

4-H Nova Scotia Misconduct Reporting and Appeals Procedures

Responsibility for Reporting

4-H has an open-door policy for reporting concerns of misconduct, abuse, or neglect and takes all claims very seriously. As a youth-serving organization, 4-H is committed to ensuring youth, leader, and staff safety.

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. Incident reports are reviewed by authorized provincial staff. They will advise on next steps and will notify 4-H Canada as required.

Where abuse or neglect is disclosed or suspected, reporting to provincial authorities is mandatory as dictated by Provincial law. Refer to the **Duty to Report Policy**, in the [Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada Policy Manual](#), for policy on reporting suspected abuse to local authorities. When abuse is reported to authorities by 4-H leaders or staff, an incident report must also be filed with 4-H.

4-H Nova Scotia will review all incident reports within 2 business days and will act promptly to ensure incidents of misconduct are responded to with the best interests of all parties concerned in mind.

Rationale

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, fun, and inclusive for all involved. This is the responsibility of everyone involved in any 4-H activity. To ensure this is possible, the conduct of all 4-H members, family members, volunteers, staff, and guests must align with the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada.

Definitions

Abuse – the disclosed or suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a child

Neglect - when the caregivers fail to meet the basic needs of a child, including; adequate food, clothing, healthcare, supervision, education, nutrition, or shelter. This may be intentional or unintentional.

Misconduct – behaviour that does not align with the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada including but not limited to; disrespectful speech, action or behavior; unsportsmanlike conduct; dishonest handling of financial matters; failure to provide appropriate animal care; failure to protect confidential information; using drugs or alcohol at 4-H youth events; failure to uphold the 4-H in Canada Inclusion Policy; and breaking any federal or provincial laws.

Youth Safety Reporting System for 4-H in Canada - Staff and trained Leaders must document all serious incidents, that occur during a 4-H 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. The Youth Safety Reporting System for 4-H in Canada is a confidential online reporting 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 <https://4-h-canada.i-sight.com/external-capture>. See the table below to determine when an online Incident Report is required.

Responsibility for Immediate Action

If an incident is occurring which jeopardizes the physical or mental safety of participants, or the reputation of 4-H, the event organizer (Trained Leader or 4-H Nova Scotia Staff) has the authority to remove the disruptive individual(s) from the activity.

When to Report Incidents for 4-H in Canada

ISSUE	INCIDENT REPORT REQUIRED:	
Observe, know, or suspect child abuse or child is in harm's way.	<p><u>Always notify authorities first.</u> Then complete an incident report if 4-H leaders or youth are involved.</p>	
Misconduct related to: -mishandling of finances, -breaking federal or provincial law, -using drugs or alcohol at a 4-H youth event.	<p>Always. Refer to 4-H in Canada Youth Safety policy manual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misconduct Policy 	
Failure to uphold policy: -breach of confidential personal, health, or financial information -youth or adult is excluded from participating -failure to implement youth supervision practices (i.e. Rule of Two)	<p>Always. Refer to 4-H in Canada Youth Safety policy manual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Assessment and Management Policy Inclusion Policy Supervision Policy 	
Risk to 4-H reputation and image.	Always.	
ISSUE	ADDRESS LOCALLY:	INCIDENT REPORT REQUIRED:
Concerning actions, such as -disrespectful speech, action, or behaviour -unsportsmanlike conduct -not providing appropriate animal care	If able to address the issue at club or event with quick resolution or corrective coaching.	If this is a repeated issue or behaviour raises safety concerns.
Accident or illness involving any participants.	If very basic first aid treatment provided. A note on treatment is given to parents.	If there is an illness, injury, mental health concern, or if a vehicle is involved.
Property damage.	If it is easily repaired.	If it is unexpected, may involve insurance.
ISSUE	ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION PROCESS	
Interpersonal conflict between youth or adults.	If conflict or grievance is related to misconduct, use the table above to determine if an incident report is required.	
Grievance about a 4-H project or program decision.	<p>Otherwise try to resolve at club or event first.</p> <p>4-H-NS-Conflict-Resolution-Tips-and-Procedures-01-2020.pdf (4hnovascotia.ca) offers tips and next steps if further support is needed. If this does not resolve the conflict or grievance, reach out to the Provincial office for support.</p>	

Misconduct Reporting

Issues of a serious nature (see table above) must be reported using a confidential online 4-H incident report form through the [Youth Safety Reporting System for 4-H in Canada](#). Refer to the [Incident Reporting Quick Reference Guide](#) for assistance completing the online form.

Incident Report Handling

1. Online incident reports are received and reviewed by the Executive Director to determine next steps:
 - Where possible corrective coaching will be provided to try to correct the issue.
 - For more serious issues the Executive Director will refer these incidents to the provincial board and Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee.
2. The Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee shall review serious incidents and make recommendations for action.
3. The Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee has the authority to issue a temporary suspension of 4-H members, family members, volunteers, staff, or guests while a review of the incident and verification of facts of the allegations is conducted.
4. Following the review of the incident, the Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee will communicate the result of their review to the individual in question and the individual who filed the incident report. The Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee has the authority to:
 - Require retraining on 4-H Canada Code of Conduct expectations
 - Issue a set of expectations for positive reengagement
 - Extend the temporary suspension, with a designated return date
 - Permanently terminate an individual's opportunity to participate in 4-H

Suspension and Termination

The involved party will be notified in writing by the Executive Director of suspensions or terminations, unless such disclosure would jeopardize any review or statutory investigation.

Grounds for suspension 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 Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada 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. Members over the age of 19, leaders and staff will be automatically terminated by the provincial organization in the event of criminal charges.

Grounds for termination include:

- a. Serious, or repeated breaches of the Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada or Youth Safety policies
- b. Failure to comply with government statutes or regulations, putting 4-H in Canada, participants, or partners at risk of harm
- c. The involved party's presence at a 4-H event is believed to pose a risk to others
- d. Members over the age of 19, leaders and staff will be automatically terminated by the provincial organization in the event of criminal charges.

Terms of suspension (temporary) or termination (permanent) shall include:

- The individual will not take part in any activity connected to 4-H in Canada
- The individual will not enter 4-H property or premises (including premises rented or leased for use by 4-H)
- The individual will not represent themselves in a 4-H capacity
- The individual will not contact youth members

Any breaches of the terms of suspension, or concealment by others, will be considered grounds for immediate termination of anyone involved.

Documentation and Reporting

The Executive Director will document the misconduct review process and will notify 4-H Canada of any suspensions or terminations.

The Executive Director will determine what key stakeholders need to be notified of the change in status where the health and safety of members, youth and staff is relevant.

Suspension and Termination Appeals

Any suspended or terminated youth member, leader, parent, volunteer or staff has the right to submit an appeal for consideration by the Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee if they believe an improper ruling/decision has been made concerning a misconduct issue rendered by the Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee.

Grounds for Appeal:

A decision cannot be appealed simply because one does not like or agree with it; an appeal may only be heard if there are sufficient grounds. Sufficient grounds for appeal occur where the Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee:

1. Made a decision that they did not have authority or jurisdiction to do so as set out in governing documents;
2. Failed to follow procedures as laid out in the Internal Process for Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee.
3. Made a decision which was influenced by bias. Bias being defined as a lack of neutrality to such an extent that the decision-maker is unable to consider other views;
4. Exercised their discretion for an improper purpose;
5. Made a decision that was grossly unreasonable or unfair.
6. Did not have access to all pertinent information that could influence the decision (e.g. new information has become available)

The Appellant will bear the onus of proof in the appeal and therefore must be able to demonstrate that the Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee made an error, as described above.

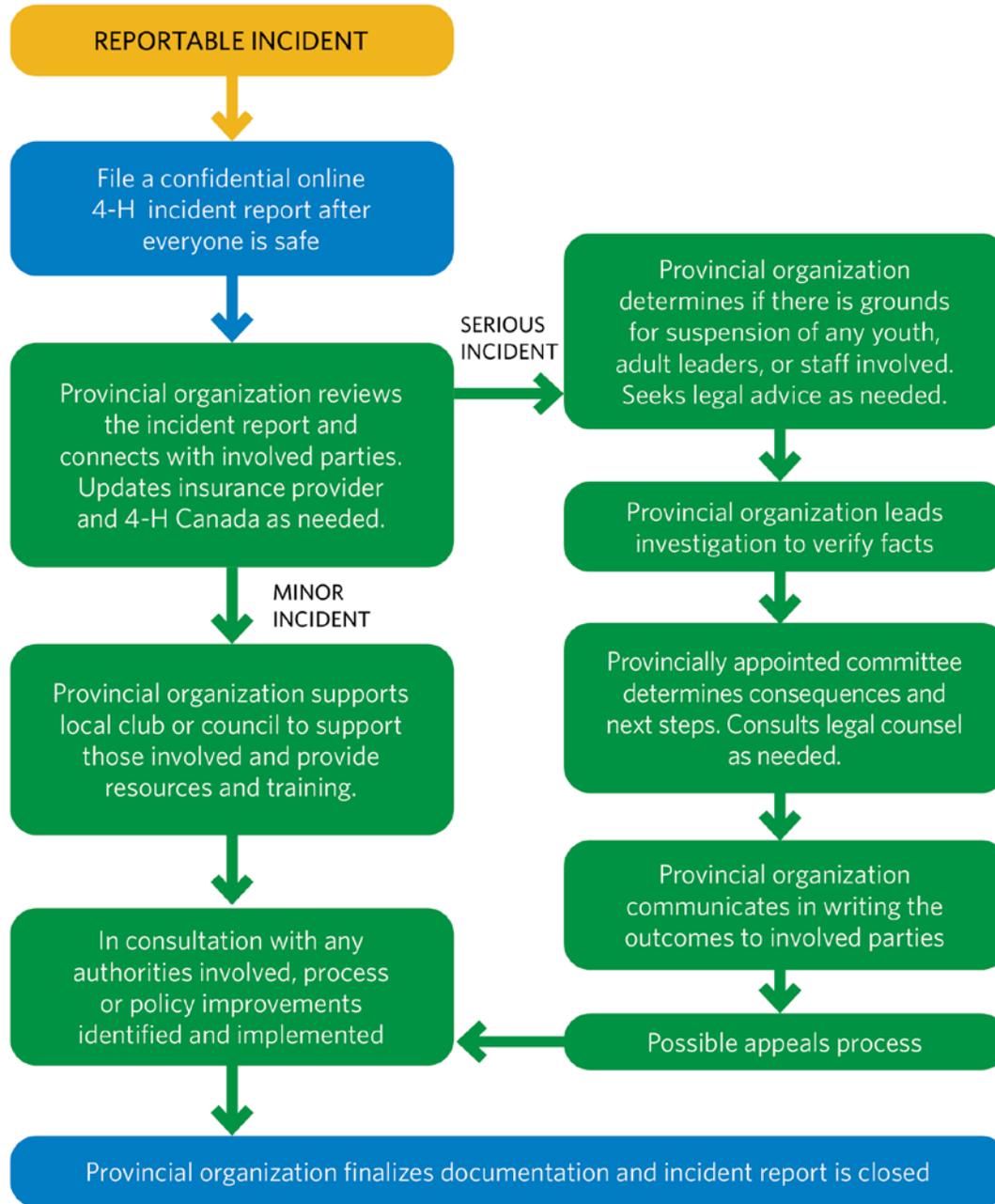
Appeals Process

If an individual determines they have grounds for an appeal, they have thirty (30) days to make an appeal, in writing to the provincial office.

The Executive Director will notify the Provincial Board chair and the Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Committee will rule on the appeal. The Executive Director will report on the final outcome.

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.



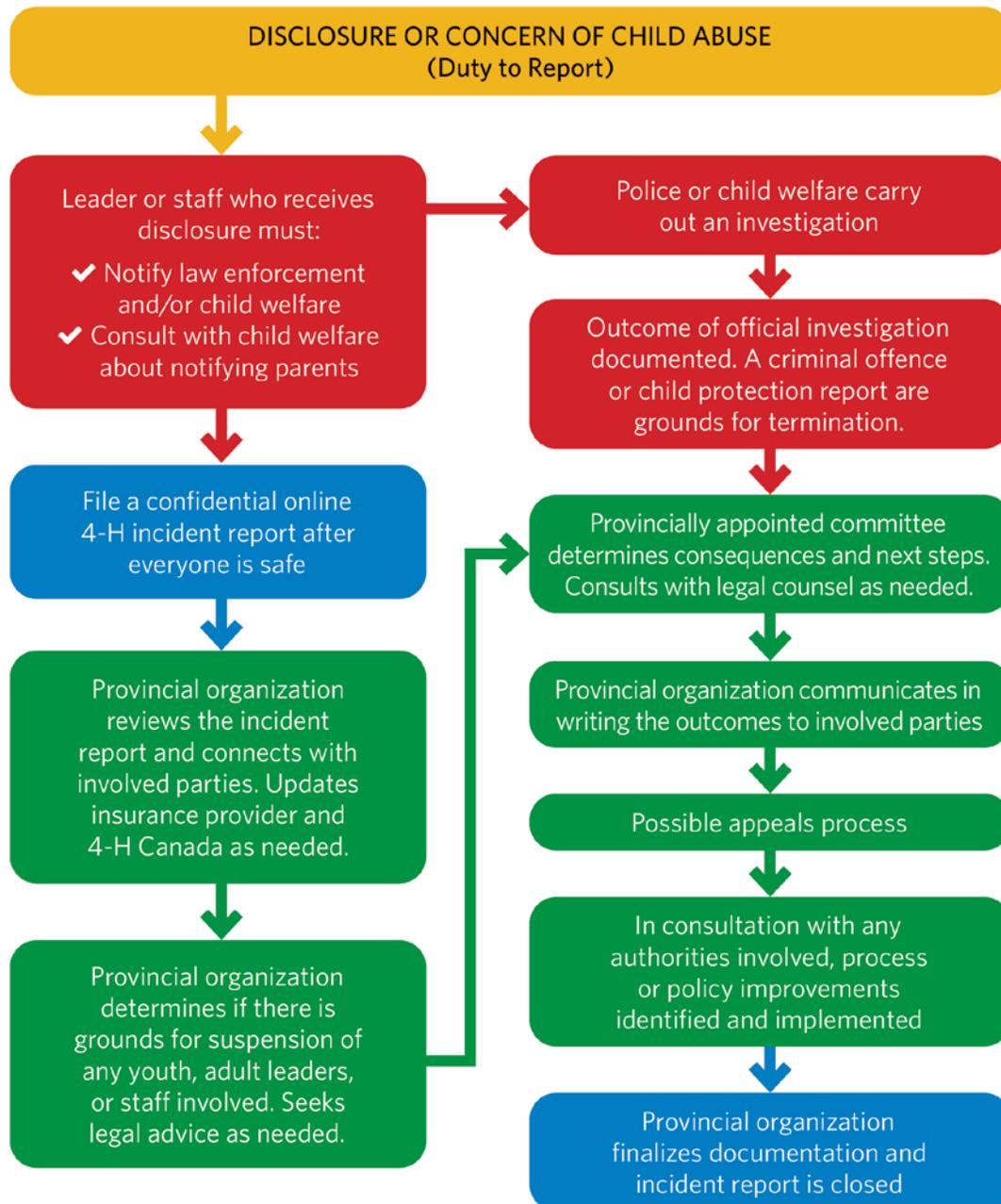
LEGEND

- 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