

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

STEPS FOR REPORTING:

This card is a component of the Commit to Kids® program. It is intended as a quick reference for use in a sporting environment and is not meant to be exhaustive or to replace legal advice. Consult with child welfare, law enforcement and legal counsel if child abuse is alleged or suspected.



1
Child discloses abuse or abuse is discovered with the adult involved in the abuse being a coach/volunteer.
 (Document)



2
 Coach/volunteer who receives disclosure:
 • **Notifies law enforcement** and/or child welfare about the incident;
 • **Consults with child welfare** about notifying parents; and
 • **Notifies the supervisor/manager**, who in turn notifies the head of the organization.
 (Document)



3
 Head of the organization/manager **suspends coach/volunteer** suspected of abuse with or without pay until case is resolved.* (Document) If the individual is a volunteer or unpaid staff, consider if the individual should be dismissed from their position immediately.

Many of these steps would also apply when:

- A child discloses abuse by someone outside the organization
- A peer discloses on behalf of another child
- An adult suspects a child is abused



As part of any investigation or internal follow-up process, an organization should be **critically assessing the adequacy of existing policies** and practices, and strengthening as necessary to better protect children.



4
 A child welfare agency and/or police **carry out investigation**. Organization should conduct an internal follow-up in consultation with police/child welfare and adjusts internal policies if needed.

POTENTIAL OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION:

A) Substantiated/guilty. Coach/volunteer is dismissed from his/her position.*

B) Inconclusive/not guilty*. Seek legal counsel. Consider if coach/volunteer should be dismissed, with or without severance.*

+ Criminal processes can be complex and lengthy. A finding of not guilty may not necessarily mean that the abuse did not occur. Consult with a lawyer.



5

- **Document the outcome** of the investigation on the incident report form.
- **Document the results** of the internal follow up.



***NOTE:**
 Seek legal guidance prior to suspension and/or dismissal.



The safety of the child and other children in the organization must be ensured at all times in the process.



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Model in image not intended to be illustrative.

Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

What do you do if you have concerns about possible child sexual abuse?

When a person becomes aware that a child may be or has been abused, there is a legal and ethical responsibility to take action. The legal responsibility comes from child welfare legislation within each province and territory and may also be a duty of a person's profession or workplace.

The responsibility to report means that a person who has knowledge or information that a child is being or is at risk of being abused must report it to someone:

- If the information relates to potential abuse of a child by the child's parent or guardian, the person must report it to child welfare or police.
- If the concern involves potential abuse by any other person, the individual should report it to the child's parent or guardian and may also be obligated to report it to child welfare and/or police.



People are responsible for reporting concerns, not proving abuse.

Reporting information about potential child abuse allows:

- An authority, like child welfare or police, to determine whether it is necessary to investigate.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) to proactively take steps to protect their child.

Mandatory reporting legislation removes any personal or professional dilemma from becoming a barrier to reporting. It is not uncommon for people to minimize or deny what a child tells them during a disclosure. People are often concerned about being wrong and causing problems. Remember, reporting may disrupt existing or future sexual abuse from occurring against other children, as well.

If a person learns about past child sexual abuse that is no longer occurring, it's still important to report the abuse. The offender may still have access to other children and those children may be at risk.



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How do you report misconduct/concerning behaviour?

While obvious sexual acts are easier to identify and address, behaviour that doesn't meet the threshold of abuse still needs to be acted upon. Misconduct is considered adult behaviour towards a child that is inappropriate and that breaches reasonable boundaries:

- If you observe or hear about concerning behaviour or an inappropriate situation between an adult and your child or another child within the organization, report your concerns to the organization.
- If you have contact with the child outside the organization (e.g., you know the child's parents), you should still report to the organization and also report your concerns to the child's parents.
- In some circumstances, particularly if your concerns are not addressed or you become aware of more information, you may wish to consider involving the appropriate authorities.

Flagging the concerning behaviour to the organization should trigger a review in an effort to correct and stop the possible misconduct. It will also allow an organization to address any behaviour that's not consistent with its policies and procedures.

Flagging concerning behaviour to a parent may help the parent address the issue with the organization and discuss it with their child if appropriate.



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This information sheet is part of the Commit to Kids® program. The contents of this sheet are provided as information only and do not constitute legal advice. The exact requirements for reporting vary by province and territory. Consult the child welfare legislation in your province or territory, your local child welfare authority, law enforcement and/or legal counsel as appropriate in a given situation.