



Revision Date: April 20, 2022
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The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Canada

Youth Protection Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Canada (Award Canada) is proud to offer a safe and supportive environment where young people can feel accepted, valued and respected. This policy lays out a framework to help staff and volunteers who work directly for Award Canada keep Award participants safe from harm. It is also intended to provide a minimum level of expected practice from organizations, their staff and volunteers, who use and work with the Award.
- 1.2. In addition, the information outlined in *“Youth Protection and Welfare - Procedures and Support Resources”* is intended to help Award staff and direct volunteers better understand:
 - 1.2.1. Potential forms of child abuse and issues of child welfare
 - 1.2.2. What to do if a young person comes to you with information or if you suspect a young person is being abused
 - 1.2.3. How to report suspected abuse
 - 1.2.4. How to handle abuse allegations against staff and volunteers
 - 1.2.5. How to behave in an acceptable manner as *“Adults in the Award”* and protect yourself against allegations of abuse
- 1.3. All staff members and direct volunteers are required to review the information detailed in this policy and the *“Youth Protection and Welfare - Procedures and Support Resources”* document.
- 1.4. Award participants are aged between 14 and 24. This policy applies to all Award participants. All Award participants are considered to be children or young people when considering how they should be treated in regard to contact with adults.

2. Safeguarding Policy

General obligations

- 2.1. It is the responsibility of each adult in the Award to be aware of their specific youth protection responsibilities:
 - 2.1.1. You are required to take immediate action to protect youth if there are any concerns for their safety and welfare.



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- 2.1.2. If you have reason to believe a youth is being abused or neglected, you are required to report to the authorities, to your organization and to The Award Canada. You may have additional protection and reporting obligations under provincial, territorial, and federal law.
- 2.2. It is the responsibility of each adult in the Award to ensure that:
 - 2.2.1. They recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.
 - 2.2.2. Their behaviour is appropriate at all times.
 - 2.2.3. They observe the rules established by the Award and by their own organization for the safety and security of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - 2.2.4. They follow the procedures of their organization following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of any abuse, including those regarding the reporting of any suspicion, disclosure or allegation.
 - 2.2.5. In every respect, the relationships they form with the children, young people and vulnerable adults under their care are appropriate.
- 2.3. In addition, all staff members and volunteers will undergo appropriate screening to federal and / or provincial standards (see Background Checking Policy).
- 2.4. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation has published a Code of Conduct with regard to safeguarding that describes what it expects of individuals and the organizations to which they belong. **All adults in the Award, regardless of appointment or role, are to be provided access to and expected to adhere to this "Code of Conduct for Adults in the Award" (see below) and the Award Canada "General Standards of Behaviour"** and treat them as minimum standards of behaviour, recognising that further standards may be required by their own provincial legislation or policies set by their own organization.
- 2.5. Award Canada will undertake due diligence when selecting organizations and individuals with whom to partner on Award activity. All organizations working with Award Canada will adhere to national guidelines for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

3. Specific obligations

- 3.1. Specific obligations for management, staff and volunteers are clearly set out in the "*Youth Protection and Welfare - Procedures and Support Resources*" document and must be adhered to at all times.



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4. Who is an adult in the Award?

- 4.1. For the sake of the Award someone aged over the age of 16, engaged in Award related activities that bring them into contact, regularly or from time to time, with children, young people and vulnerable adults is considered to be subject to this policy.
- 4.2. Award participants may work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. In this case, an Award participant, even if aged under 16, must adhere to the standards of conduct described in this document expected of an adult engaged in Award related activity.

5. Screening of staff and direct volunteers

- 5.1. All Award Staff, applicants for position as Award Staff and direct volunteers will be screened by Award Canada, according to the relevant federal or provincial procedures current when they apply and appropriate to the position they are seeking. Further information about the screening procedures for staff can be found in the Award Canada Employee handbook. Award Canada does not screen staff or volunteers of Award Centres and delivery partners. This is required to be carried out by Award Centres. The procedures for vetting by these organizations will be tested as part of licensing / quality assurance processes.
- 5.2. As participants choose their own activity coaches / assessors, participants must be advised that Award Canada does not screen these people. Participants are encouraged to check with their Award Centre about screening of activity coaches/assessors.

6. Responding to allegations of abuse and misconduct

- 6.1. As an organization, our obligations are to ensure that:
 - 6.1.1. The Award takes every appropriate step to protect young people involved in the Award from abuse by any Award staff member or volunteer associated with the Award.
 - 6.1.2. The process of responding to allegations made against any Award staff member or volunteer is fair to all parties concerned.
 - 6.1.3. Any Award staff member or volunteer involved with the Award against whom an allegation has been made is aware of the procedure which will be followed in dealing with the allegation.
- 6.2. Confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.
- 6.3. Further details about the process of recording, investigating (where appropriate) and



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responding to allegations are laid out in “*Youth Protection and Welfare - Procedures and Support Resources*”.

7. Youth Protection Officer

- 7.1. Questions and support for staff and volunteers can be sought from The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Canada, Youth Protection Officer, [insert name] at [insert email and work phone number].

Appendix 1.

Code of Conduct for Adults in the Award

Safe From Harm – An international standard

The following **Code of Conduct for Adults in the Award** is provided as a minimum guide to protection for adults from allegation of abuse and for keeping young people safe from harm. All adults involved with the Award, as a minimum, must:

1. Keep to this Code of Conduct at all times.
2. Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
3. Set an example for others to follow.
4. Avoid favouritism
5. Plan for Award activities to involve more than one other person being present, or at least within sight and hearing of others. This is relevant in all sections of an Award Participant’s programme.
6. Follow any supervisory ratios stipulated by their own organizations (and those responsible for a specific Award activity).
7. Respect a person’s right to personal privacy.
8. Avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust. For instance, a sexual relationship between an Award leader or assessor and any Award participant, even one who is over the legal age of consent, would be unacceptable.
9. Have separate sleeping accommodation for children / young people and adults and adhere to any further rules on this matter stipulated by their own organization and/or the organization responsible for the Award activity.
10. Allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have.
11. Encourage others to challenge attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
12. Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, e.g. tantrums and crushes.
13. Make everyone (children, young people, parents and carers, Award Leaders, Adventurous Journey Supervisors, and Award Assessors) aware of their own organization’s safeguarding arrangements.
14. Remember this Code of Conduct at sensitive moments, e.g. when helping someone who has been bullied, bereaved or abused.
15. Tell other adults where they are and what they are doing.



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16. Remember someone else might misinterpret actions, even if they are carried out with good intention.
17. Take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and immediately follow the reporting processes in use within their organization and, where relevant, the organization responsible for the Award activity.
18. Never trivialise abuse.
19. Never form a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of their position of power or influence over the other.
20. Never allow abusive activities, e.g. initiation ceremonies or bullying.
21. Never take part in inappropriate behaviour or contact, whether physical, verbal or sexual.
22. Never take part in physical contact games with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
23. Never make suggestive remarks or threats to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
24. Never use inappropriate language when writing, phoning, emailing or using the internet.
25. Never let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported.
26. Remember this Code of Conduct when online or using digital methods of communication.
27. Never rely just on their good name, the name of their organization or the name of the Award to protect them.