

Guidelines for Incident Reporting

Within AgScape's Code of Conduct, there is an outline of the expectations and guidelines for everyone involved in AgScape's activities. Conduct that conflicts with the Code of Conduct or other AgScape 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 an AgScape 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 an AgScape event or program session (e.g., Teacher Ambassador Program);
- suspicion of theft;
- actions that jeopardize safety or result in serious injury; and/or
- any other behaviours in conflict with AgScape's Code of Conduct.

Guidelines for Reporting Inappropriate Behavior and Misconduct

Minor Incidents

Minor incidents include scrapes, minor cuts, etc.

Serious Incidents

Serious incidents include anything of serious nature such as major injuries, bullying, and any form of abuse or neglect.

DUTY TO REPORT

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 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 cooperate 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 Out 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 AgScape office.

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").

Guidelines for Reporting Abuse

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 an AgScape representative, you must also complete a confidential AgScape 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 AgScape. Your report to authorities should include all the information you have. The Duty to Report: Incident Report can be found at the following link:

https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/l/dutyto-report_incidentreport.