



# Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada

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4-H in Canada considers the safety and well-being of 4-H youth members its top priority. This policy manual ensures industry standards and best practices are in place across the network of 4-H organizations in Canada.

In this document you will find:

1. Policies that outline what 4-H Canada is implementing to ensure the safety of all participants in the 4-H program. The core statements are numbered (1, 2, 3, ...) at the beginning of each policy.
2. Direction on when to refer to the provincial procedures. The procedures outline how the policies are implemented, with clear steps for staff and leaders in the provincial organization. A complete list of provincial procedures is in the Appendix.
3. Supplemental information, national procedures, or guidelines, where applicable, if the entire network of 4-H organizations in Canada needs to have the same information.

This document includes the following national policies:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Screening and Training Policy
- Youth Supervision Policy
- Safety Assessment and Management Policy
- Misconduct Reporting Policy
- Duty to Report Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Youth Travel Policy and Procedures

If you have questions after reading the policies, many answers can be found in the **Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada - Frequently Asked Questions**. This a collection of common questions and answers for staff, leaders, and families.



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### Code of Conduct Policy

The 4-H in Canada Code of Conduct outlines the expectations and guidelines for everyone involved in 4-H activities. Only when all participants are following these guidelines can we provide 4-H members with meaningful opportunities within an environment that is safe, inclusive, and fun for all involved.

1. There is no tolerance for conduct that conflicts with the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada or other supporting policies.
2. Incidence of misconduct by a youth member, leader, volunteer, staff, 4-H family member or guest must be reported to the provincial organization as outlined in the **Misconduct Reporting Policy**.

### Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada

As a positive youth development organization, we are committed to providing 4-H members with meaningful experiential learning opportunities within an environment that is safe, inclusive and fun for all involved. This is the responsibility of everyone involved in any 4-H activity.

#### This Code of Conduct applies to:

- 4-H youth members and their families;
- 4-H trained leaders and screened volunteers;
- camp counsellors and youth leaders;
- non-screened guests;
- 4-H staff and governing leadership;
- 4-H program partners; and
- other participants or observers of 4-H events.

#### I will:

##### Represent 4-H and myself in a positive way

- Use words, actions, and behaviours that are respectful, non-judgmental, and kind, towards all youth, leaders, volunteers, staff, families, and participants.
- Honour the 4-H Pledge and participate in the spirit of good sportsmanship, respecting rules and guidelines.
- Ensure all actions, including social media activity, is positive and reflects the integrity of 4-H.
- Act with honesty and integrity when dealing with property, monies, and other assets being used for 4-H purposes.
- Respect other youth, leader, volunteer and staff's, rights to privacy and the confidentiality of personal information.
- Provide appropriate animal care according to industry codes of practice ([nfacc.ca](http://nfacc.ca)).
- Abide by all federal and provincial laws.



**Promote a safe, inclusive, and fun environment**

- Be vigilant in ensuring an environment that is safe and protects youth, leaders, volunteers and staff from emotional, physical, verbal and sexual abuse.
- Refrain from using drugs or alcohol during any 4-H youth events.
- Make all reasonable efforts to ensure equal opportunity and access to participation for all 4-H youth members and abide by the 4-H Canada’s Inclusion Statement.
- Uphold the 4-H motto “Learn To Do By Doing” in an environment that is friendly and fun.

**Lead by example**

- Adhere to the policies and procedures of 4-H Canada and provincial organizations.
- Act as a positive role model.
- Work collaboratively with all, including 4-H members, families, fellow leaders and volunteers, staff, and guests.

In addition, trained leaders, screened volunteers, and staff will:

- Fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in the position description, and act within the limitations of authority for the position.
- Maintain the confidentiality of any information regarding 4-H that was obtained as part of the position.

**Acknowledgement**

Provincial councils, regions, districts, areas, associations and/or clubs may have additional guidelines or policies. It is the responsibility of each 4-H participant to familiarize themselves with the rules that pertain to their individual participation in 4-H events and activities.

**By signing this Code of Conduct, I acknowledge that I will comply with these standards and all 4-H policies applicable to my role.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), in my role as \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that there are consequences to non-compliance with this Code of Conduct on the part of me or anyone accompanying me, at a 4-H activity or event. After an investigation, consequences may be applied as deemed appropriate and necessary, and may affect my ability to participate in 4-H.

I understand that if I observe behaviour that violates this Code of Conduct, I have a duty to report it to the authorities and/or 4-H where appropriate. Please reach out to your provincial 4-H organization for incident reporting forms and the filing process.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian if participant is under 18

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***This document is valid for the current 4-H year only and must be read, signed annually, and kept on file with your provincial organization.***

## Inclusion Policy

1. All 4-H programming in Canada must adhere to and uphold the 4-H Inclusion Statement.
2. Staff and trained leaders are responsible for working with youth members and their families to find accommodations that would allow for access and participation.

### 4-H Inclusion Statement

4-H in Canada is open to all\* **without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or, mental or physical disability.\*\***

4-H is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive environment that allows for universal access and participation. Where barriers to participation are identified, 4-H will, with reasonable accommodation, adapt programs, rules, policies, or expectations to reduce or remove the barriers.

Any accommodations, changes or exceptions will be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the individual experience of the member and their family. The physical safety and emotional well-being of members, leaders, staff and volunteers is 4-H's highest priority and is the ultimate consideration in final decisions.

4-H Canada and local 4-H organizations consider inclusion a priority. Leaders are encouraged to work with individuals and their families to identify and discuss accommodations as required and to reach out to provincial or national office staff for help with unresolved concerns.

*\*This applies to youth members (ages 6 to 25), volunteers, leaders, staff and professionals.*

*\*\*Definition of discrimination as per the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

## Screening and Training Policy

1. Adults and older youth in a position of trust within 4-H must complete screening and training requirements before supervising and working with youth. This ensures they are aware of their responsibilities as caring adults in youth-adult partnerships, and in delivering safe and meaningful experiences.
2. Provincial and national offices are required to maintain secure records of all screening and training requirements either in progress or completed.

## Screening and Training Requirements

The Screening and Training Requirements table below outlines the screening, training, supervision, and responsibility requirements for different roles within the 4-H organization. For example:

- Trained leaders (A) and screened volunteers (B) must complete screening and different levels of training to be approved by their provincial organization to supervise 4-H events and activities.
- Non-screened guests (C) only work occasionally with the organization. As they only complete basic event training, they must be supervised by a trained leader and are not formally approved by their provincial organization.
- Camp counsellors and youth leaders (E) receive specific training to assist with camps or events. There must always be two (2) trained leaders or screened volunteers, but the camp counsellors and youth leaders may be counted as additional supervisors.
- Anyone leading, participating in, or attending a 4-H event must abide by the **Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada**.

Refer to your provincial organization's Screening and Training Procedures for a unique description of the roles in your provinces.

### Age of Majority in Canada

The age of majority in Canada is the age at which a person is considered by law to be an adult. A person younger than the age of majority is considered a "minor child." The age of majority in Canada is determined by each province or territory and varies between the ages of 18 and 19. **4-H Canada will use the age of 18 as reference for its programs, but provinces must adjust based on local law.** For more information, please refer to [www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/cons/consdoc/cscam-paem.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/cons/consdoc/cscam-paem.html).

### Key Terms

**Adult:** an adult is a person who has attained the age of majority as defined by legislation in the province or territory in which they live. All trained leaders and screened volunteers, as well as some senior member participants, have attained the age of majority.

**Youth:** a youth is any participant who is under the province or territory's age of majority.

**Senior Youth (18-25):** may play the role of a participant or have the training to act in a leadership role.



### Screening and Training Requirements by Role

	Role in 4-H					
	Trained leader, 4-H staff, YAC  18/19+ *	Screened volunteer, Overnight chaperone  18/19+ *	Non-screened guests  parent, judges, presenters	Board members	Camp counsellors, Youth leaders  members 16- 18/19*, receive specific leadership training to assist with events/camps	Youth in a club leadership role  assist with the program at club meetings
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Screening						
Application	✓	✓		✓		
Interview	✓	✓		✓		
Reference checks (min. 2)	✓	✓		✓		
Vulnerable Sector Check (completed by police services, clear or approved by staff)	✓ (3)	✓ (3)		May have completed as a leader		
Enhanced Criminal Record Check (clear or approved by staff, includes checking abuse database in MB and NS)	✓ (3)	✓ (3)		✓		
4-H in Canada Code of Conduct (acknowledged annually)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ is an initial requirement (3) is the requirement for renewal every three years

\* The age of majority is 18 in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan, and 19 in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, and Yukon.



	<b>Trained leader, 4-H staff, YAC</b>  18/19+ *	<b>Screened volunteer, Overnight chaperone</b>  18/19+ *	<b>Non-screened guests</b>  parent, judges, presenters	<b>Board members</b>	<b>Camp counsellors, Youth leaders</b>  members 16- 18/19*, receive specific leadership training to assist with events/camps	<b>Youth in a club leadership role</b>  assist with the program at club meetings
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Training</b>						
<b>Provincial 4-H Training</b>	✓ (ongoing updates)					
<b>Child Protection Training (Commit to Kids)</b>	✓ (3 - refresher)					
<b>Youth Safety Training</b>	✓					
<b>Event / Position Training (at each event or new role)</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Governance Training</b>				✓		
<b>Supervision</b>						
<b>Youth Supervision Policy requirements (Rule of Two)</b>	Additional "A" or "B" role must be present	An "A" role must be present	Must be with an "A" and another "A" or "B"	Must be with an "A" and another "A" or "B"	Must be with an "A" and another "A" or "B"	Must be with an "A" and another "A" or "B"
<b>Counts toward programming supervision ratio?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes - role explained to youth	Yes - role explained to youth	Yes - may supervise younger youth. Role explained to youth	No - role explained to youth



	Trained leader, 4-H staff, YAC all 18/19+ *	Screened volunteer Overnight chaperone all 18/19+ *	Non-screened guests parent, judges, presenters	Board members	Camp counsellors Youth leaders members 16- 18/19*, receive specific leadership training to assist with events/camps	Youth in a club leadership role assist with the program at club meetings
	A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>Responsibilities</b>						
Adherence to Supervision Policy	✓	✓				
First aid and emergency management	✓					
Incident reporting	✓					
Program planning	✓				✓	✓
Direct instruction to youth	✓	✓	Only with trained leaders / screened volunteers present	Only with trained leaders / screened volunteers present	✓	Only with trained leaders / screened volunteers present

## Youth Supervision Policy

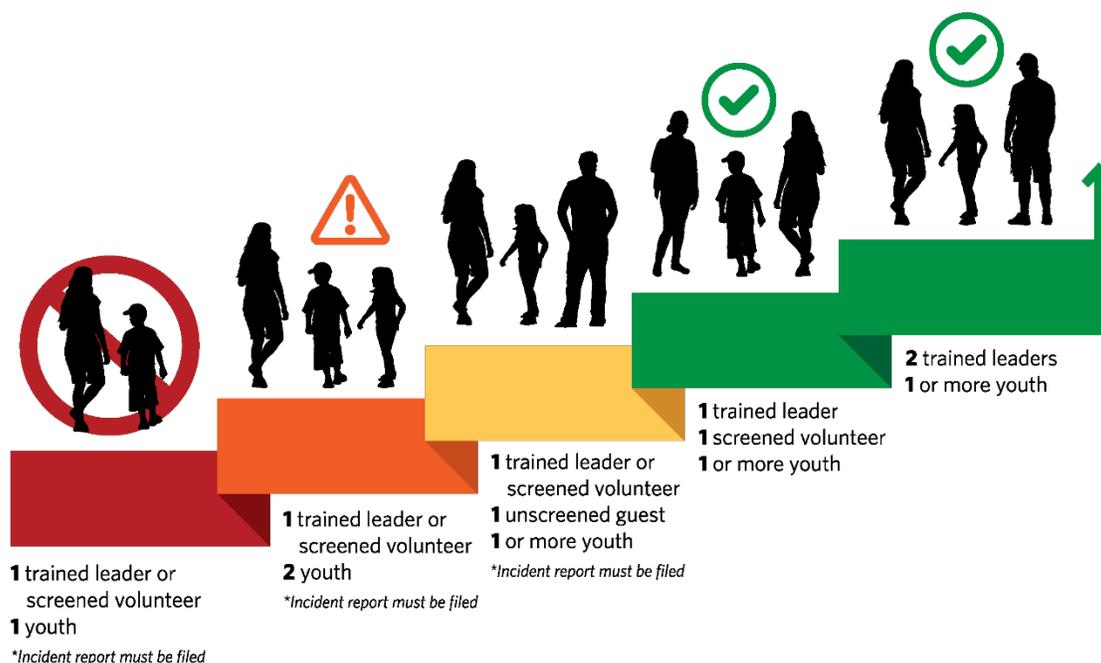
1. 4-H delivers youth programs in a safe, inclusive, and fun environment. Staff and trained leaders are required to plan and implement 4-H programs that follow:
  - The Rule of Two
  - Programming Supervision Ratios
  - Club Supervision Requirements

### Rule of Two

**At all 4-H club and project meetings, programming, and events there must always be a minimum of two (2) screened adults, who are not spouses, regardless of the number of youth members in attendance.** At a minimum, there must be one (1) trained leader or staff (A) and one (1) additional screened volunteer (B). Additional non-screened guests (C), or camp counsellors and youth leaders (E) may be required to meet the programming ratios required to safely deliver programs depending on the number of youth members in attendance and the activity. For programming ratios, see the table on page 12.

**For the protection of all, there must never be a situation where an adult is one-on-one with a youth who is not their child or ward during 4-H meetings, programming, and events.**

The purpose of this policy is to protect youth members, leaders, volunteers, and staff in potentially vulnerable situations. The goal for 4-H programming is to plan for and achieve the rightmost green level of two screened adults with youth.



## Programming Supervision Ratios

While the Rule of Two helps protect youth and leaders, safe supervisory ratios are also required to deliver a safe and meaningful program with youth. The table below outlines adult to youth supervision ratios (adult : youth) for different age groups. The total youth count must include all youth and children who are participating in the program, including 4-H members and any other youth guests.

	<b>Daytime and Low-Risk Activities</b>	<b>Daytime and Low-Risk Activities</b>	<b>Overnight and High-Risk Activities</b>	<b>Overnight and High-Risk Activities</b>
	Starting ratio with the Rule of Two (adult : youth)	Ratio for additional participants (adult : youth)	Starting ratio with the Rule of Two (adult : youth)	Ratio for additional participants (adult : youth)
4-H Members / Cloverbuds 6-8 years	2:10	1:5	2:10	1:5
4-H Members 9+	2:30	1:15	2:20	1:10
Senior 4-H members 15+	2:40	1:20	2:20	1:10

The Rule of Two is always the minimum, and ratios above apply to small breakout groups. Ratios may be multiplied for larger groups.

Provincial 4-H organizations may choose to adjust these ratios based on the complexity and nature of the program.

## Club Supervision Requirements

For a club to be in good standing and to begin hosting sanctioned meetings, programs or events, there must be at minimum one (1) trained leader or staff (A) and an additional screened volunteer (B) or camp counsellor/youth leader (E), who are not spouses, registered with the club.

Spouses may be part of the club leadership team, but there must always be a third trained leader or screened volunteer present. This requirement is in place to ensure the Rule of Two can be followed, to protect all parties and to prevent any conflict of interest that may arise in the event of financial or other misconduct.

The club registration must be on file with the provincial 4-H organization and will be reviewed each club year. Strict action will be taken if clubs are not in compliance with requirements.

## Guidelines for Implementing the Rule of Two

### General Rule of Two Practices

- At minimum one (1) trained leader or staff (A) and one (1) additional screened volunteer (B), who are not spouses, must attend club and project meetings or events, and be responsible for youth members.
- At minimum one (1) staff member (A) and one (1) overnight chaperone (B), who are not spouses, must attend national and provincial programs or camps, and be responsible for youth members.
- Meetings, events, or programming may only start when the two (2) trained leaders or screened volunteers have arrived. Trained leaders must clearly communicate to families when the meeting starts and stops, as parents are responsible for transportation and supervision outside of those times. For example, “The program commences when the club meeting starts and we say the 4-H Pledge.” The Rule of Two applies when the programming or meeting begins.
- Trained leaders and screened volunteers must introduce themselves to youth and parents as they arrive so that the caregivers are clear of who is responsible for the program.
- While delivering the program, trained leaders and screened volunteers must always be within earshot of one another when working with youth.
- When communicating with youth, always use a group email or chat and, when communicating with only one youth, copy parents or another leader. Similar to a schoolteacher, a trained leader, screened volunteer, or youth leader is in a position of power with youth members and must ensure all of their communications are appropriate and transparent by including another leader or parent.
- **Leaders and volunteers must never be one-on-one with youth.** If it is necessary to interact with an individual youth due to an injury or urgent private matter, there must always be two (2) adults present to ensure a safe environment for both the youth and adults.

### The Rule of Two at Public Events

- When attending a fair or volunteering at an event, plan to ensure there is enough supervision. It may be possible to connect with another 4-H group to provide greater supervision coverage.
- If breaking into smaller groups, there must be at least one (1) trained leader, screened volunteer, or parent with each small group of youth and Programming Supervision Ratios must be achieved. There must never be a situation where an adult is one-on-one with youth.
- The smaller groups must remain on site. Ensure that all adults communicate a safety plan to youth, and everyone knows how to contact the trained leader in charge in case of an emergency.

### The Rule of Two at Overnight Events

- The trained leader or screened volunteers must be on-site and easily reachable.

- There must be separate accommodations for youth participants over the provincial age of majority and trained leaders, screened volunteers, or chaperones.
- There must be separate accommodations for males and females (or based on how they identify). Consider using a blank field on registration forms that allow youth to self identify. Follow-up with youth directly to plan accommodations that ensure everyone feels safe and included. Please refer to the ***Inclusion Policy***.
- Camp counsellors under the provincial age of majority may share accommodations with youth provided there are two (2) counsellors in the shared accommodation.
- When conducting room checks, two (2) trained leaders, chaperones, or camp counsellors must stand in the doorway and look in the room to ensure they see each member or have them call out to hear their voices. Adults must never enter a youth's room, cabin, or tent alone.
- Female chaperones must check female youth member rooms and male chaperones must check male youth member rooms.
- If there is only one male chaperone, a female chaperone can accompany him (or vice versa), but it is the male chaperone who must look into the male rooms (and vice versa).
- If necessary, a parent, guardian, or older sibling may share a room with their own children or sibling only, but it is best if all youth have the same experience by sharing rooms between themselves.
- Adult leaders and chaperones who are spouses may room together. As youth see leaders and chaperones as role models and representative of 4-H values, be sure to model a healthy relationship and put the needs of the youth first. Refer to the ***Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada*** for more information.

### **The Rule of Two during Homestay**

- In homestay scenarios, the adults in the home play the role of temporary guardian and must complete 4-H and police screening.
- The accompanying 4-H chaperones continue to provide supervision over the entire group and program. For this reason, the Rule of Two in a homestay situation may include spouses or another adult over the provincial age of majority. In some cases, this has been a parent and another family member who is over the provincial age of majority.

## Safety Assessment and Management Policy

1. Staff and trained leaders are responsible for conducting program safety assessments and implementing preventative procedures that follow all policies and guidelines.
2. Staff and trained leaders are responsible for completing an activity plan for the following events and programs:
  - multi-club or regional events
  - include 4-H organized transportation and/or accommodations, or
  - involve high-risk activities (i.e. skiing, water activities, paintball, woodsmen competition, youth operating recreational vehicles)
  - third party service providers require a waiver (i.e. archery, shooting range, or a trampoline, etc.)

The activity plan will be submitted to the provincial organization for review and shared with all youth, leaders, and families in advance of the event or program.

3. Activities that abide by all policies are sanctioned 4-H events and have insurance coverage for youth, leaders, volunteers, staff, and invited guests.
4. Staff and trained leaders are responsible for coordinating the management of participants' health during 4-H activities. This includes:
  - Receiving a completed registration form annually by each youth and adult to indicate membership with a provincial 4-H organization and permission to attend activities.
  - Receiving a health information form annually, which is kept up to date, and is on hand for each youth and adult participant at all activities. Leaders must review the health form and discuss any health issues with youth and parents or guardians to develop a plan for managing care as required.
  - Maintaining the strict confidentiality of personal or health information or information related to an incident. Sensitive information must only be discussed with those who are providing direct supervision, are responsible for administering first aid, or are providing care.
  - Notifying the provincial office of minor or serious incidents related to illness, injury, accidents, or safety concerns. Refer to the **Guidelines for Incident Reporting** below.

Refer to your provincial organization's Safety Assessment and Management Procedures for activity planning guidelines, first aid guidelines and procedures, as well as the Information Management Procedures for registration and health information handling processes.

### Guidelines for Incident Reporting

Staff and trained leaders must document all incidents, whether minor or serious, that occur during a 4-H sanctioned activity. The purpose of the Incident Report is to ensure 4-H has details of the incident should questions arise and to ensure measures are taken to prevent future incidents. It is a tool to protect and support youth, staff, leaders, and the organization. A paper copy of a blank incident report should be on hand during any 4-H activities so that it is easy to take notes before entering the incident details into the online form at [4-h-canada.ca/youth-safety](https://4-h-canada.ca/youth-safety).

**Non-reportable incidents** are incidents that can be resolved quickly and are unlikely to have future repercussions. For example, non-reportable incidents include:

- basic first aid treatment (scrapes, cuts)
- property damage that can be quickly remedied
- behaviour and discipline issues

**Incidents that must be reported include:**

A **minor incident** is a regular occurrence or near miss. These incidents must be documented in an incident report so they can be reviewed to determine any preventive measures or mitigation or may have insurance implications. For example, minor incidents include:

- Illness or injury requiring first aid
- Property damage that cannot be quickly repaired
- Ongoing or serious discipline issues or conflicts

A **serious incident** involves any of the following and requires detailed documentation in the incident report. For example, serious incidents include:

- Requiring assistance from authorities or emergency responders (police, fire, ambulance)
- Participants who are emotionally or psychologically distressed
- Widespread illness of many participants (such as at a large event or camp)
- A stay in a hospital
- Life-threatening illness
- Has future health care repercussions
- Poses a serious or significant negative impact on the 4-H organization
- Future insurance implications
- Interest from the media
- Future negligence and/or criminal repercussions

Refer to **Appendix A: When to Report Incidents for 4-H in Canada** and **Appendix B: Steps for Incident Reporting for 4-H in Canada** for key steps, and refer to your provincial organization's Safety Assessment and Management Procedures.

For serious incidents, you must include the following information with the incident report:

- the activity plan;
- notes or statements related to the incident;
- copies of any applicable permission forms; and
- release of liability or waivers.

## Misconduct Reporting Policy

1. 4-H has an open-door policy for reporting concerns of misconduct, harassment, or abuse and takes any claims very seriously. A confidential report may be made by a youth member, leader, staff, parent, participant, or member of the public using the online incident reporting system at [4-h-canada.ca/youth-safety](http://4-h-canada.ca/youth-safety). Reports will be delivered directly to the provincial organization.
2. It is the responsibility of staff and trained leaders to:
  - document any concern about the emotional or physical safety of a youth, and incident that puts a participant at risk, or violation of 4-H in Canada Code of Conduct
  - send a confidential incident report to the provincial organization
3. It is the responsibility of the provincial organization to:
  - communicate with involved parties and notify 4-H Canada for serious incidents;
  - conduct investigations;
  - make determinations on suspension, consequences, and terminations; and
  - manage appeals.
4. As a youth-serving organization, 4-H is committed to ensuring youth, leaders, and staff safety while educating and developing the skills of our youth, leaders, and staff to prevent repeat incidents. 4-H will strive for a positive outcome through coaching and mentoring before considering stricter consequences
5. Grounds for suspension or termination include:
  - a. The involved party is the subject of an investigation for a:
    - i. Criminal offence
    - ii. Child protection report
    - iii. Other statutory offence
  - b. The involved party is under review for committing a serious, or repeated, breach of the 4-H in Canada Code of Conduct or Youth Safety policies
  - c. The involved party fails to comply with government statutes or regulations, putting 4-H in Canada, participants, or partners at risk of harm
  - d. The involved party's presence at a 4-H event is believed to pose a risk to others
6. 4-H will act promptly and will ensure the process of responding to allegations against any staff, leader, volunteer, or youth is fair to all parties concerned.

Information is held in strict confidence, including the names of those accused or involved in the incident, as well as the nature and details of the allegation. Please refer to your provincial organization's Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure for additional information and guidance.

Refer to the ***Duty to Report Policy*** below for policy on reporting suspected abuse to local authorities.

## Recognizing Inappropriate Behavior and Misconduct

Within the 4-H in Canada Code of Conduct, there is an outline of the expectations and guidelines for everyone involved in 4-H activities. Conduct that conflicts with the Code of Conduct or other 4-H policies may not be against the law in other contexts, but is still considered inappropriate, must be reported.

For example, inappropriate behaviour and misconduct can include, but is not limited to:

- a violation of someone's privacy or personal boundaries
- unauthorized contact with a child
- disrespectful or discriminatory remarks with the intent to offend in person, by phone, by electronic means, or through social media
- the use of drugs or alcohol during a 4-H youth event
- bullying behaviour, verbal or physical, that compromises the safety or well-being of another
- sexual behaviour (inappropriate touching, intercourse) with anyone regardless of gender, age, or consent at a 4-H event
- suspicion of theft of funds
- actions that jeopardize safety or result in serious injury
- any other behaviours in conflict with the 4-H in Canada Code of Conduct

### Guidelines for Reporting Inappropriate Behavior and Misconduct

Refer to the **Appendix A: When to Report Incidents for 4-H in Canada** and **Appendix B: Steps for Incident Reporting for 4-H in Canada** for key steps and refer to your provincial organization's Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure.

#### Minor Incidents

For minor breaches of the 4-H in Canada Code of Conduct, a review and discussion will be completed at the local level. As a youth-serving organization, 4-H is committed to ensuring youth and leader safety, and preventing incidents, or repeat incidents, through the education and development of skills for youth and leaders. 4-H will strive for positive outcomes through coaching and mentoring before considering stricter consequences.

#### Serious Incidents

After receiving an incident report, the provincial organization may suspend a staff, leader, or youth member. This allows time for the review of the incident, verification of facts of the allegations, and the decision of consequences, which may include termination.

### Duty to Report Policy

The relationship between youth, staff, leaders, and volunteers is based on mutual trust and respect, as well as the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada. When an adult or older youth is in a position of authority over youth, the potential for abuse exists.

1. It is the responsibility of staff and trained leaders to be aware of signs of child abuse and neglect, and to be alert to disclosures by youth. More information about abuse prevention is provided in this policy and the Commit to Kids training program.
2. It is the responsibility of staff and trained leaders to:
  - immediately report any concern that a youth is experiencing child abuse or neglect to the local child protection agency or police service. You do not need to be certain of abuse. It is the agency's job to determine whether abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur.
  - send a confidential incident report to the provincial organization at [4-h-canada.ca/youth-safety](https://4-h-canada.ca/youth-safety)
  - maintain strict confidentiality
3. It is the responsibility of the provincial organization to:
  - communicate with involved parties and authorities, and to notify 4-H Canada of serious incidents
  - make determinations on suspension, consequences, and terminations
  - maintain strict confidentiality

### Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

The different forms of abuse and neglect are:

**Physical abuse** is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in the injury to a child. It can include bruising, cuts, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting, or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks, or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse.

**Neglect** occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, protection from risks, education, clothing, or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused.

**Emotional abuse** is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond their capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring, or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because they want to please the adult or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes,

watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, allowing or forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engaging in prostitution.

**Grooming** is usually a slow, gradual, and escalating process of building trust and comfort with a child. A child sex offender can use a variety of subtle, manipulative techniques to gain access to a child and increase the chances that the child will agree to their sexual advances. Child sex offenders build rapport with the adults around the child so that their involvement with the child is welcomed and encouraged. Grooming typically progresses to testing the child's boundaries (and the child's ability to protect themselves) through the telling of sexual jokes, engaging in roughhousing, backrubs, sexual games, etc., in an attempt to see if they are likely to tell someone. Grooming typically progresses from non-sexual touching to 'accidental' sexual touching. This usually occurs during play, so the child may not identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching.

### **Watch for the following:**

**Indicators**, especially those of a behavioural nature, such as anxiety or developmental lags that may be signs of other problems. However, a series of indicators observed over a period may be a youth's reaction to abuse or neglect and may appear as dramatic changes from the child's or youth's normal behaviour. Volunteers or staff may also observe patterns of conduct that are consistent with indicators of "grooming." Indicators alone do not prove child abuse or neglect, however, they signal a need for the applicable child welfare organization or police to learn more about the youth's circumstances. That is why indicators must be reported to your applicable child welfare organization or the police, as well as your provincial 4-H office.

*Please refer to this document for a detailed outline of the forms of abuse and possible physical and behavioural indicators to watch for: [gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook\\_serviceprovider.pdf](http://gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf)*

**Disclosure** – a youth may tell you *directly* that they are being abused or neglected. Disclosure might begin with one example to see how you react. In other cases, youth do not disclose directly, but communicate what they have experienced *indirectly* through their behaviours, emotions, art, writing, appearance, inquiries, or discussions about fears, concerns, or relationships. Youth also divulge information through indirect statements, statements with conditions (such as "promise not to tell"), or third-party statements (such as "my friend's parent is hurting her").

*Please refer to the Commit to Kids Training Handout for detailed information on responding to, and supporting, a youth who may be disclosing abuse or neglect to you: [4-h-canada.ca/sites/default/files/risk-management/csa\\_preventiontraining\\_handout\\_en.pdf](http://4-h-canada.ca/sites/default/files/risk-management/csa_preventiontraining_handout_en.pdf)*

## **Guidelines for Reporting Abuse**

Refer to the **Appendix A: When to Report Incidents for 4-H in Canada** and **Appendix C: Steps for Reporting Child Abuse for 4-H in Canada** for key steps and refer to your provincial organization's Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure.

Report concerns to authorities immediately. The individual who either hears the disclosure or has the suspicion of abuse must be the one who makes the report. Do not conduct any investigation to

substantiate allegations. This is the role of child protection agencies and police and they will provide direction on notifying parents

As the disclosure or concern came to you as a 4-H leader, you must also complete a confidential 4-H incident report to document that you have made a report to authorities. To maintain the privacy of those involved, only include specifics of the abuse if it warrants follow-up within 4-H. Your report to authorities should include all the information you have.

### Transportation Policy

1. Transportation is not part of a leader's role. Parents and guardians are responsible for transporting youth to and from 4-H meetings and events, and for ensuring two (2) trained leaders or screened volunteers are present before departing.
2. Personal travel is not considered part of the 4-H program. Families who wish to arrange to carpool with other families do so at their own risk and should review their personal automobile insurance.
3. Travel as a club to a sanctioned event is considered to be part of the 4-H program and is insured if the commercial transportation or carpooling is documented in an Activity Plan, is reviewed by the provincial office, and is shared with parents in advance. The Rule of Two applies in each vehicle.

### Guidelines for Clubs Travelling to Events

If the club is travelling to a sanctioned event together, commercial transportation or carpooling must be documented in the Activity Plan, reviewed by the provincial organization, and shared with parents in advance.

Parents and guardians must bring their youth to the agreed-upon meeting place for pick-up after which the Rule of Two applies for commercial transportation or in private carpools. Two (2) trained leaders or screened volunteers (parent drivers must complete screening) must be in each vehicle transporting youth. The driver of the vehicle must be over the age of 21 to ensure an appropriate amount of maturity and driving experience.

### Insurance

**Commercial Vehicles:** Trained leaders must confirm that all commercial vehicles have adequate collision and liability insurance.

**4-H Owned:** Staff, trained leaders, and screened volunteers registered with 4-H will have additional 4-H liability insurance when using a 4-H owned vehicle for official business or programs.

**4-H Rented Vehicles:** If an incident were to occur with a 4-H rented vehicle driven by staff, trained leaders, or screened volunteers for official business or programs, the insurance would be applied in the following order:

1. the vehicle owner's automobile insurance;
2. any additional coverage purchased through the rental agency or from the credit card used for the rental; then
3. the 4-H non-owned auto policy.

**Carpooling in Personal Vehicles:** Because of the way auto insurance is organized in Canada, it is the vehicle owner's auto insurance that responds first for any injury to an individual or physical damage to their vehicle or another vehicle. **4-H does not have auto insurance coverage.** 4-H staff, leaders, volunteers, and parents or guardians who use their vehicles to drive youth for a planned event should check with their insurance broker about using their vehicle in this way, and ensure that they have adequate liability insurance. Parents and guardians should be made aware that there is no additional coverage through 4-H.

## Youth Travel Policy and Procedures

1. There are scenarios where youth may be without adult supervision when travelling by air, train, or bus to an event or program. The scenarios are:
  - Travelling by air, train, or bus to and from interprovincial, national, or international events
  - Travelling by air, train, or bus to and from a central meeting place within Canada to join up with a 4-H group travelling to a national or international event
  - When selected nationally or provincially to participate as a 4-H representative in a conference or event hosted by another organization

## Youth Travel Procedures

**When youth travel alone,** the following procedures apply:

- The minimum age for youth travelling on their own is 12 for domestic travel, and over the provincial age of majority (18 or 19) for international travel.
- Travel arrangements must be shared with youth and their parents or guardians well in advance, and permission forms must be signed and returned to the program organizers.
- Youth must be supervised at departure and arrival points by a leader, staff, parent, or guardian, or other adult authorized by the family.
- When youth are received at their destination the program will commence and supervision policies will apply.

**While travelling as a group** (such as to a national conference or part of a Club to Club Exchange), the following procedures apply:

- While youth are travelling by air, train, or bus to meet up with the larger group, youth may travel some portion on their own (see above) or with only one (1) chaperone, as they are in a public setting. Whenever possible, the chaperone must apply the Rule of Two to avoid being one-on-one in vulnerable situations. For example, if the youth becomes ill, they must engage another adult or transportation staff for assistance.
- When the youth or group reaches the program, the club, hosting chaperones, and staff will follow the supervision policy and ratios.
- If a travel issue arises and an emergency stay at a hotel is required, youth and chaperones must have their own accommodation and must follow the Rule of Two to the best of their



ability. For example, if only one (1) chaperone is present, they could engage hotel staff to assist with room checks, as well as gather to meet and eat in public spaces.

If a youth chooses to **travel independently before or after the sanctioned event**, permission from the parents must be obtained in writing and must outline how the youth will connect to the 4-H event. Any insurance coverage provided through 4-H will only cover the specific dates of the sanctioned event. Please refer to your provincial organization's Safety Assessment and Management Procedures for details on completing an Independent Travel and Waiver form.



## Appendix A: When to Report Incidents for 4-H in Canada

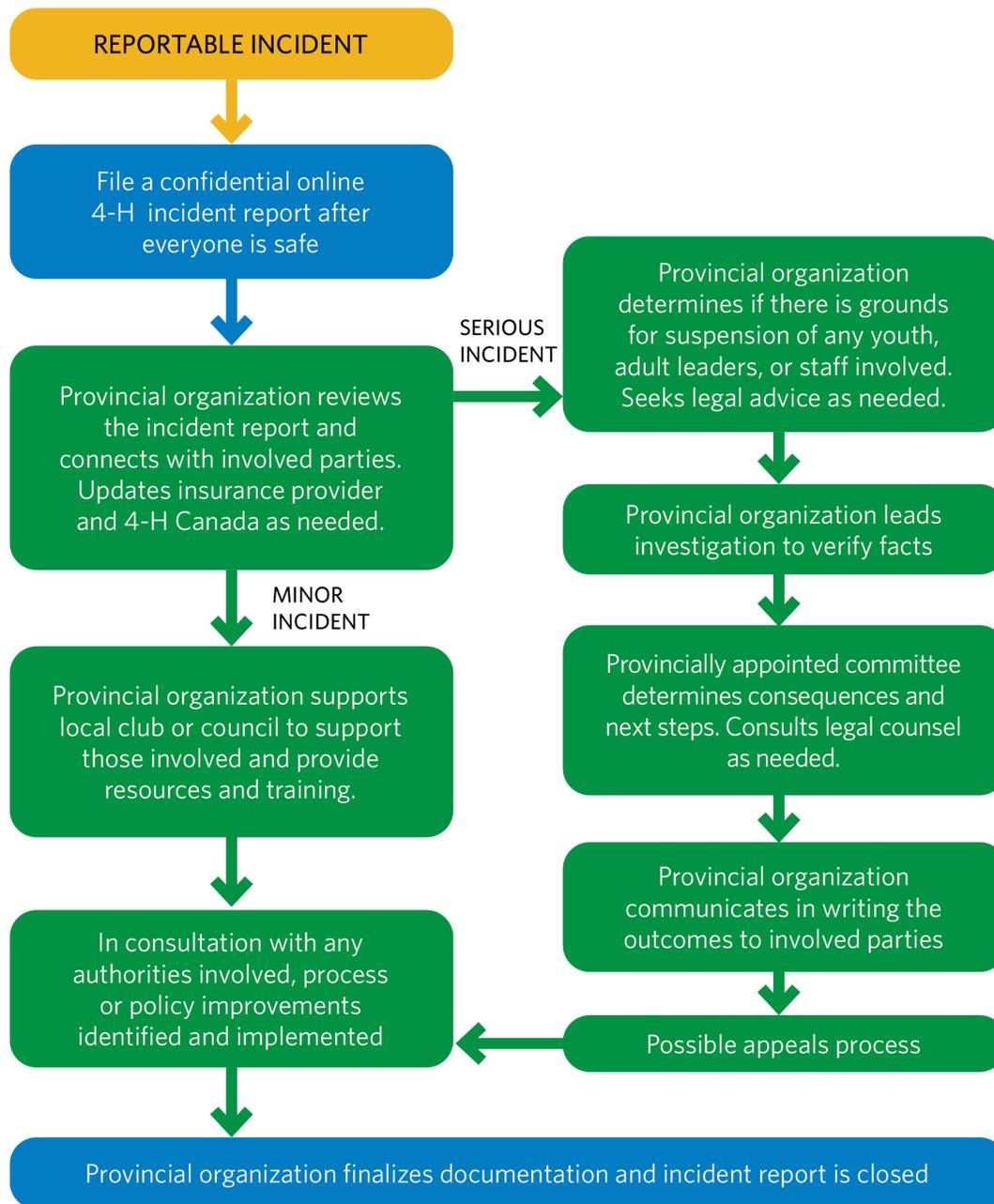
Leaders and staff have a responsibility to document concerns. Reports may also be submitted by concerned youth, parents, or the public.

Use the below table to determine when an Incident Report is required.

ISSUE	NOT REPORTABLE	REPORT USING AN INCIDENT REPORT FORM
<b>Suspect abuse or child in harms way</b>	N/A	Always. Notify authorities and then follow Duty to Report process.
<b>Complaint about behavior or a decision</b>	Complaint or conflict addressed at local club or event with quick resolution	Behavior not aligned with Code of Conduct (misconduct) or additional support needed to resolve the issue
<b>Conflict between youth or adults</b>	Complaint or conflict addressed at local club or event with quick resolution	Repeated issue or behavior raises safety concerns
<b>Accident or illness involving any participants</b>	Very basic first aid treatment. Note to parents.	Illness, injury, mental health concern, or if a vehicle is involved.
<b>Property damage</b>	Easily repaired	Unexpected, may involve insurance
<b>Risk to 4-H reputation and image</b>	N/A	Always

## Appendix B: Steps for Incident Reporting for 4-H in Canada

Leaders and staff have a responsibility to document concerns. Reports may also be submitted by concerned youth, parents, or the public.



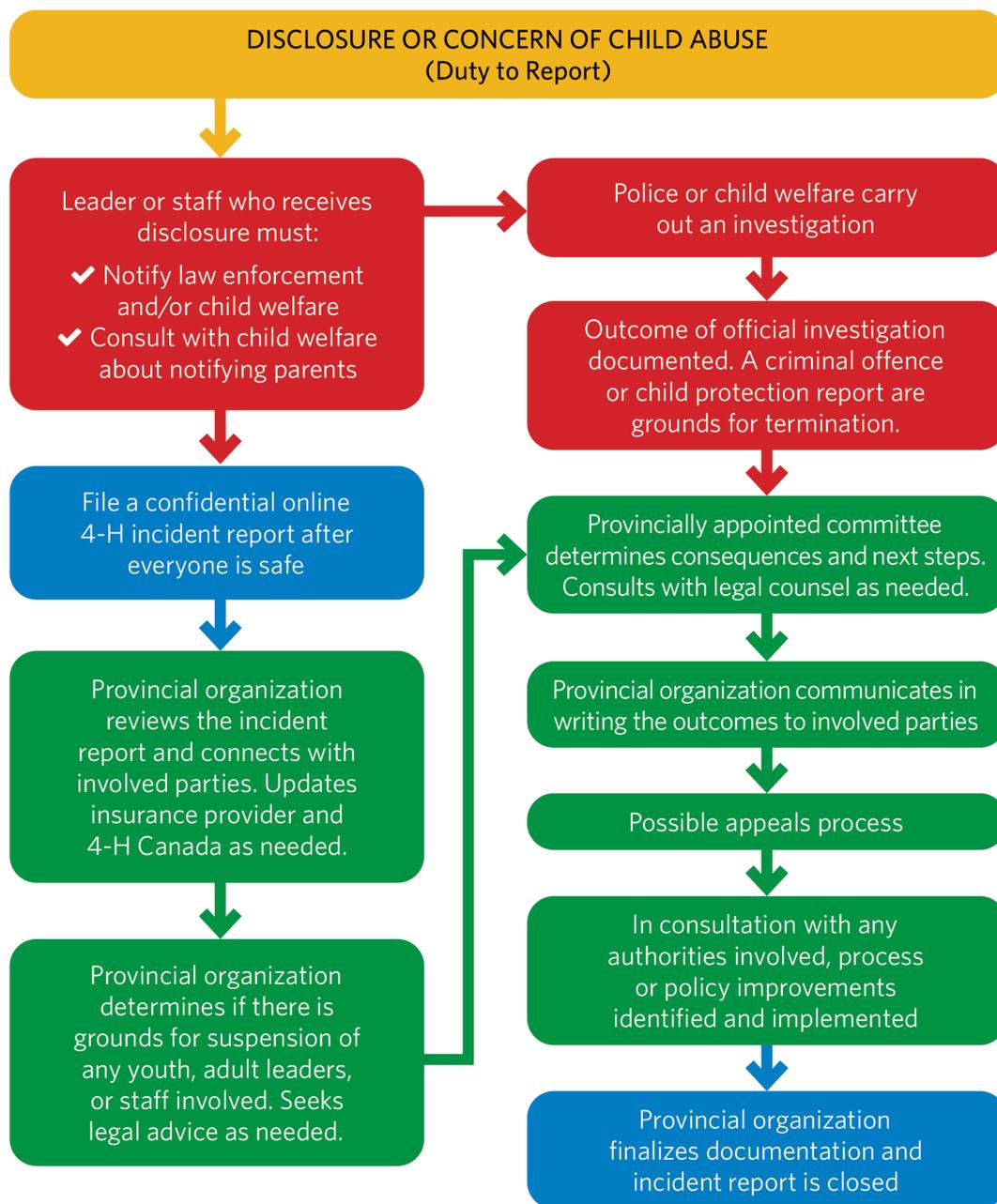
**LEGEND**

- Reportable Incident
- Documentation of Report
- Actions by Provincial 4-H Organization

## Appendix C: Steps for Reporting Child Abuse for 4-H in Canada

The safety of all children must always be ensured in the process of reporting abuse.

4-H Canada guidelines are based on the best practices developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.



**LEGEND**

- Reportable Incident
- Documentation of Report
- Actions by Provincial 4-H Organization
- Actions by Authorities



## **Appendix D: Provincial Procedures**

The policies in this manual refer to the following provincial procedures. Contact your provincial 4-H organization to access these procedures:

- Screening and Training Procedures
- Information Management Procedures
- Safety Assessment and Management Procedures
- Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedure

Contact information for your provincial organizations can be found at [4-h-canada.ca/find-club](https://4-h-canada.ca/find-club).