity, or harassing language in the presence of vulnerable persons at any time.
- I will not provide transportation to vulnerable persons unless doing so is an acknowledged component of the program. When transporting vulnerable persons, more than one volunteer or program staff must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple vulnerable persons will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation.
- I will immediately report any reasonable suspicion or knowledge of abuse of a vulnerable person to PCS supervisory or managerial staff who can take immediate action.

Employee Signature: _____ Date:_____