

Eastman Ringette Association (ERA) Safe Sport and Coach Protection Policy

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) “*Organization*” – Eastman Ringette Association (ERA)
 - b) “*Participants*” – Refers to all categories of individual members and/or registrants defined in the By-laws of the Organization who are subject to the policies of the Organization, as well as all people employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with the Organization including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, athletes, coaches, instructors, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents or guardians, spectators, and directors and officers
 - c) “*Standard*” –the principles of the [Canadian Psychological Health and Safety Standard](#) (CAN/CSA-Z1003/BNQ 9700-803)

Purpose

2. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety, well-being, and professional integrity of all Organization coaches and protect them from harassment, abuse, or undue stress. The Organization is committed to fostering a safe and respectful environment for all Organization coaches aligning with the spirit of the Standard which emphasizes the importance of preventing psychological harm and promoting psychological well-being in organizational settings.

Application of this Policy

3. This Policy applies to all Participants and is in addition to the Organization's Code of Conduct and Ethics.
4. Any Participant who violates this Policy may be subject to sanctions pursuant to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*. In addition to facing possible sanctions pursuant to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*, a Participant who violates this Policy during the business, activities, and events of the Organization may be removed and the Participant may be subject to further sanctions.

Responsibilities

5. All conduct and behavior must comply with the Organization’s Code of Conduct and Ethics.
6. Participants have a responsibility to refrain from behaviors that contradict the spirit of the Standard, including, but not limited to, instances of:
 - a) Verbal abuse, harassment, or intimidation directed towards Participants, which undermines respect and creates a hostile environment.
 - b) Suggesting a Participant, specifically a coach, is incompetent, especially through public or repeated private accusations without substantiated evidence, as this conduct can severely damage their professional reputation, undermine their authority, and create a hostile environment and is considered harassment

- c) Persistent complaints such as continuing to raise the same complaint after it has been thoroughly investigated and found to be without merit.
- d) Physical aggression or threats of physical violence, which directly compromises safety and creates a sense of fear.
- e) Behavior that creates a reasonable fear for the safety of others, which disrupts the sense of security crucial to psychological well-being.
- f) Repeated or severe violations of program rules or codes of conduct, which destabilize the predictability and fairness essential for a healthy environment.
- g) Actions that disrupt the Organization's operations or undermine its mission, which can contribute to stress and a sense of instability.
- h) Any behavior that violates local, provincial, or federal laws, which indicates a disregard for societal norms and can create a climate of fear.
- i) Protecting Participants, particularly coaches, from reputational harm, undue scrutiny, and persistent unreasonable demands is crucial for maintaining a healthy and supportive training environment. Creating a psychologically safe space is particularly vital for female and young coaches who may be disproportionately vulnerable to such behaviors due to societal biases and power dynamics.
- j) Public or private dissemination of false or misleading information intended to damage a Participant's reputation.
- k) Unnecessary and inappropriate scrutiny or expectations that create a persistent feeling of being unsafe, harassed, or unfairly targeted.
- l) Persistent and unreasonable demands or complaints that create undue stress and undermine a Participant's ability to perform their duties.
- m) Any form of cyber bullying, or use of social media to create a hostile environment.

Previous Conduct

7. The Organization reserves the right to consider documented instances of prior misconduct when assessing a threat to coach safety and well-being, accepting or renewing registration, and such other purposes deemed relevant by the Organization, such as:
 - a) Documented instances of prior misconduct, regardless of whether they occurred within the Organization or in other settings. This includes, but is not limited to disciplinary actions, suspensions, or expulsion and behaviors that indicate a pattern of aggression, persistent complaints, harassment, or disregard for safety or professional integrity.
 - b) Threatening conduct that occurs outside of the business, activities and events of the Organization if the conduct directly involves a coach, or if the conduct indicates a risk to the safety of coaches or participants or the Organization's good standing.

Persistent Complaints

8. To ensure the efficient and respectful operation of the Organization, and to protect the well-being of our coaches and volunteers, the following guidelines regarding persistent complaints will be enforced:
 - a) A documented history of persistent, unfounded complaints will be considered a serious impediment to registration, indicating a potential for disruptive behavior within the

Organization. A documented history of persistent, unfounded complaints will be a significant factor in evaluating, accepting or denying registration applications.

- b) Continuing to raise the same complaint after it has been thoroughly investigated and found to be without merit will not be tolerated.
- c) Such persistent complaints may be deemed to constitute harassment of coaching staff and volunteers.
- d) The Organization reserves the right to take disciplinary action in accordance with the Organization's Discipline and Complaints Policy, which may include, but is not limited to, restrictions on communication, suspension of participation, or revocation of registration.

Verification and Documentation

- 9. The Organization will follow its Discipline and Complaints Policy for all complaints that relate to threatening conduct, potential impact on the safety, well-being, and professional reputation of coaches and participants and any other alleged breach of conduct as defined herein.
- 10. Decisions regarding registration acceptance, denial or termination will be made based on a thorough assessment, considering all available information. The Organization will strive to communicate the reasons for such decisions clearly and respectfully, while maintaining the confidentiality of all parties involved. The Organization reserves the right to seek legal counsel or contact law enforcement as required.

Review and Amendments

- 11. This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with local laws and safe sport standards. Amendments will be communicated to all stakeholders.

Acknowledgment

All coaches, staff, participants, and families must acknowledge receipt and understanding of this Policy by signing below:

Coach's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Family Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization Representative's Signature: ** _____ Date: _____

ERA Board of Directors Approval Date:	June 9, 2025
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