



## Athlete Protection Policy

“Organization” refers to: Lakeland District Soccer Association (LDSA)

### Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in these Guidelines:

- a) **Athlete** – Includes any individual who is registered to compete for the Organization.
- b) **Individuals** – Refers to all categories of individual members and/or registrants defined in the Bylaws of the Organization who are subject 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.
- c) **Person in Authority** – Any Individual who holds a position of authority within the Organization including, but not limited to, coaches, instructors, officials, managers, support personnel, chaperones, committee members, and Directors and Officers.
- d) **Vulnerable Individuals** – Includes minors and vulnerable adults (people who, because of age, disability, or other circumstance, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority)

### Purpose

2. This *Athlete Protection Policy* describe how Persons in Authority can maintain a safe sport environment for Athletes.

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

3. For interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes, the Organization strongly recommends the ‘Rule of Two’ for all Persons in Authority who interact with Athletes. The ‘Rule of Two’ is a directive that says that an Athlete must never be alone one-on-one with an unrelated Person in Authority.

4. The Organization recognizes that fully implementing the ‘Rule of Two’ may not always be possible in some instances. 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, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Individual.

- 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) Persons in Authority must avoid situations where they are alone with a Vulnerable Individual without another screened adult or Athlete, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Individual, present unless prior written permission is obtained from the Vulnerable Individual's parent or guardian.
- e) See **Appendix A** for full Canada Soccer Rule of Two Guideline.

### **Practices and Competitions**

5. For practices and competitions, the Organization recommends:

- 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 Vulnerable Individual's parent or guardian.
- b) If the Vulnerable Individual is the first Athlete to arrive, the Vulnerable Individual's parent or guardian should remain until another Person in Authority or Athlete, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Individual, 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 the Athletes have been picked up. If an adult is unavailable, another Athlete, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Individual, should be present 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.

### **Communications**

6. For communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes, the Organization recommends:

- 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 and must follow the Rule of Two.
- 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 or guardian (when the Athlete is a Vulnerable Individual).
- 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 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. unless extenuating circumstances justify otherwise.
- f) Communication 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**

7. For travel involving Persons in Authority and Athletes, the Organization recommends:

- a) Teams or groups of Athletes shall follow the Rule of Two.
- 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 Rooms / Changing Areas**

8. For locker rooms, changing areas and other closed meeting spaces, the Organization recommends:

- a) Interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes should not occur in any area where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as a locker room, washroom or changing area. A second adult should be present for any necessary interaction between an adult and an Athlete in any such area.
- 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

9. For all photography and video of an Athlete, the Organization recommends:

- a) Photographs and video should only be taken in public view. Content 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. Images that are potentially embarrassing to the athlete
- d) If any photographs or videos will be used on any form of public media, an Image Consent Form (**Appendix B**) must be completed before any images are taken and recorded where digital waivers are not completed.
- e) An Athlete, even a Minor Athlete, may revoke any consent they granted (or that was granted by their parent/guardian) when an Image Consent Form was completed by submitting an Image Consent Revocation Form (**Appendix C**).

## Physical Contact

10. 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.

## Appendix A

### **RULE OF TWO GUIDELINES (CANADA SOCCER)**

#### **Purpose**

The Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport support the Canadian sporting community in improving practices that ensure the health, safety and well-being of all participants.

The Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) is a call to action for sport organizations, parents/guardians, and coaches to enact responsible coaching across Canada – on and off the field. The three pillars of the RCM are: Background Screening, Ethics Training and Rule of Two. The Rule of Two helps to ensure participants and coaches benefit fully from sport participation.

The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable, and justifiable. Its purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that a coach is never alone with an athlete. There may be exceptions for emergency situations. The Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches with an athlete in situations where the athlete is potentially vulnerable. One-on-one interactions between a coach and an athlete, without another individual present, must be avoided in all circumstances except medical emergencies.

#### **Standards**

The following standards have been developed for the Rule of Two.



Canada Soccer expects that all organizations will work toward the safest possible environment by having two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches always present with an athlete. If NCCP-trained or certified coaches are not available, a screened "Person in Authority" (such as managers, support personnel, chaperones, or director of the club or organization) should be present instead. If a screened Person in Authority or other volunteer is not available, another adult (such as a parent/guardian of another athlete in a youth environment or another athlete in a senior environment), should be asked to temporarily substitute. If another adult is not available, there should always be more than one athlete with the coach (this is the lowest standard and is not recommended).

## Good Rule of Two Implementation Practices and Practical Tips

Clubs and teams can consider the following practical tips when working toward implementing the Rule of Two:

- a. Take the [Responsible Coaching Movement Pledge](#).
- b. The coach is never alone and out of sight with a participant without another screened coach or screened adult (parent or volunteer) present.
- c. Allow training environment to be open to observation.
- d. Inform parents/guardians and players (particularly in a senior environment) that the club or team is aiming to achieve the highest expectation for the Rule of Two; that is, that two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches should always be present with an athlete
- e. To hold the club or team accountable, share these guidelines with parents/guardians and players and ask them to help identify situations, and acknowledge instances, when the club or team was not following the Rule of Two
- f. If a participant rides in a coach's vehicle, another adult should be present (see Guidelines-Travel below).
- g. Consider the gender identity of the participant(s) when selecting the screened coaches and volunteers who are present. For teams that only have coaches who do not share the same gender identity of some or all the athletes (i.e., for girls' and womens' teams with male coaches), ask a parent/guardian or other volunteer of the gender identity of the athletes to serve as a regular volunteer or 'bench parent/support' with the team (see Guidelines-Gender Identity below).
- h. Recruit a Team Liaison or other individual to help find parents/guardians or volunteers to assist in situations where two screened and NCCP-trained or certified coaches may potentially not be present.
- i. Ask parents or other individuals who volunteer with the team to participate in the organization's screening process and obtain a criminal record check.
- j. Provide parents/guardians and other volunteers with information about the NCCP so that they can become NCCP-trained or certified coaches (even if they are not actively coaching the team).
- k. Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents/guardians (see Applying the Rule of Two in a Virtual Setting below).
- l. Follow the requirements described in Canada Soccer's Club Licensing Program, which requires all clubs to have:
  - i. A Code of Conduct to Protect Children
  - ii. Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct between Adults/Adolescents and Children
  - iii. A policy and procedure, provided to parents and Persons in Authority, that outlines what to do if inappropriate conduct is witnessed
- m. Adopt a Discipline Policy that includes the appropriate processes for addressing misconduct and failures to follow these Rule of Two Guidelines

## Guidelines

Canada Soccer strongly recommends the following guidelines for organizations to ensure they are following the Rule of Two. In the guidelines below, a 'Person in Authority' is defined as an NCCP-trained or certified coach, a screened volunteer, or other adult. The organization is meeting the highest standard for the Rule of Two if the Person in Authority is always a screened and NCCP-trained or certified coach.

### Travel

The following guidelines are strongly recommended during travel with athletes:

- a. A Person in Authority may not be alone in a car with an athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent/guardian
- b. 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
- c. Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority

### Locker Room / Changing Area / Meeting Room

The following guidelines are strongly recommended for locker rooms, changing areas, and meeting rooms:

- a. Interactions between a Person in Authority and an individual athlete should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, meeting room, washroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for all necessary interactions in any such room
- b. Locker room or changing area should be supervised by two Persons in Authority of the same gender identity as the players whenever possible

- c. If a second Person in Authority is not available, the Person in Authority supervising the locker room or changing area should never be alone with an individual athlete
- d. 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; however, this would not be deemed to be a best practice

### **Training / Competition Environment**

The following guidelines are strongly recommended for the training and competition environment (including before, during, and after practices and games):

- a. A Person in Authority should never be alone with an athlete prior to or following a game or practice, unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian.
  - a. If the athlete is the first athlete to arrive, the athlete's parent/guardian should remain until another athlete or Person in Authority arrives. If an athlete drives themselves, the athlete should wait for another athlete to arrive before going to the field
  - b. If an athlete would potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a game or practice, the Person in Authority should ask another Person in Authority (or a parent/guardian of another athlete or another athlete in a senior environment) to stay until all the athletes have been picked up. If an adult is not available, then another athlete should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a single athlete
- b. Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual athlete should always be doing so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority

### **Gender Identity**

A Person in Authority who is interacting with athletes should be of the same gender identity as the athletes. The following guidelines are strongly recommended:

- a. For teams consisting of athletes of just one gender identity, a Person in Authority of the same gender identity should be available to participate or attend every interaction
- b. For teams consisting of athletes of more than one gender identity (e.g., co-ed teams), a Person in Authority of each gender identity should be available to participate or attend every interaction

### **Applying the Rule of Two in a Virtual Setting**

The Rule of Two should continue to apply to all minor athletes in virtual environments (additionally, for those athletes under age 16, a parent or guardian should be present during the session where possible). It is recommended that the Rule of Two be applied to non-minor athletes, as well, in the current circumstances.

### **Rule of Two in a Virtual Setting Implementation Practices and Practical Tips**

- a. For every session, the Rule of Two requires two adult coaches be present, or one coach and one adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, club administrator) – one-on-one sessions should be prohibited.
- b. A clear statement of professional standards expected of the coach during calls should be communicated – (i.e., sessions are not social engagements, and should be focused on training/coaching).
- c. Encourage parents/guardians to debrief with U-16 athletes about virtual training on a weekly basis.
- d. Parents/guardians should be fully informed beforehand about the activities undertaken during the sessions, as well as the process of the virtual session.
- e. It is recommended to record sessions where that capacity exists.
- f. Communication during each session should be in an open and observable environment (i.e., avoid bedrooms) in the athlete's home (athlete's parents'/guardians' home), and the coach must initiate the session from an appropriate location (i.e., avoid bedrooms or "overtly personal"/unprofessional settings).
- g. Parents/guardians should be required to consent to virtual sessions prior to each session, if irregularly scheduled, or prior to the first session if there is a series of regularly scheduled sessions.
- h. Prohibit one-on-one texting, emailing or online contact between coach and athlete – any texting, emailing or online contact should be limited to group text/email that includes at least 2 adults (2 coaches or 1 coach and 1 adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, club administrator), and limited to coaching (non-social) matters, and parents of minor athletes should be provided the opportunity to receive these texts/emails
  - Social media contact by coach to athlete should be prohibited (including the sharing of memes, non-training video, etc.)

Learn more: <https://coach.ca/responsible-coaching-movement>



## Appendix B – Photo and Video Consent Form

Name of Participant (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_  
*(when the Participant is younger than the age of majority)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I, being the Participant or the parent or legal guardian of the minor Participant, hereby grant to the Organization the permission to photograph and/or record the Participant's image and/or voice in pictures or videos (collectively the "Images"), and to use the Images to promote the sport and/or the Organization through traditional media such as newsletters, websites, television, film, radio, print and/or display form, and through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. I understand that I waive any claim to remuneration for use of audio/visual materials used for these purposes. This consent will remain in effect in perpetuity.
2. I, being the Participant or the parent or legal guardian of the minor Participant, hereby fully release, discharge, and agree to save harmless the Organization, from any and all claims, demands, actions, damages, losses or costs that might arise out of the collection, use or disclosure of the Images or taking, publication, distortion of the Images, negatives, and masters or any other likeness or representation of the Participant that may occur or be produced in the taking of said Images or in any subsequent processing thereof, including without limitation any claims for libel, passing off, misappropriation of personality, or invasion of privacy.
3. I, being the Participant or the parent or legal guardian of the minor Participant, **UNDERSTAND AND AGREE**, that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document. On behalf of myself, my heirs and assigns, I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily and to abide by such terms and conditions.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**, if the Participant is younger than the age of majority

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix C – Image Consent Revocation Form

Name of Participant (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian (print): \_\_\_\_\_  
*(when the Participant is younger than the age of majority)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I, being the Participant or the parent or legal guardian of the minor Participant, hereby revoke the permission that I had previously granted to the Organization to record the Participant's image and/or voice on still or motion picture film and/or audio tape (collectively the "Images"), and revoke the permission that was granted to use the Images to promote the sport and/or the Organization through traditional media such as newsletters, websites, television, film, radio, print, and/or display form, and through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. This revocation will remain in effect in perpetuity.
2. I, being the Participant or the parent or legal guardian of the minor Participant, **UNDERSTAND AND AGREE**, that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document. On behalf of me, my heirs, and assigns, I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily and to abide by such terms and conditions.

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**, if the Participant is younger than the age of majority

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_