

Code of Conduct to Protect Children



What is it?

This Child Protection Code of Conduct is a component of the Commit to Kids: Sport Edition— a supplementary resource of the Commit to Kids™ child sexual abuse prevention program. The objective of developing and implementing such a Code of Conduct is to help increase the safety of the children in your care.

The Code of Conduct ultimately adopted by Hastings youth soccer club should establish boundaries for all employees/volunteers in your organization interacting with children, assist individuals in identifying concerning behaviour, and clarify the steps they should take to address such behaviour.

Introduction

Hastings Youth Soccer Club has adopted 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.

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 set out guidelines for any members of HYSC to allow them to develop healthy relationships with the children involved in the 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 the organization

It is important to ensure your own positive behaviour towards children, and pay close attention to the behaviour of others to ensure that behaviour 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
- Interactions with children should only pertain to your set duties, as well as be designed to develop the child's skills in the soccer program

It is important to be aware of child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behaviour or other interactions. If at any time you believe an interaction may becoming inappropriate, you should discuss it with the designated person within your organization.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour toward a child:

- embarrassing
- shaming
- blaming
- humiliating
- putting them down
- inappropriate physical touch

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 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 behaviour 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 behaviour – 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 behaviour 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 "friend requests", 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. Favouritism. Singling out a child or certain children and showing them favouritism.
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.

Inappropriate behaviour also includes:

5. Telling sexual jokes to a child, or making any explicit comments.
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 behaviour will not be tolerated

The board of HYSC will determine what is constituted as inappropriate behaviour on a case by case basis.

Reporting requirements

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

Where to report:

1. All allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour (for example, child sexual abuse) that a staff/volunteer witnesses first-hand, must be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare.
2. All allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour 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 behaviour (see above examples), that a staff/volunteer learns of or witnesses first-hand, must be reported to a board member of HYSC

Examples of the type behaviour you may learn of or witness and that you must report as set out above includes:

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

Any action you have witnessed that may be considered inappropriate or abusive must be reported to the Board. Remember: You have an independent duty to report all suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour directly to police and/or child welfare.

Follow up on reporting

When an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour is reported, police and/or a child welfare agency will be notified. With any follow up conducted by HYSC if required

When an allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour is made, HYSC will gather all information and interview any parties involved as deemed necessary.

In the case of inappropriate behaviour, if:

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