

Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct

between Adults/Adolescents and Children

Adopted in May 2019

Sport offers incredible experiences and opportunities for children. These experiences are integral to enhancing child development. Positive experiences are tied to healthy relationship between athletes and coaches, 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 children in sport, and a sense of safety for those who need to bring forward any concerns of misconduct towards children.

For the purpose of this document 'a coach or adult' refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with children in sport. 'Children' refers to anyone under eighteen (18) years old.

The Coach and Athlete Relationship

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

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

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

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

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:

*14 or 15 years old The age difference must be LESS THAN 5 years AND the relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent. **

*16 or 17 years old The relative positions of the parties must be such that 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 (i.e. a coach, teacher, 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 ages 18 or older is capable of consent. The increased age considers 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 in sport and expected to model behaviour that upholds public confidence and enhances healthy relationships with children and families.

Examples of Appropriate Behaviour

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

Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour

- Disrespectful language
- Humiliating or intimidating children
- Inappropriate touching of children (i.e. massaging, stroking, caressing, roughhousing, tickling)
- Confiding or sharing overly personal information with a child
- Asking children to keep secrets
- Electronic communication with children that is personal and not directly tied to coaching duties
- Communication that is sexual or flirtatious
- Pictures taken with personal devices or in change rooms

Standard of Measure for Maintain Appropriate Boundaries

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

- Transparent
- Accountable
- Tied to coaching/volunteering duties
- In response to meeting the child's need

Parents and Coaches Play a Role

It can be difficult to respond to a situation where you notice a coach and athlete relationship that appears inappropriate. Reporting inappropriate behaviour creates accountability so proper action can be taken and expectations can be re-established. Parents or coaches who have concerns should speak with that coach's supervisor or LSC Soccer.

Parents and coaches should also have regular age-appropriate conversations with children about personal safety and boundary-breaking behaviour. Some topics to talk with children about are the qualities of healthy relationships, importance of personal boundaries, and how to get help/where to bring concerns. For this information and more visit: kidsintheknow.ca/safetysheets.

Reporting of inappropriate behaviour:

Should one witness any situation whereby a coach/volunteer and/or club representative is inappropriate in any way: they are encouraged to report suspected discrimination or harassment. Such reports may be made to the President of the LSC, or to any other person in authority.

All such reports shall be brought promptly to the attention of the LSC DG, by whoever receives the report. A complainant may request the assistance of an LSC resource person in understanding these guidelines, in pursuing resolution short of lodging a complaint if appropriate, and in formulating the written complaint. The LSC resource person shall refer the complainant to counseling upon request, and may explore the possibility of alternative

forms of dispute resolution with the complainant following the complaint, if appropriate. Should a complainant choose to retain legal counsel at any stage of a complaint or appeal, it shall be at the complainant's own expense.

Processing the Complaint

LSC will adhere to the following steps in order to process the complaint.

- A child discloses information about an employee or volunteer who has acted inappropriately.
- The employee who receives the claim informs the Director General and/or the President of the Club.
- The administration of the club determine if the concerns are justified
- If the concerns are justified, the employee or volunteer will be call in to the office to discuss the allegations. They will be informed of the complaint without revealing the identity of the individual who made the complaint.
- If the administration of the Club considers that the nature of the behavior in question is serious enough to justify concrete measures, an internal follow-up will be conducted.
- The Club will conduct an internal investigation. Based on the results of the investigations:
 - The allegations are unfounded. Follow internal policies. The file will be closed but the Club can decide to take the opportunity to remind all its employees and volunteers of the existence of our Code of Conduct.
 - The allegations are confirmed. Actions will be taken depending on the severity of the claim, the nature of the information received during the investigation and additional factors (such as prior claims).
 - The allegations are deemed inconclusive. The Club can decide to take measure to deter and prevent this from happening again. The Club will seek additional professional assistance to determine options and risk.

A details record of all matters will be kept internally.

Complaint Investigation

The LSC Official may decide not to deal with a complaint: if in the opinion of the LSC Official, the facts alleged in the complaint would be insufficient, if proven, to establish discrimination or harassment under the LSC Policy; or if in the opinion of the LSC Official, the investigation of the complaint would not advance the purpose of the LSC Policy in the circumstances, because of a significant delay between the alleged events and the time of the complaint. In all other cases, the LSC Official shall investigate the complaint or appoint and provide terms of reference to an investigator who shall investigate the complaint and make findings of fact. Before the investigation begins, the LSC Official shall advise each respondent of the complaint and shall provide each complainant and respondent a copy of the written complaint, of the LSC Policy and these guidelines, and of the investigator's terms of reference, if any. Before the investigation report is issued, each respondent shall have a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations. If a respondent declines to do so, or does not respond within the time-frame provided, the investigator's report may nonetheless be issued. All LSC participants, including the respondent(s), must co-operate fully in any investigation under these guidelines. The LSC Official may consult with the investigator during the course of the investigation, may review the investigation report in draft and may provide additional terms of reference to, or request clarification from, the investigator. A copy of the investigation report shall be provided to the complainant(s) and the respondent(s).

Assistance to Respondents A respondent may request the assistance of a LSC resource person without previous involvement in the complaint in understanding these guidelines. The LSC resource person shall refer the respondent to counseling upon request, and may explore the possibility of alternative forms of dispute resolution with the respondent. Should a respondent choose to retain legal counsel at any stage of a complaint or appeal, it shall be at the respondent's own expense.

Determinations

Following Investigation The LSC Official shall determine whether discrimination or harassment has been established in light of the findings of fact contained in the investigation report, and if so, the nature and

particulars of the discrimination or harassment. The LSC Official's determinations shall be communicated to the complainant(s) and the respondent(s).

Settlement A complaint may be settled at any stage. A resolution agreement should be in writing and signed by all parties.

Mediation The LSC may provide a mediator, if the LSC Official views mediation as appropriate and if the complainant and respondent are willing to enter a mediation agreement.

The LSC Official shall have the authority to impose sanctions, if warranted, in light of the determinations.

The complainant(s) and the respondent(s) shall be given a reasonable opportunity to make submissions to the LSC Official prior to the imposition of sanctions.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- A recommendation that a person's membership be revoked in accordance with the by-laws of the LSC.
- Temporary or permanent suspension from employment with LSC, or from participation in some or all of the competitions or activities over which the LSC has jurisdiction. The imposition of such temporary or permanent conditions on continued employment with LSC, or participation in LSC activities as the LSC Official may view as appropriate in the circumstances. The issuance of a warning and/or reprimand.

The LSC Official shall provide the complainant(s) with such information about any sanctions imposed as is appropriate in the circumstances. Should any sanction that the LSC Official views as appropriate require a resolution to be passed by either the LSC Executive Committee or Board of Directors, the LSC Official shall take such action as is appropriate to have the matter placed before the Executive Committee or Board for its consideration, but the matter will not be considered prior to any appeal under these guidelines.

The LSC Official may impose interim measures pending the investigation and disposition of a complaint, if the LSC Official is of the view that the imposition of such measures is in the best interest of the complainant(s), respondent(s) and/or LSC.

Interim measures are not sanctions, and they may take many forms, including but not limited to: the imposition of conditions upon the continued participation of the respondent(s) in the activities or work of the LSC.

suspension of the respondent(s) from participation in the activities or work of the LSC, with or without pay, or under such other terms as are seen to be appropriate, security arrangements.

Category Sites

If you are concerned about a sexual image that has been shared, visit cybertip.ca. This site has information for teens and adults. For more information on reporting inappropriate conduct and sexual abuse, visit commit2kids.ca/safesport

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