

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND SOCCER ASSOCIATION
(PEI SOCCER)
ABUSE POLICY**

DEFINITIONS

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) *“Abuse”* – Child/Youth Abuse or Vulnerable Adult Abuse as described in this Policy.
 - b) *“Discipline Chair(s)”* – An individual or individuals appointed to be the first point-of-contact for all discipline and complaint matters reported to (Name of Organization), per the organization’s *Discipline and Complaints Policy*
 - c) *“Individuals”* – All categories of membership defined in (Name of Organization), as well as all individuals engaged in activities with (Name of Organization), but not limited to, athletes, coaches, mission staff, chefs de missions, medical personnel, officials, volunteers, helpers, guides, committee members, parents or guardians, and Directors and Officers.
 - d) *“Vulnerable Individuals”* – A person under the age of 18 years old and/or a person who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority
 - e) *“Workplace”* - Any place where business or work-related activities are conducted. Workplaces include but are not limited to, (Name of Organization)’s work-related social functions, work assignments outside (Name of Organization)’s offices, work-related travel, and work-related conferences or training sessions;
 - f) *“Harassment”* – comment or conduct directed towards an individual or group, which is offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading, or malicious. Types of behaviour that constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts
 - ii. Persistent unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendo, or taunts
 - iii. Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures
 - iv. Condescending or patronizing behaviour which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect working conditions
 - v. Practical jokes which endanger a person’s safety, or negatively affect performance
 - vi. Any form of hazing
 - vii. Unwanted physical contact including, but not limited to, touching, petting, pinching, or kissing
 - viii. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, requests, or invitations
 - ix. Physical or sexual assault
 - x. Behaviours such as those described above that are not directed towards a specific individual or group but have the same effect of creating a negative or hostile environment
 - xi. Retaliation or threats of retaliation against an individual who reports harassment to (Name of Organization)
 - g) *“Workplace Harassment”* – Vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a Workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Workplace Harassment should not be confused with legitimate, reasonable management actions that are part of the normal work/training function, including measures to correct performance deficiencies, such as placing someone on a performance improvement plan, or imposing discipline for workplace infractions. Types of behaviour that constitute Workplace Harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Bullying;
 - ii. Workplace pranks, vandalism, bullying or hazing;
 - iii. Repeated offensive or intimidating phone calls or emails;
 - iv. Inappropriate sexual touching, advances, suggestions or requests;
 - v. Displaying or circulating offensive pictures, photographs or materials in printed or electronic form;
 - vi. Psychological abuse;

- vii. Excluding or ignoring someone, including persistent exclusion of a particular person from work-related social gatherings;
 - viii. Deliberately withholding information that would enable a person to do his or her job, perform or train;
 - ix. Sabotaging someone else’s work or performance;
 - x. Gossiping or spreading malicious rumours;
 - xi. Intimidating words or conduct (offensive jokes or innuendos); and
 - xii. Words or actions which are known or should reasonably be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, or demeaning
- h) *“Sexual harassment”* – unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature. Types of behaviour that constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
- i. Sexist jokes
 - ii. Display of sexually offensive material
 - iii. Sexually degrading words used to describe a person
 - iv. Inquiries or comments about a person’s sex life
 - v. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions
 - vi. Persistent unwanted contact
- i) *“Violence”* – the exercise of physical force by a person that causes or could cause physical injury; an attempt to exercise physical force against an Individual that could cause physical injury to the Individual; or a statement or behaviour that an Individual may reasonably interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the Individual. Types of behaviour that constitute violence include, but are not limited to:
- i. Verbal threats to attack
 - ii. Sending or leaving threatening notes or emails
 - iii. Making threatening physical gestures
 - iv. Wielding a weapon
 - v. Hitting, pinching or unwanted touching which is not accidental
 - vi. Throwing an object
 - vii. Blocking normal movement or physical interference, with or without the use of equipment
 - viii. Sexual violence
 - ix. Any attempt to engage in the type of conduct outlined above

PURPOSE

2. PEI Soccer is committed to a sport environment free from abuse, harassment, and violence. The purpose of this Policy is to stress the importance of that commitment by educating Individuals about abuse, outlining how PEI Soccer will work to prevent abuse, and how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by PEI Soccer.

ZERO TOLERANCE STATEMENT

3. PEI Soccer has zero tolerance for any type of abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse to PEI Soccer to be immediately addressed under the terms of the applicable policy.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

4. This Policy applies to all Individuals, relating to conduct that may arise during the course of Sport business, activities and events, including but not limited to; the office environment, competitions, practices, tournaments, training camps, social media, travel, and any work related meetings.

VIOLATIONS OF POLICY

5. An Individual who violates this Policy may be subject to sanctions pursuant to PEI Soccer's *Discipline Policy*. In addition to facing possible sanction pursuant to the *Discipline Policy*, an Individual who violates this Policy during a competition may be ejected from the competition or the playing area, the official may delay the competition until the Individual complies with the ejection, and the Individual may be subject to any additional discipline associated with the particular competition.
6. Any PEI Soccer employee or member of the Board who violates this Policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, subject to the terms of PEI Soccer's *Discipline Policy* as well as the employee's Employment Agreement (if applicable).

EDUCATION – WHAT IS ABUSE

7. Children under the age of 18 and adults, who are in a position of dependence due to age, disability, or other circumstance, can be abused in different forms.
8. The following descriptions of Child / Youth Abuse and Vulnerable Adult Abuse have been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical's *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults* [1]:

Child / Youth Abuse

9. "Child abuse" refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust. There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form:
 - a) **Physical abuse** involves single or repeated instances of deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.
 - b) **Sexual abuse** and exploitation involves using a child for sexual purposes. Examples of child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.
 - c) **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a dependent child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care, or protection from harm.
 - d) **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child's sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes exposing the child to violence.
10. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to children, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. The abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time.
11. Abuse of children or youth in sport can include emotional maltreatment, neglect, and physical maltreatment:
 - a) **Emotional Maltreatment** – A coach's failure to provide a developmentally-appropriate and supportive environment. Emotional abuse is at the foundation of all other forms of maltreatment

(sexual, physical and neglect). In sports, this conduct has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete when it is persistent, pervasive or patterned acts (i.e., yelling at an athlete once does not constitute maltreatment). Examples of emotional maltreatment include:

- i. Refusal to recognize an athlete's worth or the legitimacy of an athlete's needs (including complaints of injury/pain, thirst or feeling unwell)
 - ii. Creating a culture of fear, or threatening, bullying or frightening an athlete
 - iii. Frequent name-calling or sarcasm that continually "beats down" an athlete's self-esteem
 - iv. Embarrassing or humiliating an athlete in front of peers
 - v. Excluding or isolating an athlete from the group
 - vi. Withholding attention
 - vii. Encouraging an athlete to engage in destructive and antisocial behaviour, reinforcing deviance, or impairing an athlete's ability to behave in socially appropriate ways
 - viii. Over-pressuring; whereby the coach imposes extreme pressure upon the athlete to behave and achieve in ways that are far beyond the athlete's capabilities
 - ix. Verbally attacking an athlete personally (e.g., belittling them or calling them worthless, lazy, useless, fat or disgusting).
 - x. Routinely or arbitrarily excluding athletes from practice
 - xi. Throwing sports equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, athletes
- b) **Neglect** - acts of omission (i.e., the coach should act to protect health/well-being of an athlete but does not). Examples of neglect include:
- i. Isolating an athlete in a confined space or stranded on equipment, with no supervision, for an extended period of time
 - ii. Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep
 - iii. Ignoring an injury
 - iv. Knowing about sexual abuse of an athlete but failing to report it
- c) **Physical Maltreatment** - involves contact or non-contact behaviour that can cause physical harm to an athlete. It also includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault). Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity. Athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete—such as extreme disciplinary actions or punishment—is unacceptable. Physical maltreatment can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and restricted diet. Examples of physical maltreatment include:
- i. Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
 - ii. Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
 - iii. Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age
 - iv. Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete
 - v. Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion)
 - vi. Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete
 - vii. Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose, or excessive repetition of a skill to the point of injury
 - viii. Using excessive exercise as punishment (e.g., stretching to the point of causing the athlete to cry, endurance conditioning until the athlete vomits)

12. Potential warning signs of abuse of children or youth can include [2][3]:

- a) Recurrent unexplained injuries
- b) Alert behaviour; child seems to always be expecting something bad to happen
- c) Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather

- d) Child startles easily, shies away from touch or shows other skittish behaviour
- e) Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
- f) Withdrawn from peers and adults
- g) Behavior fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative or extremely demanding)
- h) Acting either inappropriately beyond their age (like an adult; taking care of other children) or inappropriately younger than their age (like an infant; throwing tantrums)
- i) Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
- j) New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
- k) Self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or other harmful activities)
- l) Not wanting to be alone with a particular child or young person

Vulnerable Adult Abuse

13. Although individuals may be abused at virtually any life stage – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, or old age – the nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on an individual’s situation, disability, or circumstance.
14. The following description of Vulnerable Adult Abuse has been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical’s *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults* [1].
15. Abuse of vulnerable adults is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time:
- a) **Psychological abuse** includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate vulnerable adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of abuse may include, for example
 - i. Threatening to use violence
 - ii. Threatening to abandon them
 - iii. Intentionally frightening them
 - iv. Making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
 - v. Lying to them
 - vi. Failing to check allegations of abuse against them
 - b) **Financial abuse** encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation, including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using a vulnerable adult’s money or property in a dishonest manner, or failing to use a vulnerable adult’s assets for their welfare. Abuse occurs any time someone acts without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another. This type of abuse against a vulnerable adult may include, for example:
 - i. Stealing their money, disability cheques, or other possessions
 - ii. Wrongfully using a Power of Attorney
 - iii. Failing to pay back borrowed money when asked
 - c) **Physical abuse** includes any act of violence – whether or not it results in physical injury. Intentionally inflicting pain or injury that results in either bodily harm or mental distress is abuse. Physical abuse may include, for example:
 - i. Beating
 - ii. Burning or scalding
 - iii. Pushing or shoving
 - iv. Hitting or slapping
 - v. Rough handling

- vi. Tripping
- vii. Spitting

d) All forms of sexual abuse are also applicable to Vulnerable Adults

16. Potential warning signs of abuse of vulnerable adults can include:

- a) Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
- b) Unexplained physical injuries
- c) Dehydration, malnutrition, or lack of food
- d) Poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
- e) Over-sedation

PREVENTING ABUSE

17. PEI Soccer will enact measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training, and monitoring.

Screening

18. Individuals who coach, volunteer, or otherwise engage with Vulnerable Individuals involved with PEI Soccer will be screened according to the organization's *Screening Policy*.

19. PEI Soccer will use the *Screening Policy* to determine the level of trust, authority, and access that each Individual has with Vulnerable Individuals. Each level of risk will be accompanied by increased screening procedures which may include the following, singularly or in combination:

- a) Completing an Application Form for the position sought (which includes alerting Individuals that they must agree to adhere with the organization's policies and procedures (including this *Abuse Policy*))
- b) Completing a Screening Declaration Form
- c) Providing letters of reference
- d) Providing a Criminal Record Check ("CRC") and/or Vulnerable Sector Check ("VSC")
- e) Providing a driver's abstract (for Individuals who transport Vulnerable Individuals)
- f) Other screening procedures, as required

20. An Individual's failure to participate in the screening process, or pass the screening requirements as determined by a Screening Committee, will result in the Individual's ineligibility for the position sought.

Orientation and Training

21. PEI Soccer will deliver orientation and training to those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The orientation and training, and their frequency, will be based on the level of risk, as described in the *Screening Policy*.

22. Orientation may include, but is not limited to: introductory presentations, facility tours, equipment demonstrations, parent/athlete meetings, meetings with colleagues and supervisors, orientation manuals, orientation sessions, and increased supervision during initial tasks or period of engagement.

23. Training may include, but is not limited to: certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.

24. At the conclusion of the orientation and training, Individuals will be required to acknowledge, in written form, that they have received and completed the orientation and training.

Practice

25. When Individuals interact with Vulnerable Individuals, they are required to enact certain practical approaches to these interactions. These include, but are not limited to:
- a) Limiting physical interactions to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)
 - b) Ensuring that Vulnerable Individuals are always supervised by more than one adult
 - c) Ensuring that more than one person is responsible for team selection (thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one Individual)
 - d) Including parents/guardians in all communication (e.g., electronic, telephonic) with Vulnerable Individuals
 - e) Ensuring that parents/guardians are aware that some non-personal communication between Individuals and Vulnerable Individuals (e.g., coaches and athletes) may take place electronically (e.g., by texting) and that this type of communication is now considered to be commonplace, especially with older Vulnerable Individuals (e.g., teenagers). Individuals are aware that such communication is subject to the *Code of Conduct and Ethics*
 - f) When traveling with Vulnerable Individuals, the Individual will not transport Vulnerable Individuals without another adult present and will not stay in the same overnight accommodation location without additional adult supervision.

Monitoring

26. PEI Soccer will regularly monitor those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk, as described in the *Screening Policy*.
27. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to: regular status reports, logs, supervisor meetings, supervisor on-site check-ins, feedback provided directly to the organization (from peers and parents/athletes), and regular evaluations.

REPORTING ABUSE

28. Complaints or reports that describe an element of **abuse, harassment, sexual harassment, workplace harassment, or violence** will to be addressed by the process(es) described in the organization's *Discipline Policy*. However, the Discipline Chair will also appoint an Investigator to investigate the allegations.
29. The Investigator may be a representative or Director of PEI Soccer, or may be an independent third-party skilled in investigating claims of harassment. The Investigator must not be in a conflict of interest situation and should have no connection to either party.
30. Federal and/or Provincial legislation related to Workplace Harassment may apply to the investigation if Harassment was directed toward a worker in a Workplace. The Investigator should review workplace safety legislation and/or consult independent experts to determine whether legislation applies to the complaint.
31. Per timelines determined by the Discipline Chair, who may modify the timelines as described in the *Discipline Policy*, the Investigator will investigate the complaint (by interviewing parties and witnesses, and collecting statements) and will prepare and submit a Report about the allegations.
32. The Investigator's Report should include a summary of evidence from the parties (including both statements of facts, if applicable) and recommendations from the Investigator of whether or not, on a balance of probabilities, an incident occurred that could be considered Abuse, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Harassment, or Violence.

33. The Report will be considered by the Discipline Chair or the Discipline Panel, as applicable, prior to a decision on the complaint being made.
34. The Investigator's Report will be provided to the parties with the names and identifying details of any witnesses redacted. The provision of the Investigator's Report is conditional on the parties not distributing the Report to any third party without the written permission of (Name of Organization).
35. Should the Investigator find that there are possible instances of offence under the Criminal Code, particularly related to Criminal Harassment (or Stalking), Uttering Threats, Assault, Sexual Interference, or Sexual Exploitation, the Investigator should advise the complainant to refer the matter to police.
36. The Investigator must also inform PEI Soccer of any findings of criminal activity. PEI Soccer may decide whether to report such findings to police, but is required to inform police if there are findings related to the trafficking of doping drugs or materials, any sexual crime involving minors, fraud against PEI Soccer, or other offences where the lack of reporting would bring PEI Soccer into disrepute.
37. Should the Investigator "have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection", the Investigator must inform PEI Soccer which must report the situation to the appropriate authorities (e.g., child protection services).

Reprisal and Retaliation

38. An individual who submits a complaint to PEI Soccer, or who gives evidence in an investigation, may not be subject to reprisal or retaliation from any individual or group. Should anyone who participates in the process face reprisal or retaliation, that individual will have cause to submit a complaint.

False Allegations

39. An individual who submits allegations that the Investigator determines to be false or without merit may be subject to a complaint under the terms of PEI Soccer's Pan-Canadian *Discipline Policy* with PEI Soccer, or the individual against whom the false allegations were submitted, acting as the Complainant.

Confidentiality

40. The information obtained about an incident or complaint (including identifying information about any individuals involved) will remain confidential, unless disclosure is necessary for the purpose of investigating or taking corrective action, or is otherwise required by law.
41. The Investigator will make every effort to preserve the confidentiality of the complainant, respondent, and any other party. However, PEI Soccer recognize that maintaining anonymity of any party may be difficult for the Investigator during the course of the investigation.

[1] Retrieved from: https://www.ecclesiastical.ca/guidelines_developsafetyprotectionpolicy_children-youths-vulnerableadults_faith/

[2] Adapted from: <https://www.all4kids.org/2014/03/04/warning-signs-child-abuse-neglect/>

[3] Adapted from: https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/warning_signs.htm