



ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

1. This Athlete Protection Policy describes how Persons in Authority shall maintain a safe sport environment for all Athletes.

Definitions

2. Terms in this Policy are defined as follows:
 - a) **Athlete** – An individual who is an athlete participant in Ringette Ontario who is subject to the policies of Ringette Ontario and to the *Code of Conduct and Ethics*.
 - b) **Minor** – Any Participant who is under the age of 18 years old. Adults are responsible for knowing the age of a Minor.
 - c) **Participants** – Refers to all categories of individual members and/or registrants defined in the By-laws of Ringette Ontario who are subject to the policies of Ringette Ontario, as well as all people employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with, Ringette Ontario including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, Athletes, coaches, facilitators, evaluators, instructors, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents or guardians, spectators, committee members, and Directors and Officers.
 - d) **Person in Authority** – Any Participant who holds a position of authority within Ringette Ontario including, but not limited to, coaches, instructors, officials, managers, support personnel, chaperones, committee members, and Directors and Officers.
 - e) **Screened** – Any individual who has passed screening in accordance with Ringette Ontario's Screening Policy.
 - f) **Vulnerable Participants** – 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 Persons in Authority).

Interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes – the 'Rule of Two'

3. Ringette Ontario requires that the 'Rule of Two' be followed for all Persons in Authority who interact with Athletes, to the maximum extent feasible. 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. Ringette Ontario 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) To the maximum extent possible, the training environment should be visible and accessible so that all interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes are observable.
 - b) Private and one-on-one situations, including electronic communications, that are not observable by another adult or Athlete should be avoided to the maximum extent possible.
 - c) A Vulnerable Participant may not be alone under the supervision of a Person in Authority unless prior written permission is obtained from the Vulnerable Participant's parent or guardian.
 - d) Persons in Authority may not invite or host Vulnerable Participants in their home without the written permission from parents or guardians or without parents or guardians having contemporaneous knowledge of the visit.

Competitions and Training Sessions

5. For competitions and training sessions:
 - a) A Person in Authority should never be alone with a Vulnerable Participant prior to or following a competition or training session unless the Person in Authority is the Vulnerable Participant's parent or guardian.
 - b) If the Vulnerable Participant is the first Athlete to arrive, the Athlete's parent/guardian should remain until another Athlete or Person in Authority arrives.
 - c) If a Vulnerable Participant would potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a competition or training session, 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 Participant, should be present to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a Vulnerable Participant.
 - 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.
 - e) Persons in Authority and Athletes should take steps to achieve transparency and



accountability in their interactions. For example, a Person in Authority and an Athlete who know they will be away from other Participants for a lengthy period must inform another Person in Authority where they are going and when they are expected to return. These Persons in Authority should always be reachable by phone or text message.

Communications

6. For communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes:
 - a) Persons in Authority will comply with Ringette Ontario's Social Media Policy.
 - 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 communication shall be professional in tone.
 - c) Electronic communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes that is personal in nature should be avoided. If such personal communication is unavoidable, it must be recorded and available for review by another Person in Authority and/or by the Athlete's parent/guardian (when the Athlete is a Vulnerable Participant).
 - d) Parents/guardians may request that their child not be contacted by a Person in Authority using any form of electronic communication and/or may request that certain information about their child not be distributed in any form of electronic communication.
 - e) All communication between a Person in Authority and Athletes must be between the hours of 6:00am and midnight 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 personal secret for them.

Travel

7. For travel involving Persons in Authority and Athletes:
 - a) Teams or groups of Athletes shall always have at least two Persons in Authority with



- them.
- b) For mixed gender teams or groups of Athletes, there should be one Person in Authority from each gender.
 - c) If two Persons in Authority cannot be present, reasonable efforts should be made to supplement supervision with screened parents or other screened volunteers.
 - d) To the maximum extent possible, 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 hotel room or be alone with an Athlete unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent/guardian or spouse.
 - 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 must be roomed responsibly considering, at a minimum, age, gender identity, and maturity.

Locker Rooms / Changing Areas

- 8. For locker rooms, changing areas and other closed meeting spaces:
 - 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 screened adult should be present for any necessary interaction between a Person in Authority 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:
 - a) Photographs and videos 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 in areas 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 misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing.
 - ii. Suggestive or provocative poses
 - iii. Embarrassing images
- d) If any content featuring an Athlete will be used on any form of public media, a Photo and Video Consent Form (**Appendix A**) must be completed before the content is recorded.

Physical Contact

10. 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. For physical contact, Ringette Ontario recommends:

- a) A Person in Authority must always request permission to make physical contact from the Athlete in advance and clearly explain where and why physical contact will occur. The Person in Authority must make clear that they are requesting to touch the Athlete and not requiring physical contact.
- b) Infrequent, incidental physical contact during a training session is not considered a violation of the Policy.
- c) Non-essential physical contact may not be initiated by the Person of Authority. It is recognized that some Athletes may initiate non-essential physical contact such as hugging or other physical contact with a Person in Authority for various reasons (e.g., such as celebrating or crying after a poor performance). This physical contact should always occur in an open and observable environment.

Enforcement

11. Any alleged violations of this *Athlete Protection Policy* shall be addressed pursuant to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed/approved by the Board of Directors every three years.

Date of approval: October 2023.



Appendix A – Photo and Video Consent Form

Name of Participant (print):

Name of Parent/Guardian (print):

(When the Participant is a Minor)

Date: _____

1. I, being the Participant or the parent /guardian of the minor Participant, hereby grant to Ringette Ontario and [Insert Name of Club] (collectively the “Organizations”) 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 Organizations 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/guardian of the Minor Participant, hereby fully release, discharge, and agree to save harmless the Organizations, 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 /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 a Minor

Signature of parent/guardian: _____