ABOUT THIS CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG ATHLETES

What is it?

This Code of Conduct for the Protection of Young Athletes is part of Commit to Kids - Sport, a supplement to the Commit to Kids™ child sexual abuse prevention program. Developing and implementing such a code of conduct is intended to strengthen the protection of the children in your care. Your organization's code of conduct should establish the boundaries that all employees/volunteers who interact with children must observe, help identify concerning behaviour, and set out the steps to follow when such behaviour occurs.

In what context should it be used?

This code of conduct is intended as the culmination of the process described in the Commit to Kids - Sport Guide for Sport Organizations.

How should it be used?

This Code of Conduct for the Protection of Young Athletes is a model and a starting point that your organization can use to develop a code suited to its own needs. It is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive and does not claim to cover every risk your organization may face. Your organization is responsible for adapting its content to its particular needs.

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Young Athletes

Introduction

Alliance Soccer Laval created this Code of Conduct for the Protection of Young Athletes to guide interactions between its employees/volunteers and children. The protection, rights and well-being of the children we serve are always at the heart of our programs. We develop constructive relationships with children while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

The Importance of a Code of Conduct for the Protection of Young Athletes

We are an organization committed to the protection and safety of children. Adopting a Code of Conduct is an important step toward creating a safe environment for children. The protection, rights and well-being of children who participate in our programs are a priority at all times.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to help our employees/volunteers develop healthy relationships with children who participate in our sport programs and to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in their interactions with children.

Treating Children with Dignity and Maintaining Boundaries

All employees/volunteers must:

- treat children with respect and dignity;
- establish and respect appropriate boundaries with children and families who participate in our organization's activities and programs.

It is important to monitor your own behaviour toward children and pay close attention to the behaviour of your peers so that everyone behaves appropriately and respectfully and is perceived that way by others.

All of your interactions and activities with children must:

- be known and approved by the board, where applicable, and by the child's parents;
- be part of your duties;
- be intended to develop the child's sport skills.

Always consider the child's reaction to any activity, conversation, behaviour or interaction. If you ever have concerns about your own behaviour or that of others, discuss them with the organization's designated person.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour toward a child:

- embarrassing them;
- shaming them;
- blaming them;
- humiliating them;
- belittling them.

General Rules of Behaviour

Employees/volunteers of our organization must not:

- have physical contact with a child that would make the child or a reasonable observer uncomfortable, or that would exceed reasonable boundaries in the eyes of a reasonable observer;
- communicate with a child, within or outside their work with the child, in a way that would make the child uncomfortable or exceed reasonable boundaries in the eyes of a reasonable observer;
- engage in behaviour that is (or appears to be) contrary to our mandate, policies or code of conduct, whether or not they are acting in their official role;
- conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate conduct; employees/volunteers have a duty to report the matter to the designated person, child protection services or police, not to investigate it.

What Is Meant by "Inappropriate Behaviour"?

The following behaviours are considered inappropriate:

1. Inappropriate communications. Communicating with a child or their family outside the context of one's duties within the organization, regardless of who initiated the contact. For example:

- Personal telephone calls unrelated to work with the child.
- Electronic communications (email, text messages, instant messaging, chat, social networking and "friend requests") unrelated to work with the child.
- Personal letters unrelated to work with the child.
- Excessive communications (online or offline).

2. Inappropriate contact. Spending unauthorized time with a child outside the designated duties one performs within the organization.

3. Favouritism. Giving one child or certain children special privileges and special attention (for example, giving a child a great deal of attention, giving or sending personalized gifts, or granting excessive, unjustified or inappropriate privileges).

4. Taking personal photos or videos. Using a personal device (cell phone, camera or video camera) to take photos of a child (or allowing someone else to do so), and posting or copying photos you have taken of a child to the Internet or a personal storage device. Photos may be taken as part of your duties, but those photos must remain in the organization's possession and must not be used for personal purposes.

The following behaviours are also considered inappropriate:

5. Telling sexual jokes to a child or making suggestive, sexual or personal remarks to a child.

6. Showing a child sexual material (drawings, animations, photo novels, calendars, texts, photos, screen savers, etc.), displaying such material where a child can see it, or making it accessible to a child.

7. Bullying or threatening a child.

8. Ridiculing a child.

We will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour by an employee or volunteer, especially when it compromises the well-being of children who participate in our activities or programs.

The organization will determine whether behaviour or an action constitutes inappropriate behaviour in light of all the circumstances, including the person's previous conduct and the allegations or suspicions relating to the behaviour in question.

Reporting Obligations

All employees/volunteers are required to report suspicions of child sexual abuse, inappropriate behaviour and incidents brought to their attention, whether or not they personally witnessed the behaviour or incidents.

Who to report to:

1. Any allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour (for example, child sexual abuse) witnessed by an employee/volunteer must be reported promptly to police or child protection services.
2. To protect the children in our care, any allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour brought to the attention of an employee/volunteer must also be reported promptly to police or child protection services. Police or child protection services will determine whether the allegation or suspicion warrants further investigation.

3. Any allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour (examples above) brought to the attention of an employee/volunteer or witnessed by an employee must be reported to the organization's designated person.

Potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour may be reported to you by a child or another person, or you may witness it yourself. Examples of behaviour that may be brought to your attention or that you may witness and must report in accordance with the procedures above include:

1. potentially illegal behaviour by an employee/volunteer of the organization;
2. potentially illegal behaviour by another person (parent, teacher, babysitter, coach, etc.).

If you are unsure whether something you witnessed or that was reported to you constitutes potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour, discuss it with the designated person, who will support you through the process. Remember: you have a duty to report any suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour directly to police or child protection services.

Follow-up on a Report

Following a report of an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour, police or child protection services will be notified. The organization will conduct an internal follow-up where appropriate.

Following a report of an allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour, the organization will follow up to establish the facts and determine any disciplinary or other measures that may be required.

In the case of inappropriate behaviour, the organization may decide to refer the matter to a child protection agency or police:

- if several behaviours have been reported;
- if the inappropriate behaviour is repeated;
- or if the behaviour in question raises serious concerns.