



# YOUTH POLICY



# INTRODUCTION

Passionate and innovative, Ontario youth are the future leaders of our local and global food systems. With our population expected to reach close to 10 billion by 2050, Ontario youth will be responsible for the production, processing and sustainability of our food.

For the past 30 years, however, the average age of a Canadian farmer has steadily increased, with less and less of our younger generations choosing agriculture and food as potential career pathways. From 2011 to 2016, Statistics Canada reported the average age of a Canadian farmer was 55, with the agriculture and food industry continuing to cite an aging workforce as a challenge being faced. The Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council has further detailed challenges in the agriculture industry with, as recent as 2017, 16,500 jobs going unfilled in the industry leading to a lost of \$2.9 billion in sales.

Food and Beverage Ontario details an equal challenge being faced in the food processing industry with an estimated employment gap of 25,000 skilled workers by 2025. Fewer young people are seeing the agriculture and food industries as a viable skilled career pathway option, despite the opportunities for growth, advancement and success they can achieve.

In addition to career opportunities, the development of food literacy in youth is important for their overall health and well-being. There has been a growing distance between youth and the development of essential skills such as safe food handling, preparation, knowledge of in-season foods and understanding how their food is produced. Ontario youth are leaving the education system without the knowledge and skills needed to be productive food citizens.



# INTRO CONT'D

As the current generation, the agriculture, food and education sectors, including AgScape, see it as our responsibility to help prepare and work together with Ontario youth to ensure the present and future of our communities. A future generation that is better aware of where our food comes from, the challenges the agriculture and food industry may be facing, and potential career opportunities, only serves to benefit the ever-expanding needs of our growing global population.

AgScape strives to fill these gaps by working with all parties to provide inclusive and high-quality agriculture and food education programs and resources to ensure Ontario youth become successful food citizens.



Taylor Selig  
Executive Director



Kathryn Doan  
Chair, Board of Directors



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- 1 Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/170510/dq170510a-eng.htm?indid=10441-4&indgeo=0>
  - 2 Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council. [https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/factsheet\\_NAT\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/factsheet_NAT_E_web.pdf)
  - 3 Public Health Ontario. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/l/2017/l-dcp-food-literacy-call-to-action.pdf?la=en>
  - 4 Food and Beverage Ontario. <https://foodandbeverageontario.ca/careersnow/>

AgScape is a charitable organization who believes in providing accurate, balanced and current educational agriculture and food programs and resources to Ontario youth and classroom teachers in order to help them to become food citizens and work together towards building stronger local and global communities.

## OUR VISION

AgScape believes in a world where the agri-food sector is recognized as a vehicle for positive social, economic, and environmental impact.

## OUR MISSION

We empower Ontario students with impartial and accurate information to increase awareness of the agri-food system and ignite interest in related careers.

## YOUTH SAFETY

AgScape considers the safety and well-being of Ontario youth its top priority. This policy manual ensures industry standards and best practices are in place across the province.

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In this document you will find:

1. Policies that outline what AgScape is implementing to ensure the safety of all participants in AgScape programs; and
2. Details on how the policies are implemented, with clear steps for staff, volunteers, Teacher Ambassadors and other leaders in the provincial organization.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

- Code of Conduct for AgScape - Includes employees, board members, independent contractors (Teacher Ambassadors), volunteers, partners

## INCLUSION POLICY

- AgScape Inclusion statement

## SCREENING POLICY

- Teacher Ambassadors/Volunteers/Staff

## YOUTH SUPERVISION POLICY

- Rule of Two

## DUTY TO REPORT

- Definition of Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect
- Obligations to Report

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Use of pictures/social media

## SURVEY POLICY

- Why do we survey?
- What is done with the Survey Information?
- Where is Survey Information stored?
- Who has access to Survey Information?
- How long do we keep Survey Information?
- Who to connect with if you want survey information changed/or removed?
- Who to connect with if you have further questions?

# CODE OF CONDUCT

AgScape outlines the expectations and guidelines for everyone involved in AgScape activities. Only when all participants are following these guidelines can we provide Ontario youth 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 AgScape or other supporting policies.
2. Incidence of misconduct by a youth, volunteers, staff, Teacher Ambassador, board member or guest must be reported as outlined in the Misconduct Reporting Policy.

As a positive youth development organization, we are committed to providing youth participants with meaningful experiential learning opportunities on agriculture and food education.

This is the responsibility of everyone involved in any AgScape activity. This Code of Conduct applies to:

- AgScape Teacher Ambassadors
- Volunteers
- Guests
- AgScape staff and governing leadership
- AgScape program partners
- Other participants or observers of AgScape events.

All participants in AgScape programming are expected to:

- Represent themselves in a positive, respectful, and professional manner;
- Use words, actions, and behaviours that are respectful, non-judgmental, and kind, towards all youth, leaders, volunteers, staff, families, and participants;
- Ensure all actions, including social media activity, is respectful, professional and reflects the integrity of AgScape, as well as has received staff approval prior to being taken and shared publicly;
- Respect other youth, volunteer and staff's, rights to privacy and the confidentiality of personal information; and
- Abide by all federal and provincial laws.





# INCLUSION POLICY

1. All AgScape programming in Ontario must adhere to and uphold the AgScape Inclusion Statement.
2. Staff, volunteers and Teacher Ambassadors are responsible for ensuring the inclusion policy is upheld when delivering educational programming.

## AgScape Inclusion Statement:

AgScape programming is open to all without discrimination based on gender identity, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability etc.\* AgScape is dedicated to providing a safe and inclusive environment that allows for universal access and participation. Where barriers to participation are identified, AgScape will, with reasonable accommodation, adapt programs, rules, policies, or expectations to reduce or remove the barriers. The physical safety and emotional well-being of Ontario youth and teachers, Teacher Ambassadors, staff, and volunteers are AgScape's highest priority and is the ultimate consideration for developing and delivering AgScape programs. AgScape considers inclusion a priority and will strive to work with all parties (e.g. teachers, students, industry, volunteers, Teacher Ambassadors etc.) to ensure we are providing the highest quality of programming.



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

# SCREENING POLICY

1. Adults in a position of trust within AgScape must complete screening 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. AgScape is required to maintain secure records of all screening and training requirements either in progress or completed.

## Screening Requirements

AgScape depends on a variety of individuals to help deliver interactive and high-quality agriculture and food education programs. As a result, we have outlined in a table below the different levels of screening required and responsibilities for different roles.



## ROLE IN AGSCAPE

	AgScape Staff	Board Members	Teacher Ambassadors	Volunteers / Partners	Guests
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### SCREENING

Application	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <small>specific to our thinkAG Career Competition partners</small>	
Interview/ Pre-Screening	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reference Checks	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Criminal Record Check <small>with Vulnerable Sector Screening</small>	Yes <small>completed every 3 years for permanent staff</small>		Yes		
Annual Declarations Offence Declarations			Yes <small>completed yearly</small>		
Code of Conduct	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### TRAINING

Provincial Training	Yes		Yes		
Event/Position Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Governance Training		Yes			

### SUPERVISION

Youth Supervision <small>(Rule of 2)</small>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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### RESPONSIBILITIES

Adherence to Supervision Policy <small>(Rule of 2)</small>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
First Aid & Emergency Management	Yes <small>at least one staff member present at events</small>				
Incident Reporting	Yes		Yes	Yes <small>trained to report for incidents that may happen at events</small>	
Direct Instruction to Youth	Yes <small>completed every 3 years for permanent staff</small>		Yes <small>trained through Business of Food</small>	Yes <small>trained staff are present</small>	

# YOUTH SUPERVISION POLICY

AgScape delivers youth programs in a safe, inclusive, and fun environment. Staff and trained leaders are required to plan and implement AgScape programs that follow:

- **The Rule of Two**

The purpose of this policy is to protect Ontario youth, staff, Teacher Ambassadors, and volunteers in potentially vulnerable situations. AgScape will strive to ensure that there is always at minimum two (2) screened adults at all AgScape programming and events. In the instance of large-scale events, where youth are separated into smaller groups, AgScape will ensure there is still at minimum two (2) screened adults per group.

## Rule of Two

At all AgScape programming, and events there must always be a minimum of two (2) screened adults. At minimum there must be one (1) Teacher Ambassador or staff and one (1) additional screened individual which could include any of the following: the booking classroom teacher, staff, Teacher Ambassador, board member or screened volunteer.

**FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL,  
THERE MUST NEVER BE A  
SITUATION WHERE AN ADULT IS  
ONE-ON-ONE WITH A YOUTH.**



# 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](https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/l/dutyto-report_incidentreport).

# SOCIAL MEDIA

AgScape respects the digital privacy and safety of Ontario youth. As such, AgScape is required to receive any one of or combination of the following, depending on the program or event, when obtaining video, photo or written materials of youth or belonging to them:

- Parent/guardian permission
- Booking teacher permission
- Youth permission

AgScape believes that it is our responsibility to protect youth from an ever-growing digital space. To ensure the digital safety of youth, AgScape will obtain any one or combination of the following:

- The permission of parent/guardian to use video, photo or audio of their child before sharing on any of AgScape's communication channels (i.e., website, social media, digital/print ads etc.);
- The permission/confirmation from booking teacher, who has already received permission from parent/guardians, to use video, photo or audio of their child to be used on any of AgScape's communication channels (i.e., website, social media, digital/print ads etc.); and/or
- The consent of youth to use testimonials, where any and all personal identification information would be removed prior to being used and shared on any of AgScape's communication channels (i.e., website, social media, digital/print ads etc.).





# SURVEY POLICY

AgScape uses a variety of surveys in order to ensure and maintain high-quality programming, resources and events. To ensure we are protecting the confidentiality of youth and all participants who take part in our surveys, we have outlined the following criteria:

- Why do we survey?
- What is done with the survey information?
- Where is survey information stored?
- Who has access to survey information?
- How long do we keep survey information?
- Who to connect with if you want survey information changed/or removed?
- Who to connect with if you have further questions?



## Why Do We Survey?

AgScape surveys youth and other participants for numerous reasons. We have outlined below in further detail to explain why we survey.

## Programming

AgScape wants to continue to develop, refine and provide programs and events that meet the needs of Ontario youth and teachers. Understanding activities that youth and teachers enjoy, do not enjoy and want to see more of, helps us to build programs and events that are meaningful.

## Marketing

Ontario youth and participant voices carry meaning. Hearing what you have to say and sharing it with others showcases the quality of programs and events, leading to more youth and participants becoming food citizens.

## Fundraising

AgScape is a charitable organization, dependent on the funding of members, grant providers and supporters in order to offer our programming and events for free. Due to our responsibilities to our funders, we need to capture information on youth and/or participant attitudinal changes as well as capture testimonials, so that we are able to report back and/or receive future funding.

## What Is Done With The Survey Information?

All surveys conducted by AgScape respect the privacy and confidentiality of youth and all other participants. To ensure inclusivity, AgScape surveys are optional and are not a requirement to participate in AgScape programming and events. When completing surveys, youth and all participants:

- Can choose not to respond to any questions that may make them feel uncomfortable in any way; and
- Know that survey information gathered remains confidential and are assigned identifiers, when applicable, that ensure their protected identity when shared in public or private communications.

## Where Is Survey Information Stored?

AgScape uses the digital platform, SimpleSurvey, for the completion and storing of survey information. Simple Survey has its servers and backups located on Canadian soil only and are hosted in secure commercial data centers that meet strict Canadian government compliance requirements and laws.

# Who Has Access To Survey Information?

Only AgScape staff members and Agriculture in the Classroom-Canada staff have access to survey information.

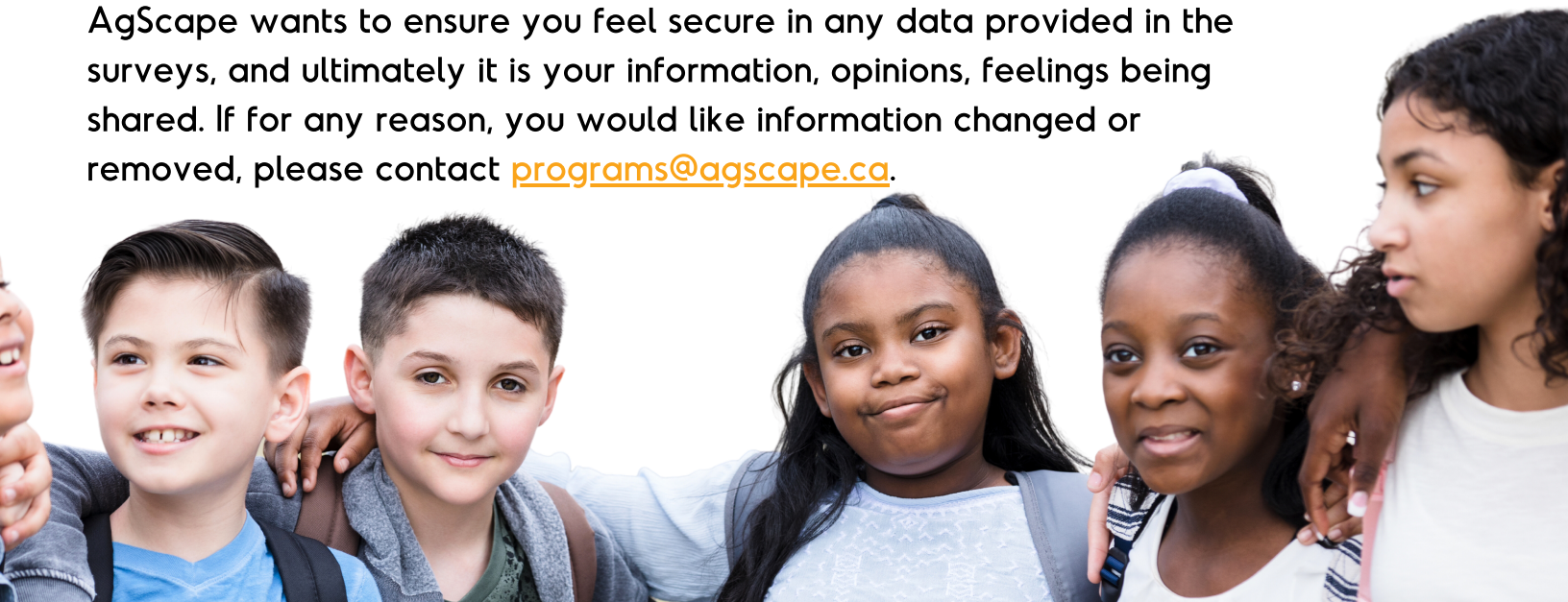
# How Long Do We Keep Survey Information?

AgScape stores its survey information for seven (7) years. We store the information for this long for a number of reasons including:

- For any potential auditing purposes;
- For historical data on quality of programs and events; and
- To review and analyze for strategic direction of future programs and events.

# Who To Connect With If You Want Survey Information Changed/Removed?

AgScape wants to ensure you feel secure in any data provided in the surveys, and ultimately it is your information, opinions, feelings being shared. If for any reason, you would like information changed or removed, please contact [programs@agscape.ca](mailto:programs@agscape.ca).



**Who to connect with if you have further questions?**

If you have further questions, please connect with [programs@agscape.ca](mailto:programs@agscape.ca).