

Good Neighbour Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach St Kilda Community Housing (SCH) takes 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 responds to antisocial behaviour.

Scope

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

Policy Statement

SCH is committed to sustaining tenancies and maintaining harmonious communities, including with neighbours.

SCH is guided by the following principles:

- A fair and consistent process
- Responding in a timely manner
- Clear and transparent communication between all parties
- A zero-tolerance approach to violence or threatening behaviour.
- Relevant privacy legislation
- Meeting all obligations under the ***Residential Tenancies Act 1997***.

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

Antisocial behaviour

Under the ***Residential Tenancies Act 1997*** all residents have a right to the quiet enjoyment of their premises. This includes taking responsibility for the behaviour of their visitors.

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, such as distributing or selling illicit drugs.
- Damaging and vandalising property
- Excessive and persistent noise
- Retaliatory disputes between households
- Loud and unruly behaviour
- Not having pets under control (where pet ownership has been approved by SCH)

Minimising antisocial behaviour

SCH is committed to preventing instances of antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood fatigue by:

- Managing housing to a high quality
- Managing housing locally
- Matching residents to the property
- Promoting social cohesion through the Social Meals Program
- Housing Managers visiting the properties on a daily basis to learn about and deal with issues as they arise.

- Housing Managers conducting regular house meeting with residents.
- Conducting six monthly property inspections
- Ensuring residents read, understand and sign the house rules at the beginning of a tenancy.
- Promoting community harmony by keeping the local community informed about SCH, its activities and its residents through a variety of different formats, including council newsletters, local news media and community events.

Responding to antisocial behaviour

SCH takes appropriate action following any reports of antisocial behaviour or interference with quiet enjoyment, including contacting the police if appropriate.

These actions include:

- Speaking with all parties involved
- Documenting the report/complaint as part of the SCH complaints process, where appropriate.
- Gathering supporting information
- Contacting the police where criminal activity has occurred on SCH premises and encouraging neighbours to contact the police if they have witnessed criminal behaviour.
- Making a referral to an appropriate support service
- Issuing a Breach of Duty Notice and take further action in accordance with the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 through VCAT
- Issuing an immediate Notice to Leave for a serious act of violence by a resident at a property.

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, where available. SCH will also complete a critical incident report where required.

Related Policies

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Legislation and standards

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)

Housing Act 1983 (Vic)

Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standard 1 (Tenant and Housing Services)

Version control

Version No	3.0	Review frequency	3 years
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