



Policy Name: Safe Sport – Abuse Prevention – Person in Authority Code of Conduct
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Safe Sport Abuse Prevention Person in Authority Code of Conduct

PREAMBLE

Coaches play a vital role in shaping the youth of tomorrow through sport. The Ontario Curling Council (OCC) rely on coaches and other persons in authority to be role models and to put young athletes on a path to success. The dynamic between coach and athlete gives rise to a power imbalance and a culture of unquestioned trust that can result in abuse. As such, it is imperative that all persons in positions of authority be held to a high standard of conduct. Abuse in sport, particularly sexual abuse and the grooming behaviour that precedes, it, destroys the positive impact of sport and caused untold harm to victims and those around them. Consequently, the OCC has a strong obligation to establish and maintain systems that prevent abuse and respond to conduct that poses risk to OCC athletes.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

1. a) “Persons in Authority” (PIA) includes any person who holds a position of trust or authority over an “Athlete” pursuant to the role assigned to them by the OCC or an “OCC Decision Maker.” PIA’s include but are not limited to Coaches, Officials, Employees, Contractors, Administrators, Councillors, Third Party Service Providers (i.e. Strength and Conditioning Coaches, Mental Trainers) and Volunteers.
- b) “Athlete” is any OCC member under the age of 18 years. It includes but is not limited to a curler, coach, official, volunteer.
- c) “OCC Decision Maker” is a person who is authorised to make a decision on behalf of the OCC and includes but it not limited to OCC staff, Councillors and administrators.

d) “Inappropriate behaviour” includes conduct by a PIA toward an athlete that involves any form of sexualized interaction or that constitutes a boundary violation or is associated with grooming behaviour.

e) A “Child in Need of Protection” is any athlete whose life, health or emotional well-being is endangered by the act or omission of any person.

PURPOSE

The OCC values the safety, rights and well-being of our athletes and their families. It is the responsibility of OCC Member Associations, CurlON and NOCA member clubs, coach, volunteers and staff members to participate in the efforts to create a safe environment for all OCC participants.

This Person in Authority (PIA) code of Conduct is intended to protect OCC participants from abuse. It provides guidelines for conduct that are consistent with the development of healthy relationships between adult persons in authority and youth sport participants. The Code provides behaviour guideposts that identify inappropriate or concerning behavior at an early stage to help better protect athletes and coaches.

OBJECTIVES

2. The PIA Code of Conduct establishes boundaries for persons in authority and requires that those boundaries be respected and maintained. Devining and teaching appropriate boundaries reduces a young person’s risk of sexual exploitation and the likelihood of being groomed. Grooming is a slow gradual and escalating process of building comfort and trust with a young person that is often very difficult to recognize. The process allows for in appropriate conduct to become normalized. It is often preceded by the grooming of an adult “gatekeeper” (who provides access to the young person) to build confidence and comfort that the individual can be trusted with the care of the young person. Behaviour that presents risks often begins by breaking boundaries with children and adolescents. Boundary violations can occur when the adult places his/her needs above the needs of the young person and gains personally or professionally at the young person’s expense.
3. The boundaries established in this Code are intended to protect athletes from grooming, inappropriate, abusive, discriminatory and harassing behaviour. By identifying behaviour that violates boundaries, the risk of abuse to athletes is reduced and expectations for the conduct of persons in authority are clearly outlined.

POLICY

Application

4. This Code applies to conduct that may arise during the course of OCC business activities or events, including but not limited to its office environment, competitions, practices, training camps, travel and any meetings of the OCC.
5. This Code also applies to the conduct of PIAs that may occur outside of the OCC's business and activities events and meetings when such conduct adversely affects relationships within the OCC (and its work and sport environment) or is detrimental to the image and reputation of the OCC. Such applicability will be made by the OCC in its sole discretion.
6. Behaviour referred to in this Code of Conduct includes:
 - a. One-time or continuous behaviour
 - b. Conduct directed at an individual or group
 - c. Conduct that was without intent to abuse power or trust
 - d. Conduct that was without intent to harass or discriminate
7. There is no time limitation on the period to report a breach of this Code as long as the parties met the definitions of a PIA and an Athlete at the time of the Conduct in Issue.
8. This Code does not replace the Code of Conducts – Board of Directors, Employees, Athletes, Coaches, Volunteers, Officials, Parents, Members (OCC-001:OCC-008), it is in addition to the content of those policies.

Obligations

9. All PIA's must comply with this Code of Conduct including the reporting requirements.
10. All PIA's must treat young persons with dignity and respect
11. Rule of Two – Any one-on-one interaction between a PIA and an individual athlete must take place within earshot and view of a second PIA. If possible one of the PIAs should be the same gender as the athlete. If a PIA is not available, another screened volunteer, parent or adult can be recruited. An exception is made for medical emergencies – See OCC Rule of Two Policy (OCC-026).
12. Importance of maintaining boundaries – all PIA must establish, respect and maintain appropriate boundaries with athletes.

Prohibited Behaviour by Persons in Authority

13. A PIA must not engage in inappropriate behaviour or grooming behaviour.
14. In assessing whether behaviour is inappropriate one should consider whether the behaviour would raise concerns in the mind of a reasonable observer. The behaviour may also be assessed by determining whose needs are being met (the athlete or the PIA) and what objective appears to be guiding the interaction.

15. Grooming Conduct Specifically Prohibited – A PIA shall not engage in the following:
 - a. Nudity or exposure of genitals in the presence of an athlete;
 - b. Sexually oriented conversation or discussions about personal sexual activities;
 - c. Spending time with an individual athlete outside of team activities;
 - d. Excessive gift-giving to an individual athlete;
 - e. Socially isolating an athlete;
 - f. Restricting an athlete's privacy;
 - g. Providing drugs, alcohol or tobacco to an athlete;
 - h. Becoming overly-involved in an athlete's personal life;
 - i. Making sexual or discriminatory jokes or comments to an athlete;
 - j. Displaying material of a sexual nature in the presence of an athlete;
 - k. Mocking or threatening an athlete.
16. Physical Contact Specifically Prohibited – A PIA shall not engage in the following:
 - a. Physical contact that does not take place in public;
 - b. Physical contact that is not for the benefit of the athlete (ie. Instead meets the needs of the PIA);
 - c. Lingering or repeated embraces with an athlete;
 - d. Having an athlete sit on the lap of a PIA or making such a request;
 - e. Cuddling or prolonged physical contact with an athlete;
 - f. Butt-pats, tickling, wrestling, horseplay with one or more athletes;
 - g. Giving massages, piggyback rides, or shoulder rides to an athlete;
 - h. Continued physical contact that makes the athlete uncomfortable whether expressed or not;
 - i. Physical contact that an athlete has specifically requested not occur.
17. Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited – A PIA shall not engage or participate in the following:
 - a. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, slapping or purposely injuring an athlete;
 - b. Displaying offensive materials, gestures or symbols to an athlete;
 - c. Negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's disability, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression or gender identity;
 - d. Withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on the athlete's disability, ethnicity, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression or gender identity;
 - e. Overlooking hazing or other activity that is humiliating, degrading, abusive or dangerous to an athlete.

Mandatory Communication Protocol for Persons in Authority

18. All persons in authority must comply with the following protocol when communicating with athletes:
 - a. Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between PIA and athletes.
 - b. PIAs may only send personal texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individual athletes when necessary and only for the purpose of communicating information related to team issues and activities. Wherever possible, a parent or second PIA should be copied.
 - c. The content of all electronic communication between PIA and athletes must be professional in tone and for the purpose of communicating information related to team issues or activities.
 - d. All communication between PIA and athletes must be between 6 am and 12 am unless extenuating circumstances exist;
 - e. No communication concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is permitted between PIAs and athletes;
 - f. No sexually explicit language or sexually oriented conversation is permitted between PIAs and athletes;
 - g. PIAs are not permitted to request athletes to keep a secret for them
 - h. PIAs may not send inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures or videos to athletes.

Mandatory Travel Protocol for Persons in Authority

19. All persons in Authority must comply with the following protocol concerning transporting and traveling with athletes:
 - a. No PIA shall drive an athlete unless the PIA is the parent of the athlete (See Rule of Two)
 - b. A PIA may not share a room with an athlete unless that PIA is the athlete's parent
 - c. A PIA may not be alone in a hotel room with an athlete unless the PIA is that athlete's parent.

Reporting Requirements

20. All PIAs have a duty to report allegations or suspicions regarding inappropriate behaviour to the OCC. This can be done by email to the [Manager of Programs and Operations](#) or [Council Chair](#).
21. Conduct that violates this Code or the Code of Conducts – Board of Directors, Employees, Athletes, Coaches, Volunteers, Officials, Parents, Members (OCC-001:OCC-008) may be subject to sanctions as per the OCC's

Discipline Policy OCC-012. The OCC may choose to appoint a third party investigative unit to consult with the affected athlete and PIA.

- 22.** A person that learns of a “child in need of protection” must report to Children’s Aid Society under the Ontario Child Youth Family Services Act. This legal obligation includes a situation where a person becomes aware of the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child at the hands of a person having charge of the child. This includes persons who perform professional or official duties with respect to children, such as health care workers, teachers, operators or employees of child care programs or centers, police and lawyers.”

[Click here to read more about 'Duty to Report'](#)

[Click here to read 'Reporting Child Abuse' factsheet](#)

[Click here for a Listing of your Local Children's Aid Society where you can report abuse.](#)

- 23.** Athletes can access the Canadian Sport Hotline.

The bilingual national toll-free confidential helpline for harassment, abuse and discrimination provides a safe place for victims and witnesses of incidents of harassment, abuse and discrimination in sport to report their concerns.

The Canadian Sport Helpline will provide callers with advice on the next steps they can take, as well as direct them to the most appropriate national and local services and resources available to them, including the police, child protection services, existing provincial/territorial helplines, or any other relevant services.

It provides professional listening and referral services by phone and text at **1-888-83-SPORT (77678)** and by email at info@abuse-free-sport.ca, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET, seven days a week.

For more information, visit www.abuse-free-sport.ca.