

Halifax City Soccer Club Policies & Procedure Requirements

Background Screening Policy

Leader candidates and other identified staff candidates who could have contact with, or access to, children and/or vulnerable individuals in their roles, must submit a “clear” Vulnerable Sector (VS) verification check report prior to commencing work in services involving children.

PURPOSE

To mitigate the risk of placing children in the care of individuals with a history of inappropriate or dangerous behaviour with children. Pursuant to the Criminal Records Act, VS screening was established to provide screening of individuals who intend to work or volunteer with the vulnerable sector.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT?

A Vulnerable Sector police record check will identify if a leader candidate has a history of crime against children or vulnerable others. Requesting a clear VS check demonstrates due diligence towards keeping children safe from physical and sexual abusers. Screening for clearance to work with vulnerable populations may reduce the chance of putting children at risk or into the care of individuals who may have had prior convictions related to the care of children.

PROCEDURE

A] The process

Indicate in all recruitment promotional materials that candidates will be required to submit a disclosure statement regarding any prior convictions and also submit to a VS police record check regarding any criminal activity involving children or vulnerable individuals. Note: in order to provide adequate time and compliance with this process, the following should be considered:

- Utilizing MyBackCheck.com to conduct VS police background checks as they can often conduct these in a condensed timeframe using electronic scanning of fingerprints rather than a scan of a paper-based product
- Fingerprinting may be a requirement of the checking process and this can take up to 120 days for verification, so it may be prudent to schedule recruitment and hiring to accommodate this process
- Fingerprinting processes, if required, will have an additional charge associated with the service

- Staff should be directed to visit the Royal Canadian Mounted Police website www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cr-cj/fing-empr2-eng.htm

B] Evidence: We are following the policy if...

- All team personnel and designated staff submit completed Vulnerable Sector verifications, prior to commencing employment

C] Communication: Who should know about this policy? How will they be informed?

- All team personnel should be aware of this policy and it should be reinforced through recruitment and training programs and related materials
- Parents/legal guardians/caregivers should be made aware of this policy in parent handbooks, on parent bulletin boards and on the organization's website
- It is also important to advise all applicants of the following information from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) website: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca

D] How to support the policy – success factors to consider:

- Commence the recruitment process with sufficient lead time to promote available positions and enable candidates to process appropriate VS verifications as required
- Maintain current awareness of processes involved so as to ensure efficient direction of candidates and processing of background checks

***Note: Team personnel = Coaches, managers or any person interacting with children and/or vulnerable individuals**

Appropriately Trained and/or Certified Coach Policy

Coaches will be placed based on the needs of the children, the number of children and the complexity of each program. Qualified and experienced coaches will supervise children in programs at all times.

PURPOSE

Minimum standards regarding child:leader ratios, qualifications, experience and maturity level of coaches need to be established for each program to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in the program.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT?

- Supervising children is an immensely important responsibility. Coaches need to be mature and experienced enough to properly handle difficult situations, such as emergencies, judgment calls about safety, serious conflicts among children and parent complaints. They also need to fully understand the Principles of healthy child development and how they are applied in children's programs.
- Coaches must possess the proper qualifications (E.g. a coaching certificate from Canada Soccer aligned to the stage & level of the program)

PROCEDURE

A] The process

- Assess each program to determine the developmental needs of the children, the level of risk involved, the complexity of the program, the number of required, and the calibre of leader that is necessary to guarantee a safe and quality experience for children
- Establish supervision and coaching standards and document them for each program to ensure that a safe number of mature, qualified and experienced coaches are in place. Evaluate standards regularly to determine whether they are effective in meeting the needs of children and are current with changes in the requirements of the program. In cases where a professional sport/activity governing body exists, standards may already be established and should be followed accordingly
- Consider the maturity level of a coaching candidate and his/her years of experience working with children when determining whether he/she is suitable for the position
- Request proof that coaching candidates have the required qualifications (E.g. Canada Soccer Coaching Certificate). Put copies in the candidate's personnel file
- Supervisor/administrator/president/administrator/presidents should review a candidate's personnel file prior to offering them a coaching position, to ensure that they meet the coaching standards for the program (Does their maturity level, qualifications and years and extent of experience qualify them for the position?)
- Supervisor/administrator/president/administrator/presidents should monitor registration and attendance numbers for programs to ensure that leader:child ratios are not exceeded

- Ask coaches to share information about their qualifications and experience with parents by writing a letter of introduction to parents at the start of the program session

B] Evidence: We are following the policy if...

- Policies and procedures manuals document the supervision and coaching standards established for each program type
- The results of screening processes are documented in each leader's personnel file. (E.g. references confirm the number of years of experience a candidate has acquired in working with children and swimming instructors have supplied photocopies of aquatic awards)

C] Communication: Who should know about this policy? How will they be informed?

- All coaches, presidents, administrators and managers should be aware of this policy and it should be reinforced through leader training programs and related materials
- Parents/legal guardians/caregivers should be made aware of this policy in parent handbooks, on parent bulletin boards and on the organization's website

D] How to support the policy – success factors to consider:

- Program policies and procedures manuals can be used to outline supervision and coaching standards for each and every program type. Such documents serve as a consistent reference for all personnel responsible for the selection, hiring, placement, training and supervision of staff and volunteers. The larger the organization, the more important policies and procedures manuals become
- Standards to be considered include supervision ratios and the minimum age, qualifications and experience requirements of coaches

Rule of Two Policy

When a Halifax City Soccer Club Coach, Volunteer Coach, Assistant Coach or Manager is in a potentially vulnerable situation with any child (example - locker room or meeting room), another Halifax City Soccer Club Coach, Volunteer Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager or the parent/guardian of the player(s) must be present.

In any one-on-one situation with any Halifax City Soccer Club child, there must be a Coach, Assistant Coach or Manager of the same gender present, or the player's parent/guardian must be present.

Note - This includes electronic devices such as SMS messaging and private chat applications.

PURPOSE

Ultimately, the Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and NCCP trained or certified coaches with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation. This means that any one-on-one interaction between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and view of the second coach, with the exception of medical emergencies.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT

The Rule of Two serves to protect minor athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that more than one adult is present. Vulnerable situations can include closed doors meetings, travel, and training environments.

PROCEDURE

In the event where screened and NCCP trained or certified coaches are not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited. In all instances, one coach/volunteer must reflect the genders of the athletes participating or be of an appropriate identity in relation to the athlete(s).

The following sequential list depicts the “staircase approach” to the Rule of Two. While the Gold Standard is the preferred environment, it is not expected that it will be reached at all times. The alternatives presented, although increasing risk, are acceptable and would be considered to be in alignment with the Rule of Two. The one-on-one interaction between a coach and an athlete without another individual present, as depicted at the lowest rank in the sequential list, is to be avoided in all circumstances.

1. Two certified coaches (Gold Standard)
2. One trained coach & one screened adult
3. One coach & two athletes
4. One coach & one player (Not to happen)

Child Sexual Abuse Training for Employees/Volunteers Policy

All employees/volunteers shall receive training on child sexual abuse upon starting work with Halifax City Soccer Club and annually thereafter.

PURPOSE

Understanding child sexual abuse is the first step towards prevention, as well as towards the creation of safer environments for children. It is important that all employees and volunteers learn about child sexual abuse and the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT?

Training for employees/volunteers includes:

- Understanding child sexual abuse
 - The importance of boundaries to foster healthy relationships between adults and children
 - The grooming process and inappropriate behaviours
 - Unlawful behaviour
 - What constitutes a child in need of protection or intervention
- Managing risk
- Reviewing the organization's child protection policies, including:
 - Code of Conduct to Protect Children
 - Reporting and documentation regarding potential unlawful behaviour and inappropriate behaviour

PROCEDURE

New employees/volunteers:

- Training occurs as soon as the employee/volunteer begins working and before s/he is entrusted with the protection and care of children.
- Training occurs within the employee/volunteer's probationary period.
- Training is conducted by Mike Whyatt (Executive Director)
- Training may involve in-person group or individual training, and may include the provision of education materials to be reviewed on your own, with a subsequent opportunity to discuss

the material in an individual or group setting.

Existing employees/volunteers:

- Training occurs when Halifax City Soccer Club introduces new information about child protection or any new policies and procedures.
- Annual training sessions occur to refresh training already provided and provide a forum for issues and new ideas to be raised and discussed.
- Additional training occurs as and when deemed advisable, such as when job duties change or when the employee/volunteer has exhibited behaviour of concern.



Reporting and Documenting Complaints: Potentially Unlawful Behaviour Policy

At Halifax City Soccer Club, all children have the right to a safe and respectful environment that is free from child sexual abuse and/or inappropriate conduct. Any abusive or unlawful act committed by an employee/volunteer will not be tolerated and will be reported to child welfare and/or law enforcement as applicable. Any employee/volunteer engaging in such acts will be subject to a range of disciplinary procedures, up to and including dismissal (see Suspension/Dismissal: Unlawful Behaviour Policy on page 11). Similarly, employees/volunteers who are aware of breaches of the Code of Conduct to Protect Children, but fail to take appropriate action, may be subject to discipline.

Halifax City Soccer Club is committed to:

- Ensuring that prompt action is taken in regard to disclosures, allegations or suspicions of child abuse (and reporting to a child welfare and/or law enforcement agency and/or parents as required by law and as deemed necessary for the protection of children).
- Ensuring we create an environment that encourages disclosures, allegations or suspicions to be reported.
- Treating all disclosures, allegations or suspicions as confidential.

PURPOSE

Under Canadian child welfare laws, if you know or suspect child maltreatment, you have a legal obligation to report it. This is known as the “duty to report”. Every person in Canada has the duty to report known or suspected child maltreatment by law.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT?

Organizations must have internal reporting procedures regarding the following types of incidents:

Child Maltreatment:

- As outlined above, Canadian child welfare laws set out the duty to report and require all people to report suspicions based on reasonable grounds that a child is/or has been sexually abused; and/or disclosure of child sexual abuse.

PARAMETERS

This policy applies to all employees/volunteers of Halifax City Soccer Club, including full-time, part-time, contract, temporary, or casual employees.

Employees/volunteers are required to immediately report all disclosures, allegations, suspicions, or indicators of child abuse, regardless of source or content.

Employees/volunteers are required to promptly report the following matters under this policy:

1. Reports of Unlawful Behaviour from a Child Involving an Employee/Volunteer of Halifax City Soccer Club or a Third Party. All disclosures, allegations or suspicions of unlawful behaviour towards a child reported to an employee by a child regarding either:
 - a) another employee/volunteer of Halifax City Soccer Club; or
 - b) someone other than an employee/volunteer of Halifax City Soccer Club (e.g. parent).
2. Unlawful Behaviour Witnessed by a Halifax City Soccer Club Employee/Volunteer. Any incident of alleged unlawful behaviour, either:
 - a) witnessed by an employee/volunteer regarding another employee/volunteer of Halifax City Soccer Club; or
 - b) witnessed by an employee/volunteer regarding someone other than Halifax City Soccer Club employee/volunteer (e.g. parent).
3. Reports of Unlawful Behaviour from a Third Party Involving an Employee/Volunteer of Halifax City Soccer Club or a Third Party. Any alleged unlawful behaviour, either:
 - a) reported to an employee by a third party and regarding another employee/volunteer of Halifax City Soccer Club; or
 - b) reported to an employee by a third party regarding someone other than a Halifax City Soccer Club employee/volunteer (e.g. parent).

The above reporting obligations apply whether the child involved is a participant in a program of our organization or not. ***NOTE: If you do not know the identity of the child, take steps to find out who the child is– depending on the situation, steps may need to be taken to protect that child from additional harm, the child may need to make a statement to police, etc.***

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

An employee/volunteer has an independent legal obligation to report unlawful behaviour to child welfare and/or law enforcement.

Under this policy, an employee/volunteer is also required to report unlawful behaviour to his/her supervisor, who is then obligated to report it to Mike Whyatt (Executive Director)

PROCEDURE

Employees/volunteers:

1. If a child is the one conveying the information:
 - a) Treat the disclosure/allegation seriously and reassure the child.
 - b) Document the disclosure/allegation on an Incident Report Form.
2. If you witness something:

- a) Do what you can to stop or interrupt the behaviour or situation causing the concern, to the extent you are able to do so without unreasonably jeopardizing your safety or the safety of the child involved. The steps you may be able to take will vary depending upon the situation and the safety concerns that may be applicable.
 - b) If you do not know the child or adult involved, take reasonable steps to identify the party you do not know and/or to note any identifiable features that may help to identify him/her.
 - c) Document what you have seen and what you may have done to intervene on the Incident Report Form, including whatever information you may have about the identity of the child or adult involved.
3. If the information is being conveyed through another source (third party, another employee, another volunteer):
 - a) Treat the information received seriously.
 - b) Document the information received from the reporting person, and any other information you have received on Incident Report Form.
 4. Notify your supervisor/administrator/president and report the matter to child welfare and/or law enforcement. A phone call to child welfare can be made by you on your own, or together with your supervisor/administrator/president.

Remember: the legal duty to report lies with the individual who witnessed the incident or received the disclosure, allegation or other concern. Notifying your supervisor/administrator/president is for purposes of this policy only. It does not absolve an employee/volunteer of the legal obligation to report to CFS.

5. Documentation:
 - a) Supervisor/administrator/president - document discussion with employee/volunteer on Incident Report Form.
 - b) Supervisor/administrator/president and employee/volunteer – document discussion with CFS on Incident Report Form.
6. The Supervisor must report the disclosure, allegation or other concern above to Mike Whyatt (Executive Director).
7. All employees/volunteers receiving the disclosure, allegation or other concern must keep the information confidential and in accordance with the confidentiality obligations set out at the end of this policy, and the obligations under the Policy on Communications with Employees About Unlawful Behaviour.
8. Leave the investigation up to the authorities mandated with this responsibility (child welfare and law enforcement). Do not investigate disclosures, allegations or other concerns, and do not discuss them with others except as required to report the information or participate in a related investigation.
9. The Executive Director is tasked with:

- a) Consulting with legal counsel and/or an HR professional.
- b) Following steps in the Suspension/Dismissal: Potential Unlawful Behaviour policy.
- c) Documenting the outcome on Incident Report Form.

OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE

Interference with the Conduct of an Investigation

A threat or promise made to discourage a disclosure, the filing of an allegation or the reporting of a concern, or any interference with the conduct of an investigation, including an attempt to have a disclosure, allegation or other concern withdrawn, is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

All disclosures, allegations and other concerns will be handled in confidence. We will not disclose the identity of any parties involved, or the circumstances of the disclosure, allegation or concern, except where necessary for the purpose of investigative or corrective action, where required by law, or for the protection of individuals. Similarly, employees/volunteers interviewed as part of an investigation or follow-up under this policy shall treat all information in a confidential manner. An employee/volunteer who breaches confidentiality may be subject to discipline.

A copy of the documented incident shall be placed in the accused employee/volunteer's human resource file. Any identifying information about the child victim or reporting person shall be removed from this copy. A generic letter shall also be placed in the file that indicates the alleged offence, how it was handled and any follow-up that was completed.

Reporting and Documenting Complaints: Inappropriate Behaviour Policy

At Halifax City Soccer Club, all children have the right to a safe and respectful environment that is free from inappropriate conduct. Any conduct of an employee/volunteer that violates the Code of Conduct to Protect Children will not be tolerated. Any employee/volunteer engaging in such conduct will be subject to a range of disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal (see Discipline/Suspension/Dismissal: Inappropriate Behaviour policy). Similarly, employees/volunteers who are aware of breaches of the Code of Conduct to Protect Children, but fail to report the information and take other appropriate action as reasonable in the circumstances, may be subject to discipline.

Halifax City Soccer Club is committed to:

- Ensuring that prompt action is taken in regard to allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensuring we create an environment that encourages reporting.
- Treating all allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour as confidential.

PURPOSE

Child-serving organizations are committed to providing safe and nurturing environments; however, because they work with children, they are vulnerable to attracting employees/volunteers who want to access and sexually abuse children or who may have inappropriate boundaries and relationships with children.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT?

Organizations must have internal reporting procedures regarding the following types of incidents:

Misconduct:

- An employee/volunteer's inappropriate behaviour towards a child or children.
- The action taken by the organization will depend upon the nature of the incident; however, it is important for the organization to distinguish between illegal behaviour and inappropriate behaviour and establish appropriate reporting procedures for each.

PARAMTERES

This policy applies to all employees/volunteers of Halifax City Soccer Club including full-time, part-time, contract, temporary, or casual employees.

Our policies and procedures, and the Code of Conduct to Protect Children, defines inappropriate behaviour. Employees/volunteers are required to immediately report all inappropriate behaviour they witness or allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour they learn about. If you are in doubt as to whether a behaviour is inappropriate, you must report the behaviour to your Supervisor/administrator/president to enable the Supervisor/

administrator/president to make an assessment.

PROCEDURE

Employees/volunteers:

1. If the child is the one conveying the information about inappropriate behaviour:
 - a) Treat the information seriously and reassure the child (if appropriate).
 - b) Report immediately to your Supervisor/administrator/president.
 - c) Document the information provided on Incident Report Form.
2. If you witness something that you believe may be inappropriate behaviour:
 - a) Do what you can to stop or interrupt the behaviour or situation causing the concern, to the extent you are able to do so without unreasonably jeopardizing your safety or the safety of the child involved. If you do not know the child or adult involved, take reasonable steps to identify the party you do not know and/or to note any identifiable features that may help to identify him/her.
 - b) Report immediately to your Supervisor/administrator/president.
 - c) Document what you have witnessed and what steps (if any) you took to stop or interrupt the behaviour on Incident Report Form.
3. If the information is being conveyed through another source (third party, another employee, another volunteer):
 - a) Treat the information seriously.
 - b) Document the information you have received on Incident Report Form.
4. Keep the information confidential.
5. **Do not attempt to determine the accuracy of the information. A process of information gathering will ensue once your Supervisor/administrator/president is made aware of the information or concern.**

Supervisor:

1. Consult with Mike Whyatt (Executive Director), and determine whether follow-up on the concern is warranted.
 - a) Document determination on Incident Report Form.

Executive Director:

1. Meet with employee/volunteer who allegedly behaved inappropriately to discuss the information received.

- a) Tell the employee/volunteer about the information received without disclosing the source (wherever possible).
 - b) Ask the employee/volunteer to share his/her version of events.
 - c) Document the discussion on Incident Report Form.
2. Seek legal counsel and/or consult with an HR professional.
 3. If applicable, follow steps from the Discipline/Suspension/Dismissal: Inappropriate Behaviour policy on page [Insert page number].
 4. Document the outcome on Incident Report Form.

OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE

Interference with the Conduct of an Internal Inquiry into Inappropriate Behaviour

A threat or promise made to discourage the reporting of information about inappropriate behaviour in accordance with this policy, or any interference with the organization's follow-up discussions regarding information received about inappropriate behaviour, including an attempt to have any such information withdrawn, is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

All information related to inappropriate behaviour will be handled in confidence. We will not disclose the identity of any parties involved, or the circumstances, except where necessary for the purpose of follow-up or corrective action, where required by law, or for the protection of individuals. Similarly, employees/volunteers interviewed as part of the follow-up process shall treat all information in a confidential manner. An employee/volunteer who breaches confidentiality may be subject to discipline.

A copy of the documented incident shall be placed in the accused employee/volunteer's human resource file and parents shall be alerted where appropriate and/or necessary pursuant to existing laws and/or information shall be shared with relevant child protection authorities in your province. Any identifying information about the child victim or reporting person shall be removed from this copy. A generic letter shall also be placed in the file that indicates the alleged offence, how it was handled and any follow-up that was completed.

Confidential Information Policy

Employees/volunteers of Halifax City Soccer Club are regularly entrusted with confidential information regarding the community it serves. All information with respect to third parties (including information related to children and families) received by employees/volunteers in the course of their involvement with Halifax City Soccer Club are regarded as confidential.

Suspicions of unlawful or inappropriate behaviour will only be shared with the employees/volunteers in the organization who need to know. Halifax City Soccer Club will maintain confidentiality while keeping the interests of the child as the primary concern.

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide employees/volunteers with a basic understanding of their responsibilities to protect and safeguard the Confidential Information to which they have access as a result of their employment.

WHY IS THIS POLICY IMPORTANT

Maintaining confidentiality is important for building and maintaining trust, and for ensuring an open and honest communication between members, peers and employees.

PROCEDURE

Employees/volunteers:

1. All disclosures, allegations or suspicions of unlawful or inappropriate behaviour by an employee/volunteer will be directed through the formal process in a prompt manner.
2. No employee/volunteer shall attempt to address a disclosure, allegation or suspicion of unlawful or inappropriate behaviour on his/her own.
3. No employee/volunteer shall engage in, or threaten to engage in, retaliation against anyone who discloses, reports or otherwise provides information with respect to alleged unlawful or inappropriate behaviour.
4. No employee/volunteer shall disclose any confidential information to the public or to the media regarding Halifax City Soccer Club policies, operations, employees, volunteers, or reports, and no employee/volunteer shall speak with the public or the media in respect of a disclosure, allegation or suspicion of unlawful or inappropriate behaviour unless, and only to the extent, authorized by the organization.
5. Upon commencement of employment, the employee/volunteer shall sign a confidentiality agreement.