



Code of Conduct to Protect Children

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

Lakeland District Soccer Association has developed the following Child Protection Code of Conduct to guide our employees/volunteers in their interactions with children. The safety, rights, and well-being of children we serve are at the core of our daily programs. We nurture supportive relationships with children while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries.

Our organization is committed to ensuring all children are protected and safe. A Code of Conduct to Protect Children is an important part of creating safe environments for children. The safety, rights and well-being of children participating in our programs is a priority in our daily operations.

The intent of the Code of Conduct to Protect Children is to guide our staff/volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the children involved in sport programs delivered by our organization and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

All staff/volunteers must:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity
- Establish, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in activities or programs delivered by the organization.
- It is important to monitor your own behavior towards children and pay close attention to the behavior of your peers to ensure that behavior is appropriate and respectful and will be perceived as such by others.

All of your interactions and activities with children:

- should be known to, and approved by the board, where applicable, and the parents of the child
- tied to your duties, and
- designed to develop the child's skills in the sport program

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behavior, or other interactions.

If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behavior or the behavior of others, you should discuss it with the designated person within your organization.

Examples of unacceptable behavior toward a child:

- embarrassing
- shaming
- blaming
- humiliating
- putting them down

Staff/volunteers of the organization must not:

- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child, or a reasonable observer feel uncomfortable, or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any communication with a child within or outside of duties with the child, that may make the child uncomfortable or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.

- Engage in any behavior that goes against (or appears to go against) the organization’s mandate, policies, or Code of Conduct to Protect Children, regardless of whether or not they are serving the organization at that moment
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior – it is a staff/volunteer’s duty to report the matter to the designated person, Child Welfare Agency, or law enforcement, not to investigate.

Inappropriate behavior includes:

1. **Inappropriate Communication.** Communication with a child or his/her family outside of the context of duties for the organization, regardless of who initiated the exchange. Any communication with a minor must follow the Rule of Two. For example:

- Personal phone calls not tied to duties with the child
- Electronic communications (email, text message, instant message, online chats, social networking including “friending”, etc.) not tied to duties with the child.
- Personal letters not tied to duties with the child
- Excessive communications (online or offline)

2. **Inappropriate Contact.** Spending unauthorized time with a child outside of designated duties with the organization.

3. **Favoritism.** Singling out a child or certain children and providing special privileges and attention. (For example, paying a lot of attention to, giving, or sending personalized gifts, or allowing privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate.)

4. **Taking Personal Photos/Videos.** Using a personal cell phone, camera, or video to take pictures of a child, or allowing any other person to do so, as well as uploading or copying any pictures you may have taken of a child to the Internet or any personal storage device. Pictures taken as part of your job duties are acceptable, however, the pictures are to remain with the organization and not be used by you in a personal capacity.

5. Telling sexual jokes to a child or making comments to a child that are or is in any way suggestive, explicit, or personal.

6. Showing a child material that is sexual in nature, including, signs, cartoons, graphic novels, calendars, literature, photographs, screen savers, or displaying such material in plain view of a child, or making such material available to a child

7. Intimidating or threatening a child

8. Making fun of a child

Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children involved in activities or programs delivered by the sport organization.

Whether or not a particular behavior or action constitutes inappropriate behavior will be a matter determined by the organization having regard to all of the circumstances, including past behavior, and allegations or suspicions related to such behavior.

All staff and volunteers must report suspected child sexual abuse, inappropriate behavior or incidents that they become aware of, whether the behavior or incidents were personally witnessed or not.

Where to report:

1. All allegations or suspicions of **potentially illegal behavior** (for example, child sexual abuse) that a staff/volunteer witnesses first-hand, must be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare.
2. To ensure the protection of all children in our care, all allegations, or suspicions of **potentially illegal behavior** that a staff/volunteer learns of must also be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare. Police and/or child welfare will make the determination as to whether the allegation or suspicion requires further investigation.
3. All allegations or suspicions of **inappropriate behavior** (see above examples), that a staff/volunteer learns of or witnesses first-hand, must be reported to the designate for the sport organization.

Keep in mind that you may learn of potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior through the child or some other third party, or you may witness it first-hand. Examples of the type of behavior you may learn of or witness and that you must report as set out above includes:

- Potentially Illegal behavior by a Staff/Volunteer of the organization
- Potential Illegal behavior by a third party, such as a Parent, Teacher, Babysitter, Coach

If you are not sure whether the issue you have witnessed or heard about involves potentially illegal behavior or inappropriate behavior, discuss the issue with the designated person within your organization who will support you through the process. Remember: You have an independent duty to report all suspicions of potentially illegal behavior directly to police and/or child welfare.

When an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behavior is reported, police and/or a child welfare agency will be notified. The sport organization will follow up internally as appropriate.

When an allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behavior is made, the sport organization will follow up on the matter to gather information about what happened and determine what, if any, formal or other disciplinary action is required.

In the case of inappropriate behavior, if:

- multiple behaviors were reported
- inappropriate behavior is recurring, or
- the reported behavior is of serious concern the organization may refer the matter to child welfare agency or police.

See **Appendix A** for: Steps for Reporting Inappropriate Conduct for Coaches
 Guide for Reporting Child Abuse and Misconduct for Parents
 Guide for Adults Interaction with Children in Sport
 Resources for Children

Appendix A

Steps for Reporting Inappropriate Conduct for Coaches

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

STEPS FOR REPORTING:

This card is a component of the Commit to Kids® program. It is intended as a quick reference for use in a sporting environment and is not meant to be exhaustive or to replace legal advice. Users are strongly encouraged to consult with any or all of child welfare, law enforcement and legal counsel as appropriate to a given situation.



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Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

What do you do if you have concerns about possible child sexual abuse?

When a person becomes aware that a child may be or has been abused, there is a legal and ethical responsibility to take action. The legal responsibility comes from child welfare legislation within each province and territory and may also be a duty of a person's profession or workplace.

The responsibility to report means that a person who has knowledge or information that a child is being or is at risk of being abused must report it to someone:

- If the information relates to potential abuse of a child by the child's parent or guardian, the person must report it to child welfare or police.
- If the concern involves potential abuse by any other person, the individual should report it to the child's parent or guardian and may also be obligated to report it to child welfare and/or police.



People are responsible for reporting concerns, not proving abuse.

Reporting information about potential child abuse allows:

- An authority, like child welfare or police, to determine whether it is necessary to investigate.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) to proactively take steps to protect their child.

Mandatory reporting legislation removes any personal or professional dilemma from becoming a barrier to reporting. It is not uncommon for people to minimize or deny what a child tells them during a disclosure. People are often concerned about being wrong and causing problems. Remember, reporting may disrupt existing or future sexual abuse from occurring against other children, as well.

If a person learns about past child sexual abuse that is no longer occurring, it's still important to report the abuse. The offender may still have access to other children and those children may be at risk.

How do you report misconduct/concerning behaviour?

While obvious sexual acts are easier to identify and address, behaviour that doesn't meet the threshold of abuse still needs to be acted upon. Misconduct is considered adult behaviour towards a child that is inappropriate and that breaches reasonable boundaries:

- If you observe or hear about concerning behaviour or an inappropriate situation between an adult and your child or another child within the organization, report your concerns to the organization.
- If you have contact with the child outside the organization (e.g., you know the child's parents), you should still report to the organization and also report your concerns to the child's parents.
- In some circumstances, particularly if your concerns are not addressed or you become aware of more information, you may wish to consider involving the appropriate authorities.

Flagging the concerning behaviour to the organization should trigger a review in an effort to correct and stop the possible misconduct. It will also allow an organization to address any behaviour that's not consistent with its policies and procedures.

Flagging concerning behaviour to a parent may help the parent address the issue with the organization and discuss it with their child if appropriate.



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This information sheet is part of the Commit to Kids® program. The contents of this sheet are provided as information only and do not constitute legal advice. The exact requirements for reporting vary by province and territory. Consult the child welfare legislation in your province or territory, your local child welfare authority, law enforcement and/or legal counsel as appropriate in a given situation.

Guide for Adults Interaction with Children in Sport



Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Children in Sport

Sport offers incredible experiences and opportunities for children. These experiences are integral to communities and enhancing child development. Positive experiences are tied to healthy relationships between athletes and coaches, as well as to safe environments where there are clearly established guidelines for professional boundaries between adults and children. As such, the purpose of these guidelines is to establish a common understanding of expectations for adults interacting with children in sport, and a sense of safety for those who need to bring forward any concerns of misconduct towards children.

For the purpose of this document “a coach or adult” refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with children in sport. “Children” refers to anyone under 18 years old.

This document does not address every situation nor is it meant to be an exhaustive list of acceptable or unacceptable conduct. It is meant to provide a framework within sport in which individuals are expected to exercise common sense and good judgment when interacting with children.

The Coach and Athlete Relationship

Generally, coaches are in a position of trust, and it's through professional boundaries that this foundation of trust between coaches and athletes is built. If boundaries are broken, that pillar of the relationship crumbles.

The coach and athlete relationship is also characterized by a power imbalance in favour of the coach. Athletes are taught to respect and listen to their coaches, and they are dependent upon the coach's knowledge and training to further develop their skills.

Both trust and power can be used to breach the coach-athlete relationship, and often this happens through boundary violations, which occur when the adult places their needs above the needs of the child and gains personally or professionally at the child's expense.

The responsibility is always with the adult to establish and maintain an appropriate boundaries with children.



Age of Protection in Canada

The age of protection (also called the age of consent) is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of protection in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the *Criminal Code* increases that age to 18 in the context of certain relationships. If the child is:

Under 12 years old	No person can engage in sexual activity with the child under any circumstance.
12 or 13 years old	The age difference <u>must</u> be LESS THAN 2 years AND the relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*
14 or 15 years old	The age difference <u>must</u> be LESS THAN 5 years AND the relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*
16 or 17 years old	The relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.*

* For all children aged 12-17: If the other person is in a position of trust or authority over the child (e.g., a coach, teacher, etc.), the child is dependent on the other person or the relationship is exploitative of the child, the child is NOT able to give consent, making sexual activity in the context of such relationships illegal. **In these situations, only a person aged 18 or older is capable of consent.** The increased age takes into account the inherent vulnerability of the child and is meant to protect the child in situations that involve a power or other imbalance.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviour

Individuals working or volunteering in sport are expected to uphold high standards and model behaviour that upholds public confidence and enhances healthy relationships with children and families.

Examples of Appropriate Behaviour:

- Interactions with athletes are goal-oriented
- Interactions with athletes are outcome focused
- Supportive language, tone and attitude towards others
- Model professional physical and emotional boundaries (know the line)
- Responsive to athlete's needs and not engaging with the athlete to meet the adult's needs
- Engaging with athlete in a manner that would be seen by a reasonable observer as maintaining reasonable boundaries
- Keeping practices open to observation by parents (transparent interactions)
- Communication with children (including electronic) is transparent and accountable and tied to job description and professional qualifications

Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour:

- Sexualized attention
- Humiliating or intimidating children
- Inappropriate touching of children (e.g., massaging, stroking, caressing, roughhousing, tickling)
- Confiding or sharing overly personal information with a child (e.g., sharing financial or relationship problems)
- Asking children to keep secrets
- Treating child as an "adult" under guise of maturity
- Creating an emotional dependency and isolating the athlete from other teammates/ staff/parents (e.g., pitting athlete against other teammates and/or against other athletic team staff)
- Electronic communication with athletes that is personal and not directly tied to coaching duties
- Communication that excessive, not tied to work duties or athlete goals
- Pictures taken with personal devices or in change rooms
- Giving athlete inappropriate gifts

Standard of Measure for Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

All interactions and activities with children should be (including electronic communication):

- Transparent
- Accountable
- Tied to coaching/volunteer duties
- In response to meeting the child's needs
- Reflect a duty of care and protection

Parents and Coaches Play a Role

It can be difficult to respond to a situation where you notice a coach and athlete relationship that appears inappropriate. Reporting inappropriate behaviour creates accountability so proper action can be taken and expectations can be re-established. Parents or coaches who have concerns should speak with that coach's supervisor.

Parents and coaches should also have regular age-appropriate conversations with children about personal safety and boundary-breaking behaviour. Some topics to talk with children about are the qualities of healthy relationships, importance of personal boundaries, and how to get help/where to bring concerns. For this information and more, visit: kidsintheknow.ca/safetysheets.

If you are concerned about a sexual image that has been shared, visit Cybertip.ca. This site has information for teens and adults. For more information on reporting inappropriate conduct and child sexual abuse visit commit2kids.ca/safesport.



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Resources for Children

Kids Help Phone:

Kids Help Phone is Canada's only national 24-hour, bilingual and anonymous phone counselling, web counselling and referral service for children and youth. Their service is completely anonymous and confidential — they don't trace calls or have call display. Callers don't even have to tell them their name if they don't want to.

Created in 1989 to provide a way for young people to confidentially report abuse, Kids Help Phone provides free, accessible support to any young person reaching out, anywhere in the country. Since its creation, Kids Help Phone has evolved their response and solutions, always focused on staying relevant to youth, recognizing the complexity of issues they face and ensuring counsellors are ready to address the continuum of emotional and mental health needs from crisis situations to the everyday concerns of growing up.

Young people in need of support can contact Kids Help Phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year at 1-800-668-6868.

For additional information on Kids Help Phone, please visit <https://kidshelpphone.ca>.

NeedHelpNow.ca:

<https://needhelpnow.ca> is a website designed to provide youth (13 to 17 years old) with practical steps to regain control over a situation in which they or someone they know has been negatively impacted by a sexual picture/video being shared by peers. This includes information about contacting websites/online services to request a picture/video be removed, dealing with peers who may have seen or be sharing the content, the importance of emotional support, and information on certain criminal offences. The site also provides resources for parents and safe adults who are assisting youth involved in these types of instances.