

ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

1. This *Athlete Protection Policy* describe how Persons in Authority shall maintain a safe sport environment for all Athletes.

Interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes – the ‘Rule of Two’

2. The Organization and its Members strongly recommend the ‘Rule of Two’ for all Persons in Authority who interact with Athletes. The Coaching Association of Canada describes the intention of the ‘Rule of Two’ as follows:

A coach must never be alone or out of sight with a minor athlete. Two NCCP trained or certified coaches should always be present with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation such as in a locker room or meeting room. All one-on-one interactions between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and in view of a second coach except for medical emergencies. One of the coaches must also be of the same gender as the athlete. Should there be a circumstance where a second screened and NCCP trained or certified coach is not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited.

3. The Organization and its Members recognize that fully implementing the ‘Rule of Two’, as described above (and modified accordingly for Persons in Authority), in all circumstances, may not always be possible. Consequently, at a minimum, interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes must respect the following:
 - a) The training environment should be open and transparent so that all interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes are observable
 - b) Private or one-on-one situations must be avoided unless they are open and observable by another adult or Athlete
 - c) Persons in Authority shall not invite or have a Vulnerable Individual (or Vulnerable Individuals) in their home without the written permission and knowledge of the Vulnerable Individual's parent or guardian
 - d) Vulnerable Individuals must not be in any situation where they are alone with a Person in Authority without another screened adult or Athlete present unless prior written permission is obtained from the Athlete's parent or guardian

Practices and Competitions

4. As it relates to practices and/or competitions, the following shall be respected:
 - a) A Person in Authority should never be alone with a Vulnerable Individual prior to or following a competition or practice unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent or guardian
 - b) If the Vulnerable Individual is the first Athlete to arrive, the Athlete's parent should remain until another Athlete or Person in Authority arrives
 - c) If a Vulnerable Individual would potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a competition or practice, the Person in Authority should ask another Person in Authority (or a parent or guardian of another Athlete) to stay until all of the Athletes have been picked up. If an adult is

unavailable, another Athlete, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Individual, should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a Vulnerable Individual

- d) Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual Athlete should always do so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority
- e) When observing the Rule of Two is not possible due to training or competition circumstances, Persons in Authority and Athletes should take additional steps to achieve transparency and accountability in their interactions. For example, a Person in Authority and an Athlete who know they will be away from other Individuals for a lengthy period of time must inform another Person in Authority where they are going and when they are expected to return. Persons in Authority should always be reachable by phone or text message

Communications

5. Communications between Persons in Authority and Athletes should respect the following:

- a) Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes
- b) Persons in Authority may only send texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individual Athletes when necessary and only for communicating information related to team issues and activities (e.g., non-personal information). Any such texts, messages or emails shall be professional in tone
- c) Electronic communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes that is personal in nature should be avoided. If such communication occurs, it must be recorded and available for review by another Person in Authority and/or by the Athlete's parent/guardian
- d) Parents and guardians may request that their child not be contacted by a Person in Authority using any form of electronic communication and/or to request that certain information about their child may not be distributed in any form of electronic communications
- e) All communication between a Person in Authority and Athletes must be between the hours of 6:00a.m. and midnight unless extenuating circumstances justify otherwise
- f) Communications concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is not permitted
- g) No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation may be communicated in any medium
- h) Persons in Authority are not permitted to ask Athletes to keep a secret for them

Travel

6. Any travel involving Persons in Authority and Athletes shall respect the following:

- a) Teams or groups of Athletes shall always have at least two Persons in Authority with them
- b) For mixed gender teams or groups of Athletes, there should be one Person in Authority from each gender
- c) Screened parents or other volunteers will be available in situations when two Persons in Authority cannot be present
- d) No Person in Authority may drive a vehicle alone with an Athlete unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent or guardian
- e) A Person in Authority may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with an Athlete unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent or guardian
- f) Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority

- g) For overnight travel when Athletes must share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate (e.g., within two years of age of one another) and of the same gender identity

Locker Room/Changing Areas

7. The following shall apply to locker rooms, changing areas, and meeting rooms:

- a) Interactions (i.e., conversations) between Persons in Authority and Athletes should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as a locker room, restroom or changing area. A second adult should be present for any necessary interaction between an adult and an Athlete in any such room (i.e. the Rule of Two must be respected)
- b) If Persons in Authority are not present in the locker room or changing area, or if they are not permitted to be present, they should still be available outside the locker room or changing area and be able to enter the room or area if required, for reasons including, but not limited to, team communications and/or emergencies

Photography/Video

8. Any photograph or video involving an Athlete shall respect the following:

- a) Photographs and video may only be taken in public view, must observe generally accepted standards of decency, and be both appropriate for and in the best interest of the Athlete
- b) The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited
- c) Examples of photos that shall be edited or deleted include:
 - i. Images with nudity or where undergarments are showing
 - ii. Suggestive or provocative poses
 - iii. Embarrassing images
- d) If any photographs or videos will be used on any form of public media, an Image Consent Form (**Appendix A**) must be completed before any images are taken and used

Physical Contact

9. It is recognized that some physical contact between Persons in Authority and Athletes may be necessary for various reasons including, but not limited to, teaching a skill or tending to an injury. Any physical contact shall respect the following:

- a) Unless it is otherwise impossible because of serious injury or other justifiable circumstance, a Person in Authority must always clarify with an Athlete where and why any physical contact will occur prior to the contact occurring. The Person in Authority must make clear that he or she is requesting to touch the Athlete and not requiring physical contact
- b) Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact during a training session is permitted
- c) Hugs lasting longer than five seconds, cuddling, physical horseplay, and physical contact initiated by the Person in Authority is not permitted. It is recognized that some Athletes may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a Person in Authority for various reasons (e.g., such as celebrating or crying after a poor performance), but this physical contact should always be limited to circumstances where the Person in Authority believes it is in the best interest of the Athlete and when it occurs in an open and observable environment.

Enforcement

10. Any alleged violations of this *Athlete Protection Policy* shall be addressed pursuant to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Policy History	
Approved	July 18, 2023
Next Review Date	2028
Revision Approval Dates	