

CanTec19 Safeguarding Policy, Protocol and Reporting Procedures

Details in this CanTec19 Child Safeguarding Policy and Protocol is informed by the Provincial and territorial child protection legislation and policy – 2018 <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/health-risks-safety/provincial-territorial-child-protection-legislation-policy-2018.html#t4> and by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (UK) <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-checklist?state=1#child-protection> and by <https://www.sojustrepairit.org/pdfs/IDRC-Child-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf>

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who participate in the CanTec19 research study from harm
- to provide CanTec19 research staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of CanTec19 including paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, and students.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognize that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated CanTec 19 protection lead: Dr. Catharine Munn
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practices through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for research staff and volunteers
- implementing effective online safety procedures
- providing effective management for research staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training so that all research staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and ethical guidance
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against research staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints process in place if children or parents are concerned about study processes
- ensuring that we provide a safe virtual environment for children, young people, research staff and volunteers, by applying safety measures in accordance with the law and ethical processes
- building a safeguarding culture where research staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

CanTec19 research staff, volunteers and students whose work involves children must adhere to the following standard of conduct:

- Treat children and young people with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, mental or physical disability, sexuality or gender identity, and national, ethnic or social origin, or any other status.
- Use positive methods to manage behaviour
- Contribute to an environment where children and young people are listened to, respected, valued, and do not have their concerns and feelings dismissed because of their status
- Ensure contact with children and young people is appropriate at all times and not an invasion of privacy; in specifically assisting children with disabilities
- Respond to all concerns, allegations, or disclosures according to our reporting procedures (see below)
- Cooperate with any investigation into violations of the child safeguarding policy (including interviews) and proactively disclose information helpful to the investigation
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries when engaging with children and young people in online contexts including (but not limited to) email and social media.

In Ontario a child is in need of protection [in the following circumstances]:

- Physical harm including failure to adequately care for or supervise, or pattern of neglect
- Likely risk of physical harm
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Likely risk of sexual abuse or exploitation
- Failure to provide or consent to treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering
- Emotional harm
- Failure to provide or consent to treatment or services to remedy emotional harm
- Likely risk of emotional harm
- Failure to obtain or consent to treatment to alleviate a mental, emotional or developmental condition that could seriously impair the child's development
- Parent has died or unavailable and has not made adequate provision for child's care and custody
- Parent refuses or unable to resume child's care following residential placement
- Child younger than 12 and has repeatedly injured another person or caused loss or damage to property with encouragement of parent or due to failure to supervise properly
- Parent is unable to care for child and matter is brought before the court on consent of parent and child (if child is over 12)
- Child is 16 or 17 and prescribed circumstance or condition exists (see following bullet point)
- Amendments in the last five years:

N.B. The Act is new in 2018. The new legislation removed "abandonment" as a ground for intervention and added the ground for children aged 16 and 17 ("the child is 16 or 17 and a prescribed circumstance or condition exists").

Duty to report in Ontario

If a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect [any of the grounds for a finding that a child is in need of protection], the person shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society (e.g. CAS). The duty is ongoing (so subsequent incidents or information will give rise to a new duty to report) and the duty cannot be delegated to another person. The duty is not mandatory in respect of children who are 16 or 17, but reports may be made in respect of such children.

Reporting and responding to concerns

Research staff and volunteers of the CanTec19 Study are responsible for reporting and responding to concerns about the safety of children and young people they come into contact within the context of their

work. These guidelines are in addition to the legislative Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>. Research staff, volunteers and students should in particular be aware and familiar with legislative requirements around responding to reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, and not consider these guidelines a substitute or alternative to them.

The following guidelines apply in responding to concerns about abuse and reporting them appropriately:

- Reports of abuse from children or young people are to be taken seriously and treated with respect. If a child approaches you about abuse:
 - Listen carefully, but do not press for information;
 - Let the child know what your next actions will be, and that you'll let them know what happens;
 - Do not investigate, inform, question or confront the alleged abuser; and
 - Record carefully what you heard on the reporting form (see below) and follow the reporting procedure.
- Suspicions or concerns about abuse arising in other contexts should follow the reporting procedure outlined below and file a concern using the protocol below (always in consultation with the protection lead, Dr. Catharine Munn). More information on filing reports to the Children's Aid Society can be found here:
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/societies/ocascomplaint.aspx>

In Hamilton:

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
735 King Street East, Hamilton, ON L8M 1A1
Bus: 905-525-2012 | Fax: 905-525-5606

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
26 Arrowsmith Road, Hamilton, ON L8N 4B9
Bus: 905-522-1121

CanTec19 Safeguarding Concern Reporting Procedure

