

STRATHMORE SOCCER CODE OF CONDUCT TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN SPORT



INTRODUCTION

Strathmore Soccer Association (SSA) has developed the following Child Protection Code of Conduct to guide all personnel (volunteer and paid) in their interactions with children. The safety, rights and well being of children we serve is at the core of our programs. Where the goal is to nurture supportive relationships with children while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries.

WHY A CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT IS IMPORTANT?

Our organization is committed to ensuring all children are protected and safe. A Code of Conduct 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 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.

TREATING CHILDREN WITH DIGNITY AND MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

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 SSA

It is important to monitor your behavior towards children and pay close attention to the behavior of your peers to ensure that behavior is appropriate, respectful, and will be perceived as such by others. All 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
- Designed to develop the child's soccer skills and passion to develop within the game

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 conduct, behavior or the behavior of others, you should discuss it with the Club Administrator who is the designated (Child Protection) person within Strathmore Soccer Association.

Examples of unacceptable behavior toward a child:

- Physical or Sexual Abuse
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Embarrassing them
- Shaming
- Blaming
- Putting them down, etc.

GENERAL RULES OF BEHAVIOUR

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 their 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 presented 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.

WHAT CONSTITUTES INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

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.

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.

Inappropriate behavior may also include, but not limited to:

- 5.** Telling sexual jokes to a child or making comments that may be interpreted 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.

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.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All members of SSA have a moral responsibility to report suspected abuse whenever it comes to their attention, regardless of where that abuse takes place. Reporting abuse is a form of assistance to those crying out for help. Therefore, immediately notify the Club Administrator, the designated Club Representative Responsible. It will then be their responsibility to notify the proper authorities to investigate the allegations.

The following steps will be taken by Strathmore Soccer Association

- Will take immediate action, if necessary, to remove the accused from the program, if warranted.
- All allegations will be taken seriously
- Will reach out to the victim and their family to show care and support and extend whatever resources necessary.
- Will keep a written report of the steps taken by the organization in response to the reported abuse. The report will contain only factual information relevant to the situation. This documentation will be kept in a secure place.
- 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.**

Reporting information about potential child abuse allows:

- An authority, like child welfare and/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 is still important to report the abuse. The offender may still have access to other children and those children may be at risk. People are responsible for reporting concerns, not proving abuse.

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 child protection designate, within Strathmore Soccer Association

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

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

FOLLOW UP ON REPORTING

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. When an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behavior is reported, police and/or a child welfare agency will be notified.

In the case of inappropriate behavior, if:

- multiple behaviors were reported
- inappropriate behavior is recurring, or
- the reported behavior is of serious concern

Strathmore Soccer Association will refer the matter to a child welfare agency or police.

I agree to comply with the Code of Conduct to Protection Children for Strathmore Soccer Association

Staff/Volunteer's Signature

Date (DD/MM/YR)