



NEIGHBOURS POLICY

Contents

Purpose	3
Scope	3
Communication	3
Policy Principles	3
Minimum expectations for being a good neighbour	4
Procedure for dealing with neighbour related issues	5
Support Workers	6
Related policies	6
Legislation and standards	6
Transparency and accessibility	7
Acknowledgement	7
Implementation	7
Review of this policy	8

Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of SouthEast to create, foster and support positive relationships between our renters/residents with neighbours and local communities. The policy intends to balance the rights of renters with the rights of neighbours.

Scope

This policy applies to all renters, residents and staff of SouthEast under all relevant programs. The words 'renters' and 'residents' and 'occupiers' are effectively interchangeable and refer generally to all those people in a property including guests and friends and family of the primary tenant named on the lease agreement.

Communication

SouthEast will ensure this policy is readily available to all renters and staff and residents. This policy will also be made available to neighbours who raise concerns or complaints about SouthEast renters.

Policy Principles

This policy outlines the process for managing complaints about antisocial behaviour of any SouthEast resident.

There is no precise definition of antisocial behaviour or neighbour nuisance. Broadly, it is acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to one or more people in a neighbouring household.

To be antisocial behaviour, the behaviour must be persistent.

The term is used to describe actions that unreasonably interfere with or could interfere with a resident's/occupier's normal use and enjoyment of their home, garden or neighbourhood.

The definition extends to behaviour that can create a nuisance or annoyance to another person connected with the property.

Minimum expectations for being a good neighbour

- Keep noise to a minimum

SouthEast residents are requested to keep noise to a minimum, especially late at night and early in the morning. This includes music, human voices, construction, lawnmowers, air conditioners and vacuum cleaners (in apartments). EPA Victoria has a list of prohibited times for different noise types on their [website](#). They also have advice on how to deal with noisy neighbours [here](#). Local Government websites also have information and list prohibited times for various noise types.

- Look after children and visitors

Children have a right to play and be safe. Residents are requested to ensure children and visitors don't negatively impact on their neighbours.

- Respect other people's privacy

Residents are encouraged to develop friendly relationships/connections with neighbours, but also remind renters and neighbours to be respectful of each other's privacy.

- Keep property clean and tidy

If a resident lives on an estate or in a block of units, SouthEast will meet its obligations under Owners Corporations rules to maintain shared areas, like stairways, lawns, gardens and other shared areas. Residents can help to keep things clean and tidy by putting rubbish and recycling in the bins provided and reporting faults and damage.

Procedure for dealing with neighbour related issues

- If you are experiencing any problems with your neighbour, it is very important that you calmly deal with it as soon as you can. Sometimes a dispute may occur because of a misunderstanding between you and your neighbour.
- Early action is encouraged for neighbours in dispute. Your first step should be to approach your neighbour to resolve the situation between yourselves.
- If you feel you cannot speak with your neighbour directly, SouthEast can assist you to manage that conversation, including how to explain the problem from your point of view, the impact that it is having on you and how it could be resolved.
- You can also ask about mediation where a trained and independent person can speak with you and your neighbour to discuss how to try to resolve the problem.
- Contact your SouthEast Tenancy Officer – they may ask you to keep a nuisance and annoyance diary. This is a document that records the date, time and details of any incident that occurs. If the problem relates to any type of harassment or abuse, we may refer you to specialised services that can offer you support and assistance. We may also ask you to keep a nuisance and annoyance diary.

If the problem relates to a breach of residential rental agreement that is negatively affecting you, you can log a formal complaint as a *neighbour nuisance complaint* directly with SouthEast. Complaints about the way the neighbour nuisance complaints have also been managed by SouthEast should also be dealt with under the SouthEast Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure.

Complaints to SouthEast can be made via the telephone, in writing, in person or via the SouthEast website.

- SouthEast 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 renters and community housing generally.
- SouthEast cannot take direct action where the problem in your neighbourhood or block of units involves criminal activity. You can report this directly to the police.

Support Workers

If the affected tenant has a Support Agreement in place the support worker from that agency will be notified to support the tenant.

Related policies

Tenant Damage Policy

SouthEast Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

VHR Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

VHR Eligibility for Long Term Housing Policy

VHR Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy

Legislation and standards

This policy implements the obligations of SouthEast under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- [Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the SouthEast website www.sehc.org.au

Acknowledgement

SouthEast acknowledges the work of the Community Housing Industry Association (Victoria, Australia) and the policy work undertaken by **Launch Housing, Haven; Home, Safe, Housing Choices Australia** and the **Department of Health and Human Services** in developing this policy template.

Implementation

Post Board Approval:

- Add to Tenancy Manual, SouthEast web site, Victorian Housing Register CHIMES data base and include in the next Housing Futures
- Include in tenant induction documentation

Review of this policy

This policy should be reviewed every 2 years.

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Review and approval of this policy			
Frequency	Person responsible		Approval
Biennially	CEO		Board
Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1			
2			