



# NORTH SHORE GIRLS SOCCER CLUB

UPDATED: FEBRUARY 2024

## POLICY

### SAFE SPORT & RULE OF TWO (2)

NSGSC recognizes that there is a need to ensure that our Club provides players and coaches with an environment on and off the field that are physically safe and accessible. These environments are free of unethical behaviour, including but not limited to harassment, abuse, physical/emotional/sexual maltreatment and discrimination. NSGSC has conducted an internal review of its own policies and practices and has reviewed resources and analyses available within the sporting community. We note that NSGSC has a [Discipline & Complaints Policy](#), which addresses Harassment and Maltreatment and has a variety of procedures in place to protect players and coaches

NSGSC notes that in particular as a female-first Club, concerns about physical/emotional/sexual maltreatment of female players have been highlighted across amateur sport in Canada. These concerns are not limited to youth players, and therefore this policy applies to all of the programs run by NSGSC, including the Indoor League and the Women's Program.

In February, 2020, NSGSC itself with the Responsible Coaching Movement, coordinated by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. NSGSC is also striving, in all areas, to be consistent with the guidelines and policies set out in the [Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#) which provides a comprehensive overview of best practices and guidelines.

#### PHYSICAL SAFETY

NSGSC commits to the proper equipment use, injury and concussion prevention and management, emergency planning and a responsible post-injury return to play.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

NSGSC will provide a healthy atmosphere where participants are empowered to raise issues for themselves and others. Annual training to review consent, boundaries, negligence and performance well-being (an appropriate level of play for an individual's capabilities) is conducted.

#### RULE OF TWO

An athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation, must be in the presence of not less than TWO team staff (Person in Authority) who possess the following:

- ⇒ Valid Criminal Record Check
- ⇒ Recognized by the club as a team staff member for the current season
- ⇒ A minimum of one of the team staff must be female.



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This rule serves to protect minor athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that more than one adult and a female (same gender as the player) is present. Vulnerable situations can include closed doors meetings, travel, and training environments amongst others. One-on-one interactions between a coach and a player, without another individual present, must be avoided in all circumstances.

If a female coach is not available, then a registered volunteer manager or registered “bench mom” must be present (all volunteers who are NSGSC registered are considered to be “registered” within the meaning of this policy.)



## TEAM TRAVEL

NSGSC advises the following guidelines during travel with athletes:

- ⇒ A Person in Authority may not be alone in a car with an athlete unless that individual is the athlete’s parent or guardian.
- ⇒ A Person in Authority must not share a room or be alone in a room with an athlete unless that individual is the athlete’s parent or guardian.

Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be completed by two Persons in Authority—one of which must be the same gender as the athletes.

## LOCKER-CHANGING-MEETING ROOMS:

NSGSC advises the following guidelines for locker room, changing room and meeting rooms:

- ⇒ Interactions between a Person in Authority and an athlete should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room,



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meeting room, washroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for all necessary interactions in any such room.

## TRAINING/COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT (INCL. BEFORE, DURING & AFTER):

NSGSC advises the following guidelines for practice and games:

- ⇒ A Person in Authority should never be alone with an athlete prior to or following a game or practice, unless that individual is the athlete's parent or guardian.
- ⇒ If the athlete is the first athlete to arrive, the athlete's parent should remain alongside the athlete until another teammate or Person in Authority arrives.
- ⇒ Similarly, if an athlete can potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a game or practice, 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.

## VIRTUAL SETTING:

NSGSC advises the following guidelines for virtual environments:

- ⇒ For those athletes under age 16, a parent or guardian should be present during the session where possible.
- ⇒ Rule of Two requires two adult coaches be present, or one coach and one adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, club administrator) – one-on-one sessions should be prohibited.
- ⇒ A clear statement of professional standards expected of the coach during calls should be communicated – (i.e., sessions are not social engagements, and should be focused on training/coaching).
- ⇒ Parents/guardians should be fully informed beforehand about the activities undertaken during the sessions, as well as the process of the virtual session.
- ⇒ It is recommended to record sessions where that capacity exists.
- ⇒ Communication during each session should be in an open and observable environment (i.e., avoid bedrooms) in the athlete's home (athlete's parents'/guardians' home), and the coach must initiate the session from an appropriate location (i.e., avoid bedrooms or "overly personal"/unprofessional settings).
- ⇒ Parents/guardians should be required to consent to virtual sessions prior to each session, if irregularly scheduled, or prior to the first session if there is a series of regularly scheduled sessions.
- ⇒ Prohibit one-on-one texting, emailing or online contact between coach and athlete – any texting, emailing or online contact should be limited to group text/email that includes at least 2 adults (2 coaches or 1 coach and 1 adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, club administrator), and limited to coaching (non-social) matters, and parents of minor athletes should be provided the opportunity to receive these texts/emails



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- ⇒ Social media contact by coach to athlete should be prohibited (including the sharing of memes, non-training video, etc.)

## PROTECTING CHILDREN

Positive experiences are tied to healthy relationships between athletes and coaches, as well as to safe environments where there are clearly established guidelines for professional boundaries between adults and children. NSGSC will establish a common understanding of expectations for adults interacting with children, and a sense of safety for those who need to bring forward any concerns of misconduct towards children.

### Power Imbalance & Boundaries

The coach and athlete relationship is also characterized by a power imbalance in favour of the coach. Athletes are taught to respect and listen to their coaches, and they are dependent upon the coach's knowledge and training to further develop their skills. Both trust and power can be used to breach the coach-athlete relationship, and often this happens through boundary violations, which occur when the adult places their needs above the needs of the child and gains personally or professionally at the child's expense. The responsibility is always with the adult to establish and maintain an appropriate boundaries with children.

All interactions and activities with children should be (including electronic communication):

- ⇒ Transparent
- ⇒ Accountable
- ⇒ Tied to coaching/volunteer duties Parents and Coaches Play a Role
- ⇒ In response to meeting the child's needs → Reflect a duty of care and protection

### Age of Protection/Consent



#### Age of Protection in Canada

The age of protection (also called the age of consent) is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of protection in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the *Criminal Code* increases that age to 18 in the context of certain relationships. If the child is:

Under 12 years old	No person can engage in sexual activity with the child under any circumstance.
12 or 13 years old	The age difference must be LESS THAN 2 years AND the relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.*
14 or 15 years old	The age difference must be LESS THAN 5 years AND the relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.*
16 or 17 years old	The relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.*

\* For all children aged 12-17: If the other person is in a position of trust or authority over the child (e.g., a coach, teacher, etc.), the child is dependent on the other person or the relationship is exploitative of the child, the child is NOT able to give consent, making sexual activity in the context of such relationships illegal. **In these situations, only a person aged 18 or older is capable of consent.** The increased age takes into account the inherent vulnerability of the child and is meant to protect the child in situations that involve a power or other imbalance.



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## Reporting Abuse

When a person becomes aware that a child may be or has been abused, there is a legal and ethical responsibility to take action. In British Columbia, it is your legal duty to report.

The responsibility to report means that a person who has knowledge or information that a child is being or is at risk of being abused must report it to someone:

- ⇒ If the information relates to potential abuse of a child by the child's parent or guardian, the person must report it to child welfare or police.
- ⇒ If the concern involves potential abuse by any other person, the individual should report it to the child's parent or guardian and may also be obligated to report it to child welfare and/or police.

If you think a **child or youth** under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected, you have the legal duty to [report your concern](#) to a child welfare worker. Phone **1 800 663-9122** at any time of the day or night.

Further Reading:

NSGSC's Safe Sport Handbook – [LINK HERE](#)

Keeping Kids Safe from Abuse in BC – [LINK HERE](#)