

Abuse Prevention Policy

Location: HTOR, Henrietta, NY
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Documented by: Education Secretary
Approved by: EC President & BoT Chair

Hindu Temple of Rochester, 120 Pinnacle Road, Pittsford, NY 14534

1.0 Purpose

This policy establishes how Hindu Temple of Rochester (HTOR) intends to prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and youth by its paid employees and volunteers in Category 1 who come in regular contact with the children and youth.

HTOR always has and continues to seek to create a welcoming and nurturing environment and has zero tolerance for those whose actions may jeopardize the safety, health or innocence of a minor by their actions classified as abuse. See below for Definitions.

Any suggestions for changes or improvements to this Policy should be submitted to the Education Secretary.

2.0 Definitions

Abuse - Abuse can be broken down into the following subtypes at HTOR, all of which are prohibited within the scope of this policy.

- Physical abuse – Injury inflicted on a minor
- Sexual abuse – Contact or activity of a sexual nature between an adult and a minor

Minor: Person under the age of 18

Category 1 Volunteer – Is a volunteer who while performing their assigned duties at the temple comes in contact with a minor.

3.0 Policy Guidelines

Structural Guidelines for Programs

All HTOR programs are designed to encourage safe interaction between employees and minor. The following guidelines are meant to keep established safeguards effective.

- All new educational or youth programs need EC approval before implementation.
- Parents have the responsibility to arrange for transportation. Employee or Category 1 volunteer will not transport the minor without the permission (written or via e-mail) of the parent.
- Unacceptable abuse related behavior has been defined as part of this policy and all employees and Category 1 volunteers need to abide by it. They will agree in writing that they have read and abide by the unacceptable behavior items listed.
- The current category 1 volunteers and employees have been grandfathered and will not be subject to any screening or background checks.
- The screening guidelines have been established for the new hires and new Category 1 volunteers.
- HTOR will maintain a file where the records of agreement by affected employees and category 1 volunteers that they have read the HTOR abuse prevention policy and record of any disciplinary action taken.

3.1 Hiring Guidelines - New Employees and Category 1 Volunteers:

Personnel Screenings

Safeguards in the hiring process will be used to eliminate from consideration any candidates who display characteristics that could classify them at a high risk for violating this policy. The required screenings and background information will depend on the positions and its level of involvement with minor.

For New Employees who work with or around a minor:

Candidates for positions that involve interaction with minor may be subject to screening and selected using the following:

- Standard HTOR employment application that includes signed authorization to perform necessary background checks
- In-person interview of the candidate
- Driving records and any applicable certification if the position requires the transportation of children
- Reference checks

If it is warranted after the above screening and based on the position being filled, additional checks prior to selection may include:

- Criminal background checks in any and all states where the candidate has lived in the past seven years
- Sexual offender registry checks in any and all states where the candidate has lived for the last seven years

All information collected about a candidate will be reviewed and used to determine if they are appropriate for the respective position. If hired, all information collected during the hiring process will be included in the employee's permanent file, which will be maintained over the course of their employment with HTOR.

Personnel screenings are required regardless of current employment status with HTOR. HTOR employees seeking to transfer into a position that involves working with minor must undergo the same review process as new hires.

Category 1 Volunteers who work with minors:

Category 1 Candidates for positions that involve contact with minor will be screened and selected using the following:

- In-person interview of the candidate
- Must make 2 reference checks preferably from the current volunteer teachers or HTOR members of long standing.

4.0 Unacceptable Conduct

4.1 Current Employees & Volunteer category 1:

The current employees ,BOT, EC and category 1 volunteers will be grandfathered. See attached list of the grandfathered employees and grandfathered Category 1 volunteers. However, they have to read and certify that they have read the following General Conduct policy guidelines of HTOR.

4.2 HTOR General Conduct Policy:

The following behavior is considered unacceptable:

- Use of harsh or inappropriate language, degrading punishment or any type of restraining device in the name of behavior management.
- Participation in or allowing others to engage in any form of hazing.
- Having any sexual contact with minor.
- Dressing, undressing, showering or bathing with or in the presence of minor.
- Use of physical punishment in any form.
- Inappropriate advances of sexual nature, including by electronic communications, text, social media and emails

- Inappropriate touching such as tickling, physical horseplay, lap sitting (Appropriate touching are high fives, fist bumps and pats on shoulder)
- No sleeping is allowed with minor. Employees can sleep in open areas with minor as long as the area is large enough for the employee to have their own defined sleeping areas and other employees are also present.
- No discussion of their own sexual history, preferences or fantasies or use of illicit sexually oriented materials or pornographic materials while in the company of minor.
- No bringing to the HTOR premises any weapons, guns, drugs, or harmful materials such as knives etc.

HTOR reserves the right to take disciplinary action against employees and volunteers whose actions are found to be inappropriate as listed above. Furthermore, HTOR is committed to following the NY state and federal and legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of child abuse to appropriate law enforcement agencies and child protection services.

Report any suspicious sexual abuse incidents at the HTOR premises to BOT member-

The copy of this will be maintained in the employee folder by the Treasurer.

Agreement

If you have any uncertainty or questions regarding the content of this policy, you should consult the Education Secretary. This should be done prior to signing and agreeing to the HTOR Abuse Prevention Policy. I have read and understand HTOR's Abuse Prevention Policy and agree to abide by its terms and conditions throughout the course of my employment and/or category 1 volunteer work. Furthermore I will report any violations if these come to my knowledge based on factual evidence. The copy of this agreement will be maintained in the Employee folder by the Treasurer.

Employee Signature/ Category 1 Volunteer

Date

() Employee

() Category 1 volunteer

Attachment: Grandfathered list

