



HopeStory

Guide to Reporting Child Abuse

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed as a reference manual to assist individuals responsible for submitting the Suspected Child Abuse Report to their local authorities.

Hope Story has prepared this guide to:

- Explain and define statutory requirements and responsibilities.
- Explain how to submit child abuse information to local authorities if necessary.
- Assist Field Directors in Hope Story Partner Sites in complying with reporting requirements.

WHAT TO REPORT

Hope Story mandates the reporting of child abuse cases (a person under the age of 18 years) that have happened on any Hope Story affiliate or partner site, to their respective leadership board and/or local authorities involving any one of the abuse types below:

- Sexual Abuse: When a child is used by an adult or older child for their own sexual gratification regardless of the country's local age of majority or consent laws. These can be contact or non-contact acts, which can include threats and exposure to pornography.
- Physical Abuse: When a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. This may take the form of forceful shoving or grabbing, punching, burning, kicking and may result in cuts, burns, fractures or bruises.

WHAT NOT TO REPORT

Sexual

Acts of consensual sexual behavior between children of a similar age. However, appropriate and corrective action is to be taken immediately to ensure behavior does not happen again.

Physical

- Incidents of accidental injury or injuries.
- Reasonable force by Hope Story affiliate partners to stop violent disturbances
- Mutual fights between minors.

Unfounded Reports

Reasons for unfounded reports may include false reporting, improbable incidents, accidents, and events that do not constitute child abuse as defined by Canadian law.

HOW TO REPORT

Once a child abuse claim has been made:

- Contact the appropriate investigative contacts such as witnesses, victims, suspects etc.
- Fill out the suspected child abuse report form
- Determine whether the child abuse report was founded/unfounded,

- Confirm that the suspected abuse or neglect is reportable to local authorities.
- Complete the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, Hope Story requires that the following be sent in the next scheduled quarterly report:

- a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse Report Form
- Corroborative documents explaining how the incident was handled, what corrective measures were taken for disciplinary action and what preventative measures have been put in place.

Please email the copy of the Suspected Child Abuse Report alongside the corroborative materials to partnerships@hopestory.ca

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Active Investigation - the activities of the Field Director in response to a report of known or suspected child abuse. For purposes of reporting information to Hope Story, “Active Investigation” means: conducting interview of the victim(s) and any known suspect (s) and witness(es); gathering and preserving evidence: determining whether the incident is substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded; and preparing a report for Hope Story.

Child - person who was a victim under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged abuse.

Child Abuse - includes physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means upon a child by another person, sexual abuse as defined in Section 1, 163,171 or 171 of the Criminal Code of Canada, the willful harming or injuring of a child or the endangering of the person or health of a child, and unlawful corporal punishment or injury. "Child abuse" does not include a mutual affray between minors nor an injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by an individual acting within the course and scope of his or her role in the program.

Inconclusive Report - a report that is determined by the investigator who conducted the investigation not to be unfounded, but the findings are inconclusive and there is insufficient evidence to determine whether child abuse has occurred.

Substantiated – Hope Story, alongside Hope Story’s Partner Field Director and board of directors have determined based upon evidence presented, that it is more likely than not that child abuse as defined, has occurred.

Suspect - a person who has been designated as a suspect in a child abuse investigation in one of Hope Story’s Partner sites and has subsequently been reported as such to Hope Story.

Unfounded - Hope Story, alongside Hope Story’s Partner Field Director and board of directors, have determined based on facts, that there was no child abuse as information appears to be: false, inherently improbable, a result of accidental injury.

Victim - a child as per Hope Story's Definition, who has been designated as a victim in a child abuse investigation report.