

# Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Youth in the Canadian Cadet Organizations

Organizations like the Canadian Cadet Organizations offer incredible experiences and opportunities for youth. These experiences are integral to enhancing youth development. Positive experiences are tied to healthy relationships between adults and youth, as well as to safe environments where adults are accountable for their actions and behaviours. As such, the purpose of these guidelines is to establish a common understanding of expectations for adults interacting with youth in the Canadian Cadet Organizations, and a sense of safety for those who need to bring forward any concerns of misconduct towards youth.

*For the purpose of this document “an adult” refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with youth in the Canadian Cadet Organizations. “Youth” refers to a Sea Cadet, Army Cadet, Air Cadet, or Junior Canadian Ranger (JCR).*

*This document does not address every situation nor is it meant to be an exhaustive list of acceptable or unacceptable conduct. It is meant to provide a framework within the Canadian Cadet Organizations in which individuals are expected to exercise common sense and good judgment when interacting with youth.*



### In this document you will find information on:

- **Professional Boundaries in the Adult and Youth Relationship**
- **Age of Protection in Canada**
- **Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviour Guidelines of Staff/Volunteers**
- **Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct**
- **Access to Free Online Learning from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection**



The Canadian Cadet Organizations (CCO) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P), sharing resources and finding ways to enhance the training CCO offers. In April 2018, when the two organizations officially signed the MOU, training based on C3P's Commit to Kids program (C2K) was made available to adult staff in an effort to increase cadet safety. This brochure is part of the MOU commitment to enhancing education and awareness regarding inappropriate behavior or situations.

## The Adult and Youth Relationship

Generally, adults are in a position of trust, and it's through professional boundaries that this foundation of trust between adults and youth is built. If boundaries are broken, that pillar of the relationship crumbles.

The adult and youth relationship is also characterized by a power imbalance in favour of the adult. Youth are taught to respect and listen to adults, and they are dependent upon the adult's knowledge and training to further develop their skills.

Both trust and power can be used to breach the adult-youth relationship, and often this happens through boundary violations, which occur when the adult places their needs above the needs of the youth and gains personally or professionally at the youth's expense.

The responsibility is always with the adult to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with youth.



### Age of Protection in Canada

The age of protection (also called the age of consent) is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of protection in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the *Criminal Code* increases that age to 18 in the context of certain relationships. If the child is:

Under 12 years old	No person can engage in sexual activity with the child under any circumstance.
12 or 13 years old	The age difference <u>must</u> be LESS THAN 2 years AND the relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*
14 or 15 years old	The age difference <u>must</u> be LESS THAN 5 years AND the relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*
16 or 17 years old	The relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*

\* For all children aged 12-17: If the other person is in a position of trust or authority over the child (e.g., a coach, teacher, adults working/volunteering within the Canadian Cadets Organizations, etc.), the child is dependent on the other person or the relationship is exploitative of the child, the child is NOT able to give consent, making sexual activity in the context of such relationships illegal. **In these situations, only a person aged 18 or older is capable of consent.** The increased age takes into account the inherent vulnerability of the child and is meant to protect the child in situations that involve a power or other imbalance.

## Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviour

Individuals working or volunteering with the Canadian Cadet Organizations are expected to model behaviour that upholds public confidence and enhances healthy relationships with youth and families.

### Examples of Appropriate Behaviour:

- Respectful language, tone and attitude towards others
- Respectful of personal physical and emotional boundaries
- Responsive to youth to meet the youth's needs and not the adult's
- Engaging with youth in a manner that would be seen by a reasonable observer as maintaining reasonable boundaries
- Keeping practices open to observation by parents
- Communication and contact with youth (including electronic) is **transparent, accountable** and **authorized**

### Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour:

- Disrespectful language
- Humiliating or intimidating youth
- Inappropriate touching of youth (e.g., massaging, stroking, caressing, wrestling, tickling)
- Confiding or sharing overly personal information with youth
- Asking youth to keep secrets
- Electronic communication with youth that is personal and not directly tied to Canadian Cadet Organizations duties
- Communication that is sexual or flirtatious in nature
- Pictures taken with personal devices or in change rooms
- Meeting with youth outside the Cadet and JCR program without authorization



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## Standard of Measure for Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

All interactions and activities with youth should be (including electronic communication):

- Transparent
- In response to meeting the child's needs
- Accountable
- Goal-oriented and outcome focused
- Tied to Canadian Cadet Organizations duties

## Parents and Adults with the Canadian Cadet Organizations Play a Key Role

It can be difficult to respond to a situation where you notice an adult and youth relationship that appears inappropriate. Reporting inappropriate behaviour creates accountability so proper action can be taken and boundary expectations can be re-established. Parents or adults who have concerns should speak with that person's supervisor.

Parents and adults should also have regular age-appropriate conversations with youth about healthy interpersonal boundaries. Some topics to talk with youth about are the qualities of healthy relationships, importance of personal boundaries, the role of adult leaders and how to get help/where to bring concerns. For this information and more, visit [kidsintheknow.ca/safetysheets](http://kidsintheknow.ca/safetysheets).

For more information on reporting inappropriate conduct and child sexual abuse visit [protectchildren.ca/concerns](http://protectchildren.ca/concerns).

# Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

*For the purposes of this handout, child means a person who is or appears to be under the age of 18 years.*

## 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<sup>1</sup>. 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/or that breaches reasonable boundaries and breaches the guidelines for adults interacting with youth.

### For Parents:

- 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.

### For Adult Leaders:

- If you observe or hear about concerning behaviour or an inappropriate situation between an adult and a child within the organization, report your concerns to your supervisor. The supervisor will address the concern in accordance with CCO reporting policies.



## How can parents/guardians learn more about the issue of child sexual abuse and misconduct?

If you are the parent/guardian of a youth in the Cadet and JCR program, an online training module on the issue of child sexual abuse and misconduct is available to you, free of charge (*Commit to Kids - Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training for those Working with Children*<sup>2</sup>). To access this training visit **[protectchildren.ca/C2Ktraining](https://protectchildren.ca/C2Ktraining)** and click the *Purchase* button. Select the first training listed on the purchase page and enter the promo code **CCOParent**.

*Note: Use of the CCOParent promo code is for parents/guardians of youth enrolled in the Cadet and JCR program only<sup>3</sup>. The code is not to be used, shared or forwarded beyond the intended audience. If you have already, or will be taking the training as part of CCO's PYDPO training, do not use this promo code to access the training. Instructions for Adult Leader access will be provided by your Commanding Officer or Patrol Leader.*



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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Information in this training is designed for those working in child-serving organizations and as such not all information is parent/guardian specific.

<sup>3</sup> This promo code is valid until June 30, 2019. Canadian Centre for Child Protection reserves the right to terminate use of a promo code in accordance with the MOU between CCO and C3P. Users attempting to access a disabled promo code will not be provided with a refund should they complete a purchase online.