

Guidelines for Appropriate and Inappropriate Conduct Between Adults/Adolescents and Children

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all interactions between adults, adolescents, and children within Opeongo Minor Soccer Club are safe, respectful, and consistent with the Canada Soccer Guide to Safety and Safe Sport Principles.

These guidelines are intended to protect players, coaches, volunteers, and staff by establishing clear expectations for appropriate conduct and preventing situations that could lead to abuse, misconduct, or misinterpretation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals associated with Opeongo Minor Soccer Club, including:

• Coaches, team managers, trainers, and members

• Referees, staff, and administrators

• Players and participants (of all ages)

• Parents and guardians It covers all club-related activities, including practices, games, tournaments, travel, online communications, and social events.

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3. Guiding Principles

Opeongo Minor Soccer Club upholds the following core principles in alignment with Canada Soccer's Safe Sport Guidelines:

• All interactions between adults, adolescents, and children must be open, transparent, and appropriate.

• Power imbalances between adults and minors must be recognized and managed responsibly.

• Relationships within the club must promote trust, safety, and respect always.

• Physical contact, communication, and mentorship must always serve the athlete's well-being and development.

4. Appropriate Conduct

4.1 General Behaviour

• Treat all players with respect, fairness, and dignity.

• Use positive and constructive language to encourage learning and development.

• Always maintain clear professional boundaries.

• Conduct all interactions in observable and interruptible settings (e.g., open spaces, with others present).

• Uphold Opeongo Minor Soccer Club's Code of Conduct and the principles of *Safe Sport*.

4.2 Communication

• Communicate with players through official club platforms, group messages, or parent-inclusive channels.

• Use language that is professional, neutral, and age appropriate.

• Copy parents or guardians on all communications with minors.

• Use social media responsibly — do not engage in private messaging or "friending" players under 18.

4.3 Physical Contact

• Physical contact should only occur when necessary for instruction, safety, or first aid, and should always be brief, appropriate, and explained to the athlete.

• Examples of appropriate contact: o Handshake, high-five, or fist bump after a game. o Corrective positioning of an athlete only when essential for instruction and with consent. o First aid administered with another adult present whenever possible.

• Always seek consent and respect an athlete's personal space.

4.4 One-on-One Interactions

• Whenever possible, avoid being alone with a minor.

• Hold meetings or conversations with youth in public or visible areas.

• If one-on-one interaction is unavoidable (e.g., due to injury discussion or private feedback):

o Notify another staff member or parent.

o Keep doors open and ensure visibility.

o Keep discussions short, relevant, and professional.

5. Inappropriate Conduct

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action or dismissal:

5.1 Behavioural Misconduct

• Any form of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

• Shouting, belittling, or using language intended to shame or intimidate.

• Favouritism or singling out an athlete for personal attention or rewards.

• Using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs in the presence of minors.

5.2 Inappropriate Communication

• Private texting, messaging, or social media contact with minors.

• Sharing or requesting personal photos, jokes, or inappropriate material.

• Making suggestive, sexual, or discriminatory comments.

• Discussing personal or private matters unrelated to sport development.

5.3 Boundary Violations

• Spending unnecessary time alone with a child or adolescent.

• Offering rides to individual players without prior parental consent.

• Meeting minors outside of official club activities.

• Allowing physical contact (e.g., hugging, touching) that could be perceived as sexual or intrusive.

6. Reporting and Response

Opeongo Minor Soccer Club maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward inappropriate conduct. Any individual who witnesses or suspects a breach of these guidelines must report it immediately to:

• A Club Executive Member, email opeongosoccer@gmail.com

Reports are handled confidentially and in accordance with Canada Soccer's Safe Sport and Whistleblower Policies.

No retaliation will be tolerated against anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

7. Training and Education

• All Opeongo Minor Soccer Club coaches, volunteers, and staff are required to complete Canada Soccer's Safe Sport, Respect in Sport, and follow Rule of Two policy.

• Regular refreshers and workshops are provided to reinforce appropriate conduct and prevent boundary violations.

• Players and parents are educated on their rights and how to identify and report misconduct.

8. Monitoring and Accountability

• The Opeongo Minor Soccer Club Board of Directors and VUSL oversee compliance with these guidelines.

• Annual reviews ensure alignment with updated Canada Soccer and Ontario Soccer policies.

• Disciplinary action will be taken for violations, up to and including suspension or termination of membership.

9. Conclusion

Opeongo Minor Soccer Club is unwavering in its commitment to maintaining a safe, respectful, and transparent environment for all participants.

By following these guidelines — in alignment with the Canada Soccer Guide to Safety — we uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and care in our relationships with children and youth.

Our collective responsibility is to ensure that every participant feels safe, supported, and valued within the Opeongo Minor Soccer Club community.