

GOOD NEIGHBOUR POLICY

Providing affordable accommodation for low income
and disadvantaged single people

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of St Kilda Community Housing Ltd (SCH) to create, foster and support positive relationships between our residents with neighbours and local communities. The policy intends to balance the rights of tenants with the rights of neighbours and also sets out how SCH will respond to antisocial behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to all residents and their visitors who live in properties owned and/or managed by SCH. It also applies to neighbours, property owners and stakeholders of SCH properties.

Principles

SCH is committed to:

- Creating homes where people want to live
- Facilitating sustainable tenancies
- Fostering a safe and secure environment for all residents
- Working in line with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- Working in line with the rooming house provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act (1997)*
- Responding promptly to allegations of anti-social behaviour to ensure the safety of all residents

Policy Statement

SCH is committed to sustaining tenancies and maintaining harmonious communities. Under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (Vic)* all residents have a right to a quiet enjoyment of their premises. This policy outlines the process for managing complaints about antisocial behaviour of any SCH resident.

Antisocial behaviour can be defined broadly as, acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to one or more people in a neighbouring household. Examples of issues that could interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of tenants and neighbours include:

- Physical assaults and acts of violence
- Verbal abuse or other threatening behaviour
- Using, causing or permitting the property to be used for any illegal purpose
- Damaging and vandalising property
- Excessive and persistent noise
- Retaliatory disputes between households
- Loud and unruly behaviour

SCH also commits to building respectful, positive and constructive relationships with neighbours and, where the opportunity exists for neighbours to learn about our work, to contribute to an improved understanding of the issues that affect our tenants and community housing generally.

Expectations of SCH residents for being a good neighbour

The behaviour expected of tenants in being 'good neighbours', is demonstrated primarily through:

- Respecting people's rights and privacy and quiet enjoyment of their tenancy
- Being responsible for their actions and those of their visitors
- Respecting communal areas
- Being considerate and tolerant of others
- Keeping noise to a minimum
- Respect other people's privacy
- Keeping property clean and tidy
- Residents abide by the house rules
- Ensuring the rented property is not used for an illegal purpose

What SCH will do for dealing with neighbour related issues

SCH will provide opportunities to promote a positive relationship between neighbours and the ability to resolve issues or problems if they arise. SCH does this through; prevention, response and resolution.

Prevention

SCH is committed to preventing instances of antisocial behaviour and promoting harmonious communities by:

- Managing housing to a high quality
- Managing housing locally
- Providing a responsive service
- Match residents to the property
- Social meals delivered at the properties on a monthly basis
- Housing Managers visit the properties on a daily basis
- Housing Managers conduct regular house meeting with residents
- Conduct six monthly property inspections
- City of Port Phillip Health Department conduct annual inspections of the rooming houses
- Residents read and sign house rules at the beginning of a tenancy
- Responsive internal maintenance service
- SCH involved in sector network meetings

Application

SCH takes appropriate action following any reports of antisocial behaviour or interference with quiet enjoyment. SCH takes all reports of antisocial behaviour seriously and investigates them.

- Encourage residents to resolve tenancy issues in the first instance where safe and practical
- Ask residents to document any incident of anti-social behaviour and report to the housing manager
- Interview residents, neighbours and other witnesses to gain an understanding of the issue

Breach of Duty Notice, Order of Compliance, Order of Possession and Eviction

Where there is evidence and legal reason to do so, the Housing Managers may issue a Breach of Duty Notice to a resident, if there is a breach of the RTA or House Rules. Another breach under the same section may result in an application for an Order of Compliance at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

If a resident breaches the Order of Compliance, SCH may issue a Notice to Vacate (NTV) and make an application to VCAT for an Order of Possession. Where future breaches occur, SCH may purchase a warrant of possession. The support worker of the resident would be informed of any breach notices. The Human rights of the resident is taken into consideration throughout the process. A Human rights Impact Assessment form is completed and approved by SCH Senior Manager prior to a Warrant of Possession being applied for. The purpose of this form is to ensure that a resident's human rights were considered prior to eviction.

SCH will issue an Immediate Notice to leave to a resident for a serious act of violence by a resident at a property. SCH also encourages residents or witnesses to contact the police immediately. SCH will liaise, work with and assist police if there is illegal or violent activity occurring at a property and will provide CCTV footage to Police, if required. SCH will complete a critical incident report.

Legislation and standards

This policy implements the obligations of SCH under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the SCH website at www.stkch.org.au

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