



NSGSC SAFE SPORT HANDBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

Safe Sport

At NSGSC the safety of our players is our top priority. It is crucial that our players are having fun in an environment that is safe for all participants. We follow the Canada Soccer Safe Sport guidelines that outline the importance of safety in a positive, welcoming environment.

What is Safe Sport?

Often we first think of physical safety and injury prevention when thinking of safe sport but it involves much more.

"It's about making sport better through equity, respect, and inclusion so everyone can do their best and have fun." - viaSport (2023)

Safe sport not only includes physical safety but also encompasses psychological, safety, social-emotional safety, and cultural safety.

Safe sport is a shared responsibility as it involves not only the players but also the coaches, managers, referees, volunteers, administrators, parents, guardians, and spectators.

We **ALL** have a role and responsibility to contribute to safe sport environments that are free of harmful behaviours such as abuse, maltreatment, harassment, and discrimination.



Health & Safety Officer

Jana Madill

The Health and Safety officer should be contacted with any injury, physical/mental health, or safety concerns. All reports will be reviewed by the health and safety officer and will be assessed and dealt with directly by the club, or will move forward to a third-party assessment for further investigation and support.

Email: healthsafetyofficer@nsgsc.com

CONFLICT

Being part of a team can be one of the most supportive environments to learn and grow as an athlete and as an individual. Coaches can help teammates aspire to work together in harmony to achieve success, sometimes reaching a higher level than an individual could on their own. Sport by nature can be competitive and fraught with conflict. When teammates are in conflict it can have a huge impact on team dynamics and team cohesion. It is how we work through the elements of conflict that helps us determine success.



What can athletes do to resolve conflict? Advice for the players

The coach plays an important role in teaching strategies for teams to work better together.

- **Educate the team** – Set expectations around open communication, positive teammate interaction and conflict resolution at the beginning of the season.
- **Encourage communication** – Having an open and honest environment makes, athletes feel comfortable bringing issues forward instead of letting concerns and frustrations build, and disrupting team unity.
- **Provide a common goal** – Engage the team in setting a few simple team goals at the beginning of the season.
- **Promote a positive atmosphere** – During times of conflict is important to refocus the individual athletes or team on positive behaviours concentrated on solving the problem at hand to move forwards in achieving the team's goal.
- **Be a role model** – Coaches and parents can be role models for conflict avoidance and resolution behaviour. Set an example of honesty, calm demeanor, and positive conflict resolution.

- **Be professional** – Keep a calm and collected demeanor. Be the bigger person and rise above any argumentative behaviour. Focus on the team and working together.
- **Be honest** – If possible, work toward a resolution with the individual involved.
- **Don't take sides** – The only side that should be taken is the side of the team itself. Taking sides only encourages divisive behaviour and increases tensions and animosity.
- **Talk to the coach** – If issues cannot be resolved on a person to person basis, talk to the coach for advice on your role and behaviour or enlist their help in working towards a team solution.
- **Address the conflict off the field** – Personal issues between teammates should not be aired on the field of play and frustrations should not be taken out in the group setting impacting team performance. Support the player and the team during competition and training.

Please see the "Additional Resources" section for links and more detailed information regarding conflict on the team.

BC UNIVERSAL CODE OF CONDUCT



For sport experiences to be positive they need to be safe.

British Columbia's sport sector and organizations are committed to create sport environments that are free from all forms of harm including sexual, physical, mental, emotional and psychological.

The B.C. Universal Code of Conduct has been designed to supplement sport organization's current policies, it does not replace them. The purpose of the code is to set standards for the culture of sport in B.C. Any violations of the Code are subject to review and disciplinary procedures according to the respective sport organization's policy.

All participants in a position of trust or authority have a responsibility to:

- Protect the **health** and **well-being** of all other **Participants**.
- Prevent or reduce opportunities for **Maltreatment** and other **Prohibited Behaviours**.
- Respond to any **Maltreatment** involving **Minors** and other **Vulnerable** Participants.
- Learn to recognize **systemic bias**, **unconscious bias**, and to respond quickly and effectively to **Discriminatory practices**.
- Recognize when you are in a position of **Power Imbalance**.
 - A coach athlete relationship is one of a Power Imbalance in favour of the coach.

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.

BC UNIVERSAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Prohibited Behaviours

It is a violation of the B.C. Universal Code of Conduct to engage in:

- Psychological Maltreatment
- Physical Maltreatment
- Sexual Maltreatment
- Grooming
- Boundary Transgressions
- Neglect
- Discrimination
- Subjecting a Participant to the Risk of Maltreatment
- Aiding and Abetting
- Failure to Report
- Intentionally Filing a False Allegation
- Interference with or Manipulation of Process
- Retaliation

Physical Safety

NSGSC is committed to :

- Proper equipment use.
- Injury and concussion Prevention and management.
- Emergency planning.
- Responsible post injury return to play.

Psychological Safety

NSGSC provides a **healthy atmosphere** where athletes are empowered to raise issues for themselves and others. Annual training is conducted to review consent, boundaries, negligence & more.

Power Imbalance

As athletes are taught to listen to and respect their coach they become dependant on the coach's knowledge. The responsibility is always with the adult to establish and maintain boundaries with the athlete, and not abuse their power.



B.C. Universal Code of Conduct Links:

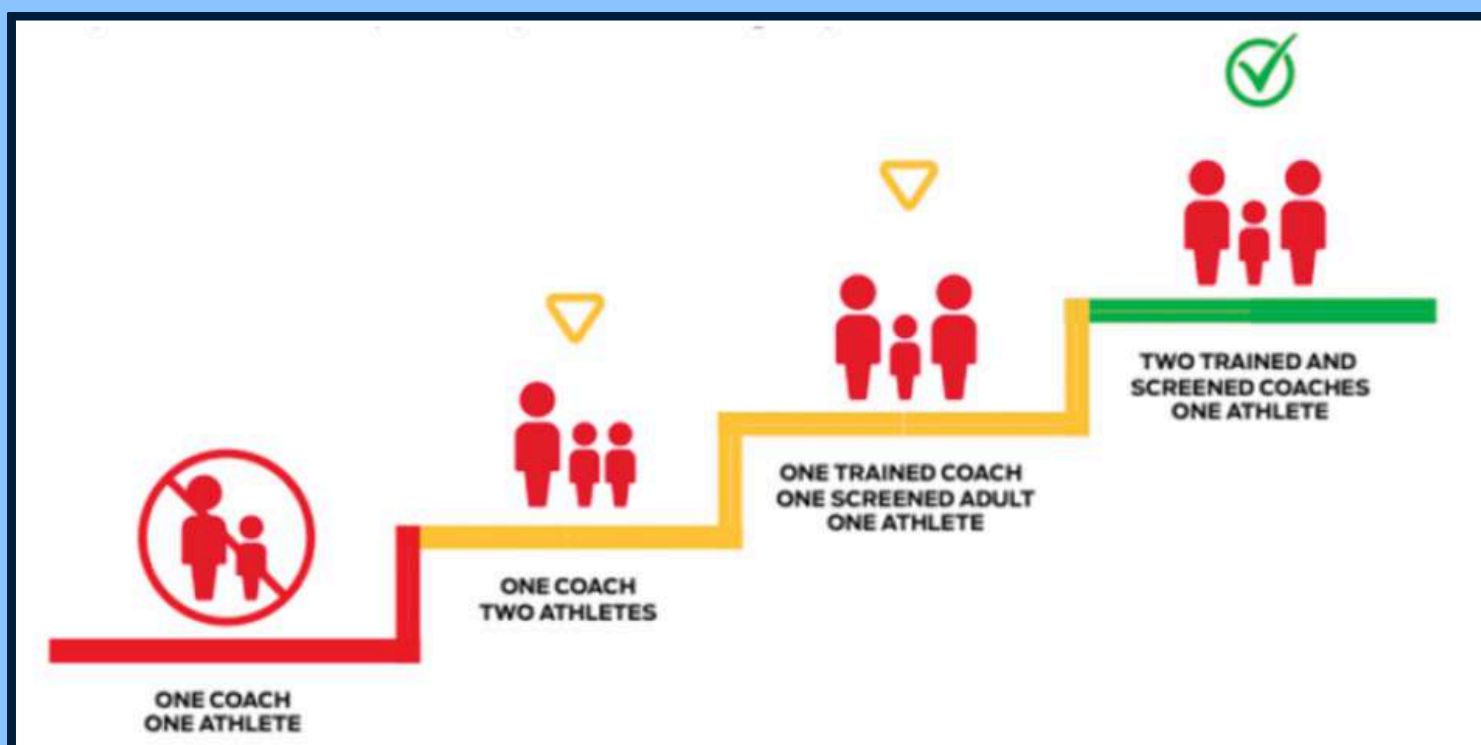
ViaSport's Safe Sport Conduct Summary can be found [HERE](#)

The link to the full B.C. Universal Code of Conduct can can be found [HERE](#)

Rule of Two

The rule states that when an athlete is placed in a potentially vulnerable situation they must be in the presence of no less than **TWO** team staff (Person in Authority) who fulfil the following:

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



Team Travel:

- A Person in Authority **must not be alone in a car with an athlete** unless they are the athlete's parent/guardian.
- A Person in Authority **must not share a room with an athlete** unless they are the athlete's parent/guardian.
- **Room/bed check during overnight stays are to be done by two Persons of Authority**, one must be female.

Locker/Changing/Meeting Room

- **Interactions** between an athlete and Person of Authority **are not to occur in a room where privacy is expected** (locker/changing/meeting room or washroom).
- A **second Person of Authority must be present for all necessary interactions in such a room**, one must be female.

ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION

Complaints, Dispute Resolution, and Discipline

The NSGSC Discipline and Complaints Policy sets out the guidelines and procedures for bringing and resolving complaints concerning the conduct of individuals who participate in NSGSC business or activities.

General Complaints

Complaints of any nature related to NSGSC may be directed to the Club Administration at clubadministrator@nsgsc.com.

Game Related Complaints

Complaints related to on-field, game-related conduct of athletes, coaches, or officiants should first be handled on-field with the referee. Process:

- Handle with the referee at the field
- Referee to report incident
- If referee refuses, coach to submit to Club Administration at clubadministrator@nsgsc.com, or directly to the relevant league official



Complaints of a Serious or Sensitive Nature

Complaints of a serious or sensitive nature may be directed to the NSGSC Discipline Chair via disciplinechair@nsgsc.com, or directly to the Executive Director via janam@nsgsc.com. Pursuant to the NSGSC Discipline and Complaints Policy, NSGSC will refer to BC Soccer certain allegations of misconduct, including but not limited to allegations of maltreatment, harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination.

Other Resolutions

- For additional advice, guidance and resources from BC Soccer on how to proceed or intervene appropriately in circumstances of misconduct, please visit this link [Report Abuse | BC Soccer](#).
- Complaints may also be submitted anonymously, confidentially, and directly to BC Soccer via the ITP Sport "Integrity Counts" system IntegrityCounts, or by phone at 1-800-758-9412.



INJURY REPORTING

If the incident that is being reported pertains to a physical injury, here is the process coaches should ensure are followed:

1. **On site assessment** of injury
2. **Fill in the injury report form** for any incident on the field. (download form from website [HERE](#))
3. **Submit it to Health and Safety Officer** in case of club insurance coverage needing to be activated
4. **This must be submitted within two weeks of the injury.**

It is very important to please ensure you fill out an injury report form and submit it to the Health and Safety Officer if there is an injury during a practice or game. In the event club insurance is needed at any time, there needs to be a record of the injury.

Jewelry

Jewelry is prohibited to be worn during during any games:

- The referee will ask you to remove all jewelry
- All must be removed with the exception of medical alert bracelets
- **YOU CAN NOT TAPE JEWELRY**

We recommend players get any new piercings post-season in April-June.

Insurance Claim Form

- Sports Accident Insurance is coverage for **sanctioned games and practices**.
- It acts as **secondary coverage** to your work/family policy.
- If you need to make a claim **fill out the SBC Accident Claim Form** and **submit it to the Health and Safety Officer** (find the form [HERE](#))
- SBC Insurance must **receive notice of the accident within 30 days** and **claim documentation within 90 days**.



Reporting Abuse

If you become aware or have reason to **believe a child has been or is being abused** there is a **legal and ethical responsibility to report it**.

- If it involves the child's parent/guardian report to child welfare and/or police
- If it involves another person report the the child's parent/guardian along with child welfare and/or the police

Report your concern [HERE](#) or phone 1 800 663-9122 at any time of day or night.

MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS

Ethical decisions inspire trust and with it, equity, responsibility, and care for others. As a team official, you will deal with a wide range of issues and dilemmas. The following framework and core principles can help guide the process to ensure you make a thoughtful and responsible decision.

Framework for Ethical Decision Making

Identify the Ethical Issue



Identify and Establish the Facts

- Who, What, When, and Where



Identify and Evaluate your
Options and Possible
Consequences

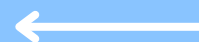


Consider Factors Affecting the
Decision Making Process

- Internal influences (personal bias, previous experience, personal values, and emotions)
- External influences (magnitude of situation, expectations from others, organizational/social aspects and pressures)



Choose the Best Option



Take Action and Implement
your Decision



MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS

Core principles and ethical standards of behaviour



Leadership and professionalism

- Understand the authority that comes with your position and make decisions that are in the **best interest of all participants**
- Share your knowledge and experience openly
- Maintain the **athlete-centered approach** to coaching so that every participant's well being is a priority
- Be a **positive role model**
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy of participants' personal information

Respect and integrity

- Provide equitable opportunity and access for all
- Establish a **respectful and inclusive sport environment** where all participants can raise questions or concerns
- Obey the rules and participate honestly and respectfully
- **Be open, transparent and accountable** for your actions
- Maintain objectivity when interacting with all participants

Health and safety

- Recognize and minimize vulnerable situations to ensure the safety of participants
- Prioritize a holistic approach when planning and delivering training and competition
- Advocate for, and ensure appropriate supervision of participants, including the **Rule of Two**
- Participate in education and training to stay current on practices to ensure the continued safety of your participants
- Understand the scope of your role and skills and call upon others with specialized skills when needed to support your participants



DIGITAL/PRIVACY



The use of online chat and other digital communications platforms must occur in **OPEN** and **OBSERVABLE** environments (i.e. avoid unprofessional settings like bedrooms). The communication should be necessary, administrative, and/or focus exclusively on supporting participant engagement and development.

When communicating electronically with your team or players:

Rule of Two: Sessions require two adult coaches or one adult coach and one adult to be present.

- Coaches will communicate a clear statement of professional standards about the session.

Prohibit one-to-one electronic messaging/one-on-one sessions.

- Personal and closed/private communications between team officials and participants should not be used.
 - I.e. direct messaging such as text or via social media platforms.
- Avoid using disappearing content platforms or content (Snapchat, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories).

Parents/Guardians of athletes aged 16 and under should be present for sessions when possible.

- Parents/Guardians should be required to consent prior to an irregularly scheduled session or the first of a series of regularly scheduled sessions.
- Parents/Guardians should be informed beforehand of a session's process and activities.
- Record sessions when it is possible.

Please use our electronic communication platform, TeamSnap, for any communications.

- Please encourage all parents/guardians on your team to register and use TeamSnap for updates.

All communication from a team official to participants should be kept professional in nature.

Any participant **can choose not to engage with other participants (including team officials) on social media.**

Participants should not be required to engage on social media platforms to access team or Sports Organization information.

If an individual participant sends a team official a message directly, the team official should include another individual in the response. The parent or guardian of minors should be included in any individual communications from team officials.

Restate team expectations about positive, respectful communication, and online behaviors.

KEEPING GIRLS IN THE GAME

How we choose to coach and interact with the young athletes we lead is crucial to their experience and their attitude about themselves and sport. **As coaches and leaders, we must create environments that support and encourage our players.** We can all do our part to get girls playing and help keep them playing. It's up to us to create a structured, supportive, and positive sport environment.

A few key things are needed to create a positive, meaningful connection to sport:

Social - Opportunities to be part of the team, compete, make friends and connect with teammates and the adults around them.



And most importantly, remember that the **main reason** why girls will participate in sport is because it is **FUN!**



Role models are important too, like female coaches and people in their lives who **celebrate female athletes**. Girls who have these things are more likely to keep playing as they get older. To keep them coming back and playing, we need to create a sports culture that includes and celebrates the female athlete. This starts with the culture we create on our teams.



KEEPING GIRLS IN THE GAME

Ways to help:

If players stay active, they are more likely to develop **positive coping skills, increased self-worth, and increased confidence**. But many girls who were involved in physical activities and sports when they were younger drop out as they approach puberty.



Prepared with excerpts from: 5 ways to keep girls in sports – Active For Life

Changing attitude regarding physical activity - If a player uses a phrase such as “I’m not an athlete” or “I don’t know anything about sports” use it as an opportunity to explain that **physical activity is not black and white**. Remind them that **no one is ever born a natural athlete**, even Olympic champions started at the beginning, and worked hard to succeed in their sport.

And always remind them that **being active will help them be more confident, do better in school, and be more secure socially**.

Keeping it fun – outside of ensuring they are enjoying their time on field with their team, here are some other suggestions to help encourage girls to stay in sport:

- Go to **female sports events**
- **Team based activity** such as a team picnic on the beach or snowshoeing in the winter
- **Learn about female athletes**. Read, or watch biographies on inspirational female heroes like Christine Sinclair, the Canadian National Women’s Soccer team, and other athletes such as the Williams sisters.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here are some helpful links for coaches and managers to resources that can help with the success of your team:

[NSGSC Discipline and Complaints Policy](#)

[British Columbia Universal Code of Conduct](#)

[Championing Amateur Sport in BC: Making Sport Better w/ viaSport](#)

[Resolving Conflict within a Youth Sport Team – The Sport Information Resource Centre \(sirc.ca\)](#)

[i-Protect – Safe Sport Learning Platform](#)

[Keeping the Game Fun: A Sports Psychologist Weighs on Mental Health For Young Athletes](#)

