

# CHAPERONE HANDBOOK



**Responsibility:** Board of Directors

**Scope of Policy:** All club staff, volunteers, and athletes

**Adopted:** March 2025

**To be reviewed:** Within two years of being adopted

## [PROVIDE FEEDBACK HERE](#)

Vortex Water Polo Club (VWP) could not provide its athletes with exciting out-of-town tournament opportunities without volunteer chaperones. Chaperones ensure the health, safety and well-being of every athlete whenever they are not with the coaches. It is an essential role, and we sincerely thank all volunteers who take it on!

This document is arranged in the following sections:

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## Helpful Policy

The role of a chaperone is informed by a number of essential policies. Please take a moment to review them, as they contain important information and helpful guidance. Material from these policies is also integrated into this guidebook.

**Policies include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- [VWPC Code of Conduct](#)
- [VWPC Travel Policy](#)
- [MWPA Athlete Protection Guidelines](#)
- [MWPA Screening Policy](#)
- [Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport \(UCCMS\)](#)
- [Rule of Two](#)

- Canadian Centre for Child Protection: Travel Guidelines to Help Protect Children in Sport

## Who Can Chaperone?

All VWPC chaperones must meet the following criteria<sup>1</sup>:

- be a minimum of 25 years old
- be registered in good standing with VWPC and MWPA
- hold a valid driver's license
- complete courses and any other requirements as mandated for Water Polo Canada hosted events
- have a valid credit card with available credit of at least five thousand dollars (\$5,000)

Individuals should identify with the same gender as the team they are chaperoning, especially if the coach does not. At minimum, either one (1) coach or one (1) chaperone must identify as the dominant gender of the team.

Chaperones must undergo the following checks<sup>2</sup>:

- Criminal Record Check (CRC)
- Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)
- Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC)

**If you are planning to chaperone a National Championship League (NCL) event, please note there are additional checks and courses to complete.** Please see Appendix A of this document for the different checks and courses required for an NCL event.

It is recommended that those who plan to chaperone initiate the checking process well in advance, as it may take up to six weeks to complete. The club must also submit proof of screening for chaperones to the MWPA a minimum of one month before departure.

## What do Chaperones do?

What do chaperones do? A lot! They are the MVPs of out-town-tournaments, supervising and caring for athletes during travel, meals, and off time. Any time athletes are not with the coaches, chaperones are on duty.

In general, chaperones are required to:

- maintaining the safety, health, and wellbeing of athletes in their care is the top priority for a chaperone
- work collaboratively with coaches and Team Managers<sup>3</sup>
- maintain a contact list of key people, including coaches, Team Managers, and parents
- maintain communication through an agreed to communication tool
- assist athletes in adhering to the tournament schedule

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<sup>1</sup> VWPC Travel Policy, Appendix B

<sup>2</sup> MWPA Screening Policy

<sup>3</sup>

- support the safeguarding travel documents, hotel keys, valuables and money, where appropriate (note: chaperones are NOT responsible for athletes' personal items)
- will not consume alcohol or drugs for the duration of the trip

## Conduct

**At all tournaments, VWPC athletes will strive to behave in a manner that brings credit to the sport, their team, their provincial association, and/or their country.**

Chaperones will work with coaches to ensure athletes adhere to the **VWPC Code of Conduct and UCCMS**, both in and out of the pool.

Note that:

- all athletes are bound by the VWPC Code of Conduct and the UCCMS
- all athletes are responsible for reviewing and understanding the VWPC Code of Conduct
- all athletes are responsible for their own behaviour
- chaperones are not expected to manage poor athlete behaviour

Chaperones likewise must follow the Code of Conduct and UCCMS.

**Serious infractions of the VWPC Code of Conduct or UCCMS - actual or suspected - should be reported immediately to the Head Coach.**

In the event of an actual or suspected serious infraction of the VWPC Code of Conduct or the UCCMS, which includes, but is not limited to harassment, hazing or bullying, chaperones should intervene to protect athletes from harm.

The **Rule of Two** is an essential safeguarding process used when interacting with athletes. All adults - coaches, athletic staff, chaperones - should be fully familiar with its guidelines, especially during team travel.

## Scheduling

Chaperoning takes planning and organization. One of the first key tasks of a chaperone is to create a tournament schedule<sup>4</sup>. See Appendix B of this document for a sample. Work closely with coaches and Team Manager to develop the schedule. It should include:

- departure/arrival from Winnipeg
- arrival at hotel
- game times
- meals times
- team meetings
- free time/excursions/outings
- departure times games/outings
- return to hotel times
- rest times
- lights out

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for a sample Tournament Schedule

Especially when **scheduling meals**, plan with the athletes' activity levels in mind. Consult closely with coaches, who may have specific requests as to when to serve food for optimum performance. **Encouraging healthy eating is important on a water polo trip.**

Athletes are frequently at the pool for many hours at a time, so lunches and snacks may have to be prepared and packed in advance. Make time in your schedule for prep to occur when it is **most convenient for athletes**, such as after breakfast, or the evening before. Instruct athletes to store pre-packed lunches in their room fridges if needed.

Chaperones must consult with coaches prior to scheduling any extra curricular events

Helpful tip - print and distribute a tournament schedule to athletes in each hotel room, and have them tape it to the inside of their door for easy reference.

## Travel

Basic responsibilities for travel include:

- Know the transportation schedule and communicate it clearly to athletes
- Assist athletes in boarding and know their general whereabouts, especially if seated separately
- If athletes are traveling in private vehicles, know with whom athletes are traveling and have the contact information of drivers
- Drive athletes to and from event locations, if required. When driving athletes in small groups, strive to use the Rule of Two.

When traveling by bus, chaperones may wish to pack a small kit for motion sickness. This might include plastic bags, ginger drinks or lozenges, soda crackers, and OTC anti-nausea medications. Please note that athletes must have parent/guardian permission to take OTC medications.

If vehicles will be rented for travel, insurance can be purchased by the chaperone/driver from MPI ahead of the trip. It will replace the insurance offered by the vehicle rental agency, and will be significantly cheaper.

If using Ubers/Lyfts in tournament locations, DO NOT book them in advance, as this can double the cost. Ubers are generally reliable enough that they can be booked on the spot.

## Hotel Stays

The hotel is home away from home for traveling athletes, and is therefore where chaperones are at their busiest. Getting athletes settled and well rested is a big job - who knew?

Basic responsibilities for hotel stays include:

- Recognizing room assignments may not be in control of VWPC, chaperones staying on same floor or wing of the hotel as the athletes they are supervising is ideal
- Assist athletes and coaches with check-in and check-out at the hotel
- Ensure athletes follow VWPC rules for hotel stays
- Ensure athletes adhere to lights out and get to sleep in a timely fashion<sup>5</sup>
- Assist with wake up calls/door knocks, if necessary

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<sup>5</sup> [Detail: MWPA. Athlete Protection Guidelines. Section 7f:](#) "Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority."

- Go into athletes rooms, using rule of two, and check for any belongings
- At checkout, remind athletes to check rooms for anything left behind and for cleanliness

Athletes actually spend a lot of time at the hotel during a tournament. Whenever they are not in the pool playing, or cheering on other Vortex teams, they are at the hotel resting. It is during this time that chaperones should be checking on the well-being of athletes, and making sure they follow VWPC rules regarding hotel behaviour.

VWPC hotel rules are:

- athletes are not allowed to change room assignments, these are set by the coaches
- athletes may only enter their assigned rooms
- room doors must remain closed
- if a coach or chaperone knocks on the door, the athlete must check who it is and then open the door
- athletes must socialize/gather in COMMON SPACES ONLY, such as hallways, breakfast rooms, the lobby, or other common areas
- athletes should use the buddy system when visiting common areas
- **rooms are for resting** - if an athlete wants to rest, roommates need to be respectful and quiet, or leave to a common space (coaches should be alerted to any issues with this)
- athletes may not leave their room after lights out, except in case of emergency and in accordance with emergency situation procedures

Remind athletes that food and drink that are present in hotel rooms at check-in (ex. drinks and snacks in the fridge) may not be free. Athletes are NOT to consume any food/drinks stocked by the hotel without checking with the chaperone first. The club could be charged for these items.

Sleeping is absolutely essential for athletes at a tournament. Electronic devices are great for communication, but can distract athletes getting a good night's sleep. Coaches set a time for electronic device collection, with chaperones collecting them and holding them for safe keeping. Some phones may require charging. Athletes need to bring and clearly label any charge cords, none will be supplied by the club.

Chaperones who want a good night's sleep should remind athletes to turn off all notifications!

## Game Days

Athletes are always excited to get in the pool and start competing! It is best if chaperones build a bit of extra time into game day planning to ensure everyone is properly packed and prepared, and that there is ample time to get to the pool on schedule.

The following game day tasks are encouraged:

- coaches appreciate a **recording of games** for review and strategy purposes
- **streaming team games to the Vortex Facebook page** for parents at home

Chaperones can raise these items at the pre-tournament meeting, and ask for assistance from any parents who may be attending the tournament.

## Feeding Athletes

Providing food is the most important thing chaperones do - just ask the athletes! Planning healthy, tasty, affordable meals is key to keeping the athletes fuelled up for the competition.

Basic responsibilities include:

- ensure athletes are eating and drinking throughout the event
- plan, acquire and prepare snacks and meals for athletes throughout the event - this may include meals and snacks prepared in advance, or purchased where the event is being held
- when planning meals you must adhere to food restrictions and try to align with athlete preferences
- consult closely with coaches to ensure that meals are offered in a timely way to maximize performance in the pool

## BUDGET

Food costs for athletes are included in trip fees, and do not have a firmly set figure, as costs are reconciled with the Technical Director and Treasurer after each trip. However, assuming breakfast is provided by the hotel, chaperones can use **approximately \$25/day/athlete** as a guide when budgeting. Chaperones (and coaches) receive a \$50/day per diem to cover their own food and meal costs. Receipts are not required to claim this per diem.

Athletes typically pack meals and a snack when travelling by bus, car, or plane. Depending on travel arrangements, chaperones may provide meals when the team travels via bus or car to a tournament. When possible, shopping and preparation should be completed prior to travel, and transported along with the team. This reduces the stress of having to shop upon arrival.

When the itinerary calls for it, chaperones may opt to purchase ready-made foods and snacks from grocery stores, or party-style/order-in restaurant foods for meals.

Helpful tip - It's okay to have grocery delivered to the hotel if it's the best option for the circumstances and if all foods needed are available.

## BREAKFAST

**Breakfast** is typically provided by the hotel unless athletes are playing or traveling before breakfast service is open, in which case appropriate snacks or other food options can be provided by the chaperones. Some hotels will provide light bagged breakfasts upon request - inquire about this service if your athletes will be up and away before breakfast service opens.

## SNACKS

Athletes need **grab and go snacks** to keep their energy up. These can be offered at breakfast or lunch, at the hotel or at the pool. Provide foods such as:

- bananas, small oranges
- granola bars
- small cracker packets
- small popcorn servings
- cheese string
- yogurt tubes, apple sauce
- juice boxes, vitamin water

Coaches may request that **electrolyte sport drinks** are made available. Ask them in advance about their preferences. Try to minimize processed sugars when possible.

## LUNCH & DINNER

**Lunch and dinner** are usually provided by chaperones. At the hotel, meals can be served/prepared in the chaperone's room, and athletes then eat in their own rooms. Depending on the hotel, the breakfast room or other meeting rooms may be available for meals.. Be sure to inquire with hotel staff, and be aware that some hotels don't allow common areas to be used for team meals, and sometimes they can be booked for an extra fee.

**Lunches** are typically buffet-style, and assembled by the athletes. Lunch food may include:

- sandwiches fixings with lots of choice:
  - bread, buns, large croissants, wraps, etc.
  - cheeses and meats
  - mayo, mustard, etc.
  - veggies such as pickles, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce (for toppings or just eating )
- dips like creamy ranch, hummus, tzatziki, etc
- fruit, yogurt
- lunch bags and napkins if athletes are packing lunch for later in the day

**Dinners** may be prepared in advance or purchased. Follow [guidelines for safe food handling](#) when heating and serving pre-made meals. Inquire about microwaves at the hotel when planning to reheat pre-prepared food (be sure to pack foods in microwave safe containers). Microwaves may be available in guest rooms, in breakfast rooms, or other common areas. Small cooking appliances such as hot plates, rice cookers and slow cookers are typically not permitted in hotel rooms due to fire hazard. Check with hotel staff about using these items. Some hotels do have kitchenettes in the room.

Some ideas for Pre-made food options :

- chilis, soups, stews
- pulled meat-style sandwiches
- burrito meat, rice
- Taco kits
- bagged salads, veggie trays
- fruits trays,

Teams may choose to go out for dinner, or to bring in party-style catered foods. These can often be done at a reasonable cost. Consult with athletes in the pre-trip Google doc survey as to their tastes - you might be surprised by their choices!

Ideas for Catered food :

- salads, bread and pastas
- pizza and salad
- burritos, soft tacos, empanadas
- gyros, falafel, shawarmas, kebabs, rice, salads
- pad thai, spring rolls, mild curries, rice

## FOOD RESTRICTIONS

Remember to be fully aware of **dietary, health or religious restrictions** when choosing foods. This information will have been collected in the Google doc sent to all athletes or their parents/guardians before the trip.

Do not bring/purchase meals that exclude any athlete from sharing a table with their teammates (ex. athlete with a nut allergy must eat apart from other athletes eating brownies with nuts), or put them at

risk from accidental contact contamination. No athlete should have to miss or be excluded from any portion of a meal due to food restrictions.

## Free Time

Athletes may have long stretches of free time to fill between games. **Coaches will frequently use some of his time to meet, review performance, and set strategy.** They may also organize some gentle training, especially after long bus ride. The remaining time, however, is available for chaperones to plan activities, keeping in mind the physical demands of the tournament.

Older athletes, especially if they have traveled to tournament locations before, require less programming, and are often happy to play cards among themselves or rest in their rooms. Ask them in advance if they wish to have planned free time activities.

Free time activities may include:

- resting and recuperating from intense competitive play
- watching and cheering on other VWPC teams play at the tournament
- poster making to help with cheering, group games
- studying and completing school work
- free outings, such malls, parks, or points of interest
- paid outings such as escape rooms, movies, or other amusements

The cost of any paid outing will be the responsibility of individual athletes, and should be communicated clearly to parents in advance of the trip. Some outings may be decided on the fly due to tournament or schedule changes. Be sensitive that some family budgets may not allow for much in the way of extra costs. If there may be additional costs incurred for team events if the team exits a tournament early, communicate that as a potential cost upfront to parents as a component of the trip budget though flexibility may be required.

Chaperones will accompany athletes on all outings. If athletes split up - like at a mall - they must use the buddy system and remain in groups of at least two. Outings that are active such as trampoline parks or laser tag should be scheduled **after all tournament play is complete** to avoid the risk of being sidelined by injury.

Any athlete who wishes to visit with family or friends outside the club must first receive approval from both chaperones and coaches. At no time will the player be allowed to leave the team without chaperones/coaches being aware.

Some athletes may require a **quiet study area** to do school work. Chaperones should arrange for a space within the hotel for this purpose when requested.

## Health and Safety

Chaperone responsibilities for athlete health and safety include:

- In accordance with standard Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), chaperones should have a current medical record form on hand for each athlete in their care and contact information for parents/guardians
- Be aware of athletes' health concerns (ex. existing injuries, conditions, etc.)
- Carry small first aid items (bandages) and common OTC medications (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) for minor medical issues when not at the pool/competition venue
- Have accurate directions to nearest hospital/clinic



- Accompany sick or injured athletes to the hospital/clinic if they require medical attention, using the Rule of Two whenever possible
- Immediately contact the parents of sick or injured athletes and note that chaperones are standing *in loco parentis*

### USE GOOGLE DOC TO DESIGNATE INDIVIDUAL IN LOCO PARENTIS?

Chaperones may hold and distribute medication for athletes on trips. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to contact chaperones in advance, provide well-labelled medication containers, and detailed instructions for giving medication.

## Expenses

At the tournament, chaperones will submit their expense forms in to the Team Manager in a timely manner. If further adjustments are deemed to be required, the Team Manager will work with the Treasurer to determine the value of the reimbursement or top up.

## Chaperone Timeline

Start early when planning to chaperone a team or group to an out-town-event. The following is a **suggested timeline** to help chaperones prepare for a trip. Note that flying to a tournament versus driving presents different requirements. Adjust accordingly.

Note that Team Managers (TM) are responsible for bookings flights and hotels, and managing logistics. Work closely with TMs to ensure a smooth trip.

### 6 Weeks in Advance

- Initiate necessary registrations, checks and screenings
- Take required courses
- Consult with the TM for flight, ticketing and hotel information
- Proposed trip budget

### 1-2 Weeks in Advance

- Consult with Technical Director (TD) for a team roster of the athletes you will be chaperoning
- Attend the pre-tournament team meeting with TD, TM, coaches, athletes and parents
- Introduce yourself as the team chaperone and share your contact information with parents
- Offer parents the option of joining an tournament group chat
- For fly-in tournaments, research restaurants and plan take out meals
- Research possible free time outing options (mall, movie theatres, etc.)

### 1 Week in Advance

- Acquire the finalized version of travel itinerary, game schedule, and team roster from TD and TM
- Acquire flight information (if flying) and hotel booking information from TM. Note that the TM may also be traveling to the tournament, in which case they may manage this aspect of the trip
- Develop and finalize the Tournament Schedule in consultation with the coaches and TM
- Acquire food preference/restriction information for your athletes from TM
- Plan meals and create shopping lists

- Shop for meal and snack supplies
- Prepare and freeze any meals (ex. chili, taco meat, soups)
- Determine if you will use paper/plastic plates and cutlery, or reusables. Athletes are responsible for bringing reusable plates/cutlery, and should be instructed to pack them
- Acquire room assignments from coaches

#### 1 Day in Advance

- Final communications to athletes regarding travel, and any other relevant instructions (ex. bag requirements for air travel, what uniforms to wear, etc.)

#### Travel Day to the Tournament

- Take attendance of rostered athletes before and during travel. Adapt as needed depending on mode of travel (ex. private vehicle vs. flight)
- Ensure athletes have all their belongings after disembarking bus/plane
- Help transport athletes from airport to hotel, using the Rule of Two
- Assist with check-in, and help athletes find their rooms and get settled
- Communicate any schedule highlights clearly to athletes (ex. dinner time, coaching session, lights out, wake up time)

#### Tournament Day

- Ensure athletes are awake and prepared for breakfast
  - Send athletes to the breakfast area, ensuring they eat, as some may skip this meal
  - Ensure athletes leave breakfast room clean and tidy
  - Inform athletes of tournament schedule and when to be ready for the next event
  - Collect athletes for scheduled events, building in extra time for preparation
  - Accompany athletes to games or off-time activities
  - Prepare meals
- set up/coordinate game recording and live stream

#### Travel Day back to Winnipeg

- Ensure athletes pack and do a final sweep of the room for before checkout
- Assist with check out process, including overseeing bags being stowed in holding area if check out precedes departure by several hours
- Ensure all athletes are accounted for and have boarded homebound transportation (plane, bus, private vehicles)
- When travelling by bus, accompany athletes to roadside restaurants to purchase meals
- Ensure athletes have all their belongings when disembarking
- When arriving home, ensure athletes “check out” with you before leaving the group

## APPENDIX A

### NCL Volunteer Team Chaperones: Registration, Checks, and Screening Requirements

All chaperones accompanying athletes to NCL events must complete the following registrations, checks, and screening requirements. These requirements are a combination of MWPA and Water Polo Canada policies. The Water Polo Canada requirements are only needed for NCL events.

- VWPC Volunteer Team Chaperone registration
- Criminal Records Check (CRC) and Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)
- Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC)
- National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Account and Number
- Respect in Sport OR NCCP Safe Sport
- NCCP - Making Headway in Sport
- NCCP - Diversity and Inclusion in Action
- NCCP - Understanding the Rule of Two
- Water Polo Canada Screening Disclosure Form

The club will cover or reimburse fees associated with checks or screening.

All screens/checks and registration must be completed before attending any trips as a chaperone.

#### 1. Register with VWPC as Volunteer Team Chaperone

You should already have an account from registering your child as an athlete.

Go to <http://VortexWaterPolo.rampregistrations.com> and select "Executive/Volunteer Registration" and then choose "Team Chaperone". There is no fee for this registration.

When you register, you will have the option to upload your Criminal Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check. If these are not currently completed, the club will update your account when we receive them.

#### 2. Criminal Records Check (CRC) and Vulnerable Sector Search (VSS)

To be completed online at <https://www.winnipeg.ca/police/services/online-record-checks>

This check needs to be done every two (2) years. All chaperones must have a current Criminal Records Check (CRC) & Vulnerable Sector Search (VSS) on file with the club. Please forward completed check to [td@vortexwaterpolo.ca](mailto:td@vortexwaterpolo.ca) if you need a new or renewed check uploaded to the system.

There is a \$60.00 fee for this check. Vortex Water Polo has prepaid checks for people residing in Winnipeg which can be sent to you. If you live outside Winnipeg, please contact your local police force, usually the RCMP.

#### 3. Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC)

Please read the instructions carefully on the [CARC website](#) before submitting your application. Applications may be made via three methods:

- I. Online at <https://web.gov.mb.ca/AbuseRegistry>
- II. Mailed in ([download form HERE](#)) and post to:  
Child Abuse Registry, 2nd Floor – 777 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3G 0N3
- III. In person at 777 Portage Avenue. Office hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm. The office is closed during holidays.

There is a \$20.00 fee for initial applications. Each additional application is \$5.00 when requested at the time of submission. Keep the receipt - Vortex Water Polo Club will reimburse you for this fee.

#### **4. NCCP Account and Number**

Create an NCCP Account/Number online at <https://thelocker.coach.ca/>

You will need your NCCP when you register for coaching courses. Register for a NCCP number even if you have not taken any courses yet. Keep a record of your NCCP number and your login details. If you have one already, there is no need to create a new account.

There are no fees for creating an account or for taking the NCCP courses that are required below.

#### **5. NCCP Safe Sport or Sport Manitoba Respect in Sport**

NCCP Safe Sport at <https://safesport.coach.ca>

or

Respect in Sport at [https://sportmanitoba.respectgroupinc.com/koala\\_final/start.jsp](https://sportmanitoba.respectgroupinc.com/koala_final/start.jsp)

#### **6. NCCP - Making Headway in Sport**

Online at <https://coach.ca/nccp-making-head-way-sport>

#### **7. NCCP - Diversity and Inclusion in Action**

A Special Olympics e-learning module. Login to your locker at [coach.ca](https://coach.ca). Select the e-learning tab. On the left hand side are a list of sports, scroll and select "Special Olympics".

#### **8. NCCP - Understanding the Rule of Two**

Login to your locker at [coach.ca](https://coach.ca). Select e-learning tab. Select the course.

#### **9. Water Polo Canada Screening Disclosure Form**

Online at <https://forms.office.com/r/csXrBzMgzJ>