



# **NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB GUIDE TO SAFETY**

# INTRODUCTION

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club believes that every individual involved in soccer deserves the opportunity to participate safely. Children, in particular, have a right to participate in sport in a safe and enjoyable environment. Although the Niagara Falls Soccer Club follows and adopts the [Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#), we have put together our own Guide to Safety (the guide), which presents information, best practices and principles, and guidance to support safe environments and participation to all our Members, Executives, Coaches, Staff, and Volunteers.

The Guide is designed to cover all elements of safety both on and off the field of play, including Codes of Conduct, Child Protection, the Responsible Coaching Movement, Anti-Doping, Injury and Return to Play, Facility and Equipment Safety, and Psychological Safety.

## Using the Guide

This guide focuses on best practices that can help members to ensure a safe environment for all participants both on and off the field. The Guide is supported by and coordinated with other Guides relating to Governance, Management and Operations, and Accessibility & Inclusion.

Finally, note that this Guide is not an instruction manual or policy document! It is a genuine guide, aimed at helping NFSC members be the best they can be, providing positive experiences for their players, coaches, match officials and volunteers. NFSC encourages all members to follow the principles, directions and standards laid out purely for their own benefit, and at their discretion.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide and for your commitment and contributions to soccer in Canada. We hope it is of help to you in your efforts to build great soccer organizations around the country!

## CODES OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct is a set of rules outlining the social norms, responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, group, or organization. It helps to set a standard for the participants, staff, volunteers, and members so that they know what is expected of them in that environment.

Niagara Falls Soccer Club has a Code of Conduct and Ethics that applies to all Board Members, Staff, Coaches, Team Personnel, Volunteers, Players and Parents/Caregivers/Spectators.

These Codes focus on the conduct of actions on and off the field of play. Any breach of this Code will be addressed by the Executive Officer, Technical Lead and if more serious in nature, the NFSC Discipline Committee.

The NFSC Code of Conduct and Ethics outlines Responsibilities of members and stakeholders, Integrity in Sport, Harassment, and Duty of Disclosure, Reporting and Cooperation.

Any behaviour prohibited by the Niagara Falls Soccer Club Code of Conduct that is experienced or observed must be reported confidentially and in writing to [nfscoffice@gmail.com](mailto:nfscoffice@gmail.com).

### Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics

The purpose of the [Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics](#) which Niagara Falls Soccer Club adheres to by adopting the Niagara Falls Soccer Club Guide to Safety, is to ensure a safe and positive environment (within Niagara Falls Soccer Club programs, activities, and events) by making individuals aware that there is an expectation, at all times, of appropriate behaviour consistent with Canada Soccer's core values. NFSC supports equal opportunity, prohibits discriminatory practices, and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect.

This Code applies to Officials, Athlete Members, Life Members, players and individuals employed or engaged by Niagara Falls Soccer Club.

### Code of Conduct to Protect Children (adopted from Commit to Kids)

A Code of Conduct to Protect Children is the most important tool an organization will develop to help establish boundaries between adults/adolescents and children. It is a written overview of the organization's expectations regarding interactions with children, and it outlines that discipline will be enforced if expectations are not met. An organization should post its Code of Conduct and readily share it with everyone.

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club has made the commitment to protecting children, adolescents and members within our Organization by adopting the Commit to Kids program and creating policies to help educate and establish boundaries and expectations followed up with discipline if these are breached or not met.



## The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

### Code of Conduct for Parents/Caregivers/Guardians/Spectators

Here at the Niagara Falls Soccer Club, we feel that parent's/ caregivers /guardians/spectator's expectations and attitudes have a significant bearing on a child's attitude towards:

- Other Players
- Referees
- Managers
- Spectators

NFSC will strive to ensure that parents/ caregivers /guardians/spectators within the club are always positive and encouraging towards all of the players—not just their own—and will encourage parents/ caregivers /guardians/spectators to:

- Applaud the opposition as well as their own team
- Avoid coaching the child during the game
- Not to shout and scream
- Respect the referee's decisions
- Give attention to each of the children involved in soccer not just the most talented
- Give encouragement to everyone to participate in soccer

NFSC will ensure that parents/caregivers/guardians/spectators agree and adhere to the ***Code of Conduct and Ontario Soccer's Screening Handbook***.



# The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

## Code of Conduct for Players

### Obligations toward the Game

#### A player should:

1. Make every effort to develop their own sporting ability, in terms of skill, technique, tactics and stamina.
2. Give maximum effort and strive for the best possible performance during a game, even if the team is in a position where the desired result has already been achieved.
3. Set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters.
4. Avoid all forms of gamesmanship and time-wasting.
5. Always have regard to the best interests of the game, including where publicly expressing an opinion on the game and any particular aspect of it, including others involved in the game.
6. Not use inappropriate language.

### Obligations towards the Team

#### A player should:

1. Make every effort consistent with Fair Play and the Laws of the Game to help the team win.
2. Resist any influence that might, or might be seen to, bring into question commitment to the team winning.
3. Respect for the Laws of the Game and Competition Rules a player should:
4. Know and abide by the Laws, rules and spirit of the game, and the competition rules.
5. Accept success and failure, victory and defeat, equally.
6. Resist any temptation to take banned substances or use banned techniques.

### Respect towards Opponents

#### A player should:

1. Treat opponents with due respect at all times, irrespective of the result of the game.
2. Safeguard the physical fitness of opponents, avoid violence and rough play, and help injured opponents.

### Respect towards the Referees

#### A player should:

1. Accept the decision of the Referee without protest.
2. Avoid words or actions that may mislead a Referee.
3. Show due respect towards Referee.

### Respect towards Team Officials

#### A player should:

1. Abide by the instructions of their Coach and Team Officials, provided they do not contradict the spirit of this Code.
2. Show due respect towards the Team Officials of the opposition.

### Obligations towards the Supporters

#### A player should:

1. Show due respect to the interests of supporters.



# THE NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

## Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Personnel

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club expects all Coaches and Team Personnel to be a positive representation of the Club at all times. As such, NFSC has implemented the following Code of Conduct and requires that it be adhered to at all times. NFSC will ensure all Coaches and Team Personnel are made aware of this Code and will make it available on the Club's website as well as in manuals and handbooks. If a Coach or Team Personnel fails to comply with the standards set forth in this code, disciplinary measures may be taken by the Club.

### A Coach/Manager must:

1. Create and maintain a positive environment that promotes teambuilding and development.
2. Be committed to improving the performance of the players and the team physically and mentally.
3. Provide a high-quality soccer program that positively reflects the values of the Niagara Falls Soccer Club.
4. Comply with all NFSC policies and procedures as stated in league manuals, on the website, etc.
5. Never create a environment that anyone affiliated with the team might find offensive, sexually suggestive or uncomfortable in any way.
6. Ensure the safety of the players is paramount at all times.
7. Be thoroughly acquainted with FIFA Laws of the Game and keep attuned to the sound principles of coaching.
8. Respect all people affiliated with the game - players, referees, coaches, spectators, etc. Opponents and referees must be treated with respect at all times.
9. Act as a positive role model at all times as players look up to team officials and model their behaviour after them.
10. Encourage players to exhibit good sportsmanship, be gracious winners and losers, and to always play fairly within the laws of the game.
11. Be enthusiastic and positive. Be generous with praise when deserved and provide feedback in a positive format that promotes improvement and confidence building.

### Coach/Team Personnel Sign Off

**I have read, understand and agree to adhere to NFSC's Coach and Team Personnel Code of Conduct.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date



# THE NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

## Code of Conduct for Match Officials

Match Officials having certain privileges through and by Ontario Soccer, with respect to the game, shall realize and respect their responsibilities and duties to The Association and the game. Ontario Soccer endorses The Canadian Soccer Association's "Code of Ethics" for Match Officials.

### **Specifically Match Officials shall:**

- Conduct themselves with dignity both on and off the field of play and shall, by example, endeavor to inspire the true principles of fair play and earn the respect of those whom they serve;
- Not cause The Association to become involved in any controversial matters and shall abide by the rules and regulations of the jurisdiction in which they officiate;
- Adhere to all standards and directives;
- Always be neat in appearance and maintain a high level of physical and mental fitness;
- Study the Laws of the game and be aware of all changes, and shall enforce all said Laws and changes;
- Perform their designated responsibilities, including attending organized clinics and lectures, etc., and shall assist their colleagues in upgrading and improving their standards of officiating, instructing and assessing;
- Honour any appointments made for and accepted by them unless unable to do so by virtue of illness or personal emergency;
- Not publicly criticize other referees or any soccer association nor shall they make any statements to the media related to any game in which they were involved;
- Be subject to disciplinary action for not complying with this Code of Conduct

# CHILD PROTECTION

## Soccer as a Safe Place and the Coach as a Trusted Adult

For some young players, the soccer field may be one of the few safe places, and, after the parent or guardian, a coach is one of the most influential people in a child's life. As such, all coaches are in a unique position to be role models and mentors for young participants.

All coaches and individuals who work with children have a "duty of care" to the children with whom they work. A duty of care is a legal obligation which is imposed on an individual requiring adherence to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others. Coaches are required by law to always act in the best interest of the individuals they coach and not act or fail to act in a way that results in harm. This obligation also includes a responsibility to role model appropriate boundaries and professional contact at all times.

Although child serving organizations have an obligation to ensure the safety of the children in their care, including appropriate screening and monitoring of all coaches, the vast majority of coaches are positive influences on and trusted adults in the lives of the young players they coach. As coaches work with children on a regular basis and many are able to establish a positive and healthy adult-child relationship with their players, a coach may be the person a child chooses to talk to about something happening in their life. In fact, studies have shown that children are more likely to disclose maltreatment to their coach than even their teacher.

In addition, a coach may be in position to be able to detect signs of maltreatment of children in their care.

Coaches must be able to recognize signs of maltreatment and know what to do when you feel that maltreatment has taken place. It is important that coaches know how to respond to a child in danger, and how to share information appropriately with those who can help. It is important to remember that even though a child could be displaying some or all of the signs of maltreatment, this doesn't necessarily mean that maltreatment is occurring. As a coach, if you see signs in a child that are worrying, it is not your responsibility to decide if maltreatment is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it. Under Canadian child welfare laws, if you know or suspect child maltreatment, you have a legal obligation to report it. This is known as the "duty to report". Every person in our Organization has the duty to report known or suspected child maltreatment by law.

Because of this, we have adopted policies and codes of conduct to act a safeguards for our players.

### **Policies and Safeguards aim to:**

- Help create a safe sporting environment for children wherever they participate and at whatever level;
- Provide a benchmark to assist sports providers and funders to make informed decisions;
- Promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children;
- Provide clarity on safeguarding children to all involved in sport; and,

### **They are based on the following principles:**

- All children have the right to participate, enjoy and develop through sport, in a safe and inclusive environment, free from all forms of maltreatment; bullying, abuse, harassment, violence, discrimination, neglect and exploitation
- Children have the right to have their voices heard and listened to. They need to know who they can turn to when they have a concern about their participation in sport
- Everyone, organizations and individuals, service providers and funders, has a responsibility to support the care and protection of young people
- Organizations providing sports activities to children and young people have a legal and moral duty of care for them
- There are certain factors that leave some children more vulnerable to abuse, and steps need to be taken to address this
- Children have a right to be involved in shaping safeguarding policy and practice
- Organizations should always act in the best interests of the child
- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and not be discriminated against based on gender, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, beliefs, religious or political affiliation
- The processes and activities for the creation, development and implementation of safeguarding measures should be inclusive





# The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

## Child Protection Policy

As a soccer club primarily focused on delivering soccer programs to children, we must always, as coaches, coordinators and/or staff, be attentive and ensure that the environment is safe and supportive to their needs. As such, the Niagara Falls Soccer Club (NFSC) expects all those directly involved with children in soccer, to always be and present a positive and ethical representation of themselves and NFSC, and to always take into account children's safety. As such, and on behalf of the NFSC Board of Directors, the following child protection policy must be adhered to at all times.

The intent of the Code of Conduct is to guide our Coaches/Coordinators/Staff/Volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the children involved in sport programs delivered by our organization and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

### **All Staff/Coordinator/Coach/Volunteer 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 monitor your own behavior towards children, and pay close attention to the behavior of your peers to ensure that behavior 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 NFSC Board, where applicable, and the parents of the child
- tied to your duties , and
- designed to develop the child's skills in the sport program

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behaviour or other interactions. If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behaviour or the behaviour of others, you should discuss it with the Director of Soccer Operations or Executive Officer at NFSC.



# The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

## Child Protection Policy

### Examples of unacceptable behaviour toward a child:

- embarrassing
- shaming
- blaming
- humiliating
- putting them down

### Staff/Coach/Coordinator/Volunteers of our 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 NFSC's Policies, or Child Protection Policy, regardless of whether or not they are serving our Organization at that moment

Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour – it is a staff/coordinator/coach/volunteer's duty to report the matter to the designated person, Child Welfare Agency, or law enforcement, not to investigate.

### Inappropriate behaviour includes:

- Telling sexual jokes to a child, or making comments to a child that are or is in any way suggestive, explicit or personal.
- 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
- Intimidating or threatening a child
- Making fun of a child

**Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children involved in activities or programs delivered by the Niagara Falls Soccer Club.**

Whether or not a particular behavior or action constitutes inappropriate behaviour will be a matter determined by NFSC having regard to all of the circumstances, including past behaviour, and allegations or suspicions related to such behaviour.

## **Inappropriate behaviour also includes the following:**

### **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:

- Electronic communications (email, text message, instant message, online chats, social networking including “friending”, etc.) not tied to duties with the child Should such communications to players be necessary it MUST always be directed to or indirectly (CC) via the parent/guardian. Club and team-based group communication sites such as TeamSnap are to be utilized whenever possible;
- Excessive communications (online or offline)
- Personal phone calls not tied to duties with the child
- Personal letters not tied to duties with the child

### **2. Inappropriate Contact (See "Rule of Two")**

- Spending unauthorized time with a child outside of designated duties with the organization.
- Be alone with a child in a non-visible place and/or enclosed space, such as a car, change room or similar at any time;
- Any direct meeting with an individual player that is not done in the presence of another adult such as the team manager, assistant coach and/or the player’s parent or guardian. Ad-hoc direct feedback before, during or post
- Provide transportation to and from practices, tournaments, festivals and games to children unless accompanied by the player’s guardian and/or parent;

### **3. Favouritism**

- Singling out a child or certain children and providing special privileges and attention. (for example, paying a lot of attention to, giving or sending personalized gifts, or allowing privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate.)

### **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. Pictures taken as part of your job

duties are acceptable, however, the pictures are to remain with the organization and not be used by you in a personal capacity.

5. Games/practice scenarios are encouraged but must always be done at the training ground or similar venues within in a visible setting;
6. Leave children alone after a game or practice if their parent/guardian has not arrived to pick them up. In such cases the Coach and or Team Manager must remain with child in a visible place until the player is picked up.
7. Conduct practices alone with a children's team. Make sure you are in a visible place and that there are parents/guardians and or other adults present in the direct vicinity.
8. Use profanity, swearing, ridicule or violence towards a child.

Given your important role at NFSC and your interaction with NFSC players, parents and families, your attention to the above is required and is appreciated. If at any time you are faced with a "grey" situation, take the side of caution or seek guidance from the Club , as even the most innocent type of situations can lead to unwanted challenges and misunderstandings. The core essence of this framework is to put the child's safety and wellbeing first and never put yourself in a situation where you are alone with a child whether in a physical space or via direct communication channels. As a coach / team official, you must also be aware and keep all requirements as part of Ontario Soccer up to date.

**Please reference these Policy's for more information:**

- [Respect in Soccer Program](#)
- [Protecting Children & Youth in Sport](#)
- [Sport Safety for Sport Organizations](#)

**Let's all help make Soccer a positive and memorable experience!**

Policy Updated: April 9th, 2020

## **Commit to Kids Program**

The Commit to Kids program helps child-serving organizations reduce the risk of sexual abuse and create safer environments for children in their care. The Niagara Falls Soccer Club is committed to protecting our children and youth. For this reason we utilize this program and encourage our staff to make it a priority and take the Commit to Kids online training.

The program's helpful tools provide organizations with information on the issue of child sexual abuse which forms the basis for educated policies and procedures — from hiring and screening to reporting and staff training. This enables all employees, Coaches and volunteers throughout an organization to uphold standards of conduct that protect children and youth in their care by focusing on healthy interaction between adults and children.

Through the use of print material, check lists, manuals, and electronic resources, as well as online training, Commit to Kids offers options to help organizations create a culture of safety in which employees/volunteers feel confident in both their interactions with children and their decision making when it comes to reporting inappropriate behaviour.

They are widely used by large, small, or volunteer-run Child-serving organizations such as daycares, camps, after-school programs, faith-based organizations, sports organizations, and foster programs that are dedicated to the safety, health and well-being of children and youth. Organizations like ours who recognize the importance of physical safety in their programming and services, and must do the same in preventing sexual abuse.

By continuing to utilize this program and implement the resources in which they provide, we can continue to ensure a safe and fun experience for our players to fondly look back on.

**Click on this link for the [Commit to Kids for Coaches Online Training](#)**

**Click on this link for the [Commit to Kids Parent Guide](#)**



Model in image and infographic for illustrative

## Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Children in Sport

Sport offers incredible experiences and opportunities for children. These experiences are integral to enhancing child development. Positive experiences are tied to healthy relationships between athletes and coaches, as well as to safe environments where adults are accountable for their actions and behaviours. As such, the purpose of these guidelines is to establish a common understanding of expectations for adults interacting with children in sport, and a sense of safety for those who need to bring forward any concerns of misconduct towards children.

*For the purpose of this document “a coach or adult” refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with children in sport. “Children” refers to anyone under 18 years old.*

*This document does not address every situation nor is it meant to be an exhaustive list of acceptable or unacceptable conduct. It is meant to provide a framework within sport in which individuals are expected to exercise common sense and good judgment when interacting with children.*

### The Coach and Athlete Relationship

Generally, coaches are in a position of trust, and it’s through professional boundaries that this foundation of trust between coaches and athletes is built. If boundaries are broken, that pillar of the relationship crumbles.

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 appropriate boundaries with children.



### 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 <u>must</u> be LESS THAN 2 years AND the relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*
14 or 15 years old	The age difference <u>must</u> be LESS THAN 5 years AND the relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> be such that a child is able to give consent.*
16 or 17 years old	The relative positions of the parties <u>must</u> 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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## Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviour

Individuals working or volunteering in sport are expected to model behaviour that upholds public confidence and enhances healthy relationships with children and families.

### Examples of Appropriate Behaviour:

- Respectful language, tone and attitude towards others
- Respectful of personal physical and emotional boundaries
- Responding to children to meet the child's needs and not the adult's
- Engaging with children in a manner that would be seen by a reasonable observer as maintaining reasonable boundaries
- Keeping practices open to observation by parents
- Communication with children (including electronic) is transparent and accountable

### Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour:

- Disrespectful language
- Humiliating or intimidating children
- Inappropriate touching of children (e.g., massaging, stroking, caressing, roughhousing, tickling)
- Confiding or sharing overly personal information with a child
- Asking children to keep secrets
- Electronic communication with children that is personal and not directly tied to coaching duties
- Communication that is sexual or flirtatious in nature
- Pictures taken with personal devices or in change rooms

## Standard of Measure for Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

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

- Transparent
- Accountable
- Tied to coaching/volunteer duties
- In response to meeting the child's needs

## Parents and Coaches Play a Role

It can be difficult to respond to a situation where you notice a coach and athlete relationship that appears inappropriate. Reporting inappropriate behaviour creates accountability so proper action can be taken and expectations can be re-established. Parents or coaches who have concerns should speak with that coach's supervisor.

Parents and coaches should also have regular age-appropriate conversations with children about personal safety and boundary-breaking behaviour. Some topics to talk with children about are the qualities of healthy relationships, importance of personal boundaries, and how to get help/where to bring concerns. For this information and more, visit: [kidsintheknow.ca/safety sheets](https://kidsintheknow.ca/safety sheets).

If you are concerned about a sexual image that has been shared, visit [Cybertip.ca](https://Cybertip.ca). This site has information for teens and adults. For more information on reporting inappropriate conduct and child sexual abuse visit [commit2kids.ca/safesport](https://commit2kids.ca/safesport).



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## Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

### What do you do if you have concerns about possible child sexual 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. The legal responsibility comes from child welfare legislation within each province and territory and may also be a duty of a person's profession or workplace.

**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.



**People are responsible for reporting concerns, not proving abuse.**

### Reporting information about potential child abuse allows:

- An authority, like child welfare or police, to determine whether it is necessary to investigate.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) to proactively take steps to protect their child.

Mandatory reporting legislation removes any personal or professional dilemma from becoming a barrier to reporting. It is not uncommon for people to minimize or deny what a child tells them during a disclosure. People are often concerned about being wrong and causing problems. Remember, reporting may disrupt existing or future sexual abuse from occurring against other children, as well.

If a person learns about past child sexual abuse that is no longer occurring, it's still important to report the abuse. The offender may still have access to other children and those children may be at risk.



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## How do you report misconduct/concerning behaviour?

While obvious sexual acts are easier to identify and address, behaviour that doesn't meet the threshold of abuse still needs to be acted upon. Misconduct is considered adult behaviour towards a child that is inappropriate and that breaches reasonable boundaries:

- If you observe or hear about concerning behaviour or an inappropriate situation between an adult and your child or another child within the organization, report your concerns to the organization.
- If you have contact with the child outside the organization (e.g., you know the child's parents), you should still report to the organization and also report your concerns to the child's parents.
- In some circumstances, particularly if your concerns are not addressed or you become aware of more information, you may wish to consider involving the appropriate authorities.

Flagging the concerning behaviour to the organization should trigger a review in an effort to correct and stop the possible misconduct. It will also allow an organization to address any behaviour that's not consistent with its policies and procedures.

Flagging concerning behaviour to a parent may help the parent address the issue with the organization and discuss it with their child if appropriate.



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This information sheet is part of the Commit to Kids® program. The contents of this sheet are provided as information only and do not constitute legal advice. The exact requirements for reporting vary by province and territory. Consult the child welfare legislation in your province or territory, your local child welfare authority, law enforcement and/or legal counsel as appropriate in a given situation.



## NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

### Steps for Reporting Suspicion of Child Abuse

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club is committed to providing a safe environment for our members and protecting our children and youth. If you have witnessed or have suspicion that a child or youth is being sexually abused, you have a duty to report this as per the Children and Family Services Welfare (CFSW) and the Niagara Falls Soccer Club.

Any person, who has reasonable grounds to suspect child protection concerns, has an obligation to immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based, to Law Enforcement and/or Children's Welfare/ the Children's Aid Society (CAS). Proof is not required in order to report a concern to the Child Welfare/CAS that a child may be in need of protection.

Please note that many of these steps would also apply when;

- A child discloses abuse by someone outside NFSC
- A peer discloses on behalf of another child/youth.
- An adult suspects a child is abused.

### **Here are the steps that must be taken to report such an incident or suspicion within NFSC;**

1. Child discloses abuse or abuse is discovered with the adult involved in the abuse being a Coach/Volunteer/Staff.
2. If a Coach/Volunteer/Staff is the one who receives the disclosure:
  - Notifies Law Enforcement and/or CAS/Child Welfare about the incident;
  - Consults with CAS/Child Welfare about notifying parents/caregivers; and
  - Notifies the Administrator/Director of Soccer Operations/Chief Executive Officer/Technical Lead of NFSC, who in turn notifies the President of NFSC or Vice President.
3. President/Vice President of NFSC suspends Coach/Volunteer/Staff suspected of abuse with or without pay until case is resolved. If the individual is a volunteer or unpaid staff, consider if the individual should be dismissed from their position immediately.
4. A Child Welfare/CAS agency and/or police carry out an investigation. NFSC will conduct a follow up in consultation with police/Child Welfare/CAS and adjusts internal policies if needed.

### **Potential Outcome of Investigation;**

- a. Substantiated/Guilty:** Coach/Volunteer/Staff is dismissed from his/her position.
- b. Inconclusive/Not Guilty:** Seek Legal counsel. Consider if Coach/Volunteer/Staff should be dismissed, with or without severance if a paid position.

- 5.** Document the outcome of the investigation on the incident report form and document the results of the internal follow-up.

**Please note:** NFSC will seek Legal advisement prior to suspensions and/or dismissals.

If we all work together as a team, we can ensure that the children and youth in our Community and our Organization remain safe and protected to provide a fun and everlasting experience.

Policy Updated: May 9th, 2020



## **The Niagara Falls Soccer Club Supports Responsible Coaching Movement Pledge**

NFSC is proud to sign the Responsible Coaching Movement pledge, a program coordinated by the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES).

“NFSC is proud to be joining sport organizations across the country in reaffirming our commitment to the health and safety of athletes on and off the field of play. “With the important role coaches play in the lives of athletes and in the soccer community, we are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for anyone who participates at any level within our club.”

Beginning this year, NFSC has worked to implement policies and processes that adhere to the three key areas of focus in the Phase 1 of the RCM, which include: The Rule of Two, Background Screening and Respect and Ethics Training. Although NFSC’s current structure includes many of the recommended elements, the organization has committed to review its policies and procedures to ensure they have remained consistent and are current to all recommendations from the CAC and CCES.

Moving forward, all NFSC Team coaches are required to complete the Respect in Sport training as part of the Responsible Coaching Movement. This training will ensure our coaches remain engaged and educated on current leadership practises.

With this pledge, NFSC sets the standard for soccer coaches in our club by implementing guidelines that support and protect our coaches and athletes at all levels.

### **About the Responsible Coaching Movement**

The Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) is a multi-phase system-wide movement, coordinated by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, that has the potential to affect all sport organizations and coaches. The RCM is the result of extensive ongoing consultation with the Canadian Sport Community. These consultations will guide the different phases of the RCM that will address the role coaches play with issues relating to the health and safety of athletes, both on and off the field of play. The RCM is open to National Sport Organizations, Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations, and club/community organizations. For more information, visit [www.coach.ca/ResponsibleCoaching](http://www.coach.ca/ResponsibleCoaching).

Tim Chamberlain

President, NFSC

## RESPONSIBLE COACHING MOVEMENT

The Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) is a call to action to keep sport healthy and safe by addressing the important role of coaches of in dealing with issues relating to the health and safety of athletes, both on and off the field of play. A multi-phase system-wide movement, coordinated by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, the RCM has the potential to affect all sport organizations, coaches, and the participants in their care. The RCM is a call to action for organizations to implement realistic change based on their individual state of readiness.

With a vision of creating change by 2020, Clubs were encouraged to take the [Responsible Coaching Movement Pledge](#) and put that pledge into action using the recommended action plan and timeline provided by Canada Soccer. This is something the Niagara Falls Soccer Club has done and is committed to.

The RCM focuses on three steps to responsible coaching;

1. The Rule of Two
2. Background Screening
3. Ethics and Respect Training

### Rule of Two

The Rule of Two serves to protect minor athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that more than one adult is present. Vulnerable situations can include closed doors meetings, travel, and training environments. Organizations are encouraged to create and implement policies and procedures that limit the instances where these situations are possible.

Ultimately, the Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and NCCP trained or certified coaches with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation. This means that any one-on-one interaction between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and view of the second coach, with the exception of medical emergencies. In the event where screened and NCCP trained or certified coaches are not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited. In all instances, one coach/volunteer must reflect the genders of the athletes participating or be of an appropriate identity in relation to the athlete(s)



## THE NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

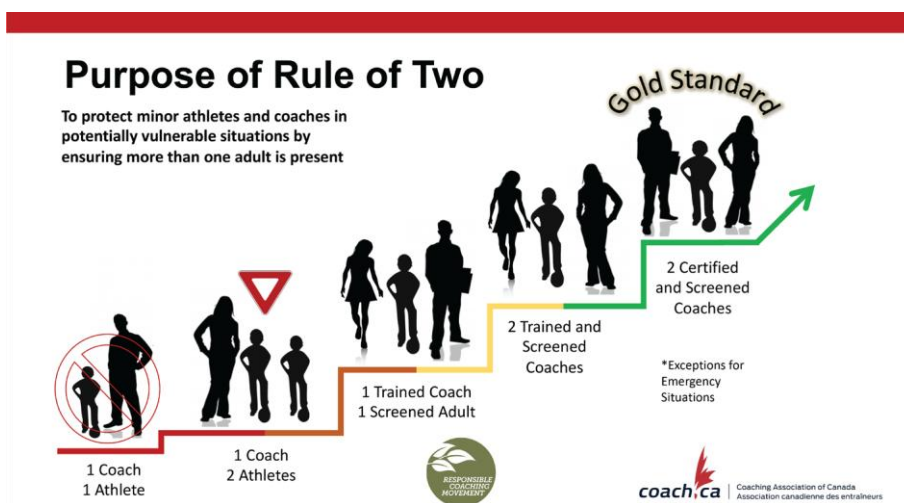
### "RULE OF TWO" Policy

When a Niagara Falls Soccer Club Coach, Volunteer Coach, Assistant Coach or Manager is in a potentially vulnerable situation, or one-on-one situation with any NFSC player, especially a minor, (ie. - indoor/outdoor training environments, closed door meetings, change rooms, etc.), there must always be another screened and NCCP trained or certified Coach, screened volunteer, parent or adult present or within earshot and view with the exception of medical emergencies. One of the screened coaches, volunteers, parent, or adult must also be the same gender as the player.

This policy serves to protect minor athletes in a potentially vulnerable situation by ensuring that more than one adult is present. It also protects the Coaches and Coaching staff.

### Coaching Association of Canada Standards

The Coaching Association of Canada has developed standards for the Rule of Two.



This can also be broken down further to more specific scenarios such as the following;





## THE NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

### "RULE OF TWO" Policy

#### Travel

*The following guidelines are strongly recommended during travel with athletes:*

A Person in Authority may not be alone in a car with an athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian.

A Person in Authority may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with an athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian.

Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority.

#### Locker Room / Changing Area / Meeting Room

*The following guidelines are strongly recommended for locker rooms, changing areas, and meeting rooms:*

Interactions between a Person in Authority and an individual athlete should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, meeting room, washroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for all necessary interactions in any such room.

If Persons in Authority are not present in the locker room or changing area, or if they are not permitted to be present, they should still be available outside the locker room or changing area and be able to enter the room or area if required.

#### Training / Competition Environment

*The following guidelines are strongly recommended for the training and competition environment (including before, during, and after practices and games)*



## THE NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

### "RULE OF TWO" Policy

A Person in Authority should never be alone with an athlete prior to or following a game or practice, unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian. If the athlete is the first athlete to arrive, the athlete's parent should remain until another athlete or Person in Authority arrives. Similarly, if an athlete would 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. If an adult is not available then another athlete should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a single athlete.

Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual athlete should always be doing so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority.

### Gender Identity

*A Person in Authority who is interacting with athletes should be of the same gender identity as the athletes. The following guidelines are strongly recommended:*

For teams consisting of athletes of just one gender identity, a Person in Authority of the same gender identity should be available to participate or attend every interaction.

For teams consisting of athletes of more than one gender identity (e.g., co-ed teams), a Person in Authority of each gender identity should be available to participate or attend every interaction.

### Electronic Communications

A Person in Authority who is communicating with athletes via electronic communications shall do so in a group and / or include parents and other Persons of Authority within that team. There shall be no one-to-one electronic messaging.



## Coach's/Team Staff/Parent Liaison - Pledge to Adhere to "Rule of Two"

I (insert printed name) \_\_\_\_\_ as a Person of Authority acting as (circle one); Head Coach/Assistant Coach/Manager/Parent Liaison have read and understand the Niagara Falls Soccer Club policy of **"Rule of Two"**. I will adhere to this policy for the safety of all NFSC players. I understand the procedures that have been put in place and the consequences that may occur from breaching this policy as per NFSC Coaches Code of Conduct.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Policy dated: January 2nd, 2019

Updated: April 1st, 2020

## Screening

Screening all those who are involved in delivering NFSC soccer programs and administering the sport is a vital part of providing a safe sporting environment. Organizations are responsible, by law, to do everything reasonable to provide a safe and secure environment for participants in their programs, activities, and events. The purpose of screening is to identify individuals involved with the organization's activities who may pose a risk to the organization and its participants. The screening process involves using a number of different tools to ensure staff, coaches, and volunteers meet the necessary minimum standards to coach or work with athletes. These tools include comprehensive job postings and position descriptions, criminal record checks, interviews and reference checks, as well as appropriate training and monitoring practices.



# NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

## Volunteer Screening Policy

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club relies heavily on its volunteer coaches, managers, conveners, and a staff of qualified technical coaches.

### Assessment of Risk

The first principle of screening is risk management, which simply means “What could go wrong here” and “How do we avoid it?” Risk management involves looking at the possibilities of loss or injury that might arise in programs, activities and services and taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate them all together. This includes the Club’s obligation to take all reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants from harm. The need to screen an applicant is dictated by the nature of the position and its inherent level of risk. When determining risk consider such factors as the participant, the environment, the nature of the activity, the level of supervision and the nature of the relationship.

For example, a high risk position is defined as a position in which staff members, volunteers, or Board members are in direct contact with, or provide direct service to, vulnerable individuals, and in particular when the applicant will be in a position of trust, power or influence and whose contact is unsupervised and/or takes place off site.

### Definition of Positions:

The various levels of play in the sport have been ranked according to the level of risk associated with that position and the appropriate screening measures have been assigned to each level of risk.

#### Low Risk Positions:

- Recreational team volunteer officials, U15 and younger

#### Medium Risk Positions:

- Recreational team volunteer parent coaches, U18 divisions (U16-U18)
- Non-parent volunteer coaches in all recreational divisions U4 to U15

#### High Risk Positions:

- Competitive team Coaches and Managers: Rep, Select and All-Star Teams
- Development camp leaders and staff: Indoor development camps, summer camp and academy programs
- Recreational division conveners, U18 divisions



## NIAGARA FALLS SOCCER CLUB

### Volunteer Screening Policy

#### **Boundaries/ limitations:**

- Shall never be alone with a player
- Shall not be responsible for transportation to/from practices/games/tournaments
- Shall not be responsible for water or snacks
- Shall be a role model - no drugs/alcohol/smoking or abusive language at practices/games/tournaments
- Shall comply with the Dress Code as defined by the Club
- Shall ADHERE to OS and Club policies
- Shall embrace Club values, principles, and policy as per Club Constitution
- Shall demonstrate the ability to set and maintain standards for players (i.e. respect, self-discipline, fair play)

#### **Screening measures:**

##### **HIGH RISK**

- Application Form (with references)
- Interview by Selection Committee
- References Checked Out
- Police Records Check (Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector, or, Enhanced Police Information Check {E-PIC})
- Evaluation by Club
- Position Briefing/Orientation

##### **MEDIUM RISK**

- Application Form (Reference Checks Optional)
- Police Records Check (Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector, or, Enhanced Police Information Check {E-PIC})
  - I. Yes, All of our volunteers and staff have submitted valid E-PIC Certification
  - II. Yes, All of our Competitive coaches have completed their Respect in Soccer Certification
- Position Briefing/Orientation

##### **Low Risk**

- Application Form (Reference Checks Optional)
- Police Records Check (Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector, or, Enhanced Police Information Check {E-PIC})
- Position Briefing/Orientation

## Respect Training

Respect Group was founded in 2004 with a single purpose; empowering all sport stakeholders to recognize and prevent ALL forms of MALTREATMENT; bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination (BAHD) through interactive, online certification. The “Respect Platform” which is focused on building a holistic culture of respect, has become the standard training environment for Canadian sport. Having certified over one million Canadians, Respect Group has implemented the Respect Platform for hundreds of sport organizations. Respect in Sport certification has also become a foundational element within the “Responsible Coaching Movement”, led by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.

Niagara Falls Soccer Club requires all Coaches within the Rep/Travel program, Long Term Development programs and Referees to obtain the Respect Training. We have also required that all NFSC Staff and Board members take Respect in the Workplace and also introduced in 2020 the Respect in Sport Parent's Program with it becoming mandatory in 2021.

To get the link to these programs, see below;

[Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders - Soccer](#)

[Respect in Sport - Parents Program](#)

[Respect in the Workplace](#)

## Ethics Training

Increasing coaches' ethical conduct and ethical behaviour toward athletes requires that coaches be trained to understand what it means to act ethically. This training includes the Make Ethical Decisions module, which is a cornerstone of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). By successfully completing the Make Ethical Decisions (MED) training, NFSC coaches will be fully equipped to handle ethical situations with confidence and surety. MED training helps coaches identify the legal, ethical, and moral implications of difficult situations that present themselves in the world of team and individual sport.

This course is also mandatory for all NFSC Competitive, Recreational and Grassroots Festival Coaches.

For more information on ethics training, [please click here](#).

## Anti-Doping

Sport is about competing and performing to the best of your ability, however, taking prohibited substances or using prohibited methods is cheating, and most importantly can be very damaging to an athlete's health. Doping ruins the integrity and value of the sport and overall damages the spirit as it interferes with the rights of athletes to compete in a fair and ethical sport environment.

For this, NFSC has a zero tolerance policy for substance abuse and adheres to Ontario Soccer procedures and guidelines.



## The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

### Anti-Doping Policy

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club has a zero-tolerance policy for substance abuse within its membership. As a member of Ontario Soccer, the Niagara Falls Soccer Club follows the procedures and guidelines outlined by the OS with regards to Anti-Doping. Any incidents involving Niagara Falls Soccer Club players and doping will be handled in accordance with OS procedures.

For more information, please see the following resources;

[FIFA and Anti-Doping](#)

[The Canadian Anti-Doping Program](#)

[Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport – Athlete Zone](#)

[Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport – Make the Call E-Learning](#)

## Injury and Return to Play

### Emergency Action Plan

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a plan coaches and team personnel (see Safety Person) design to help them respond in a responsible and clear-headed way if an emergency occurs. NFSC encourages our Coaches to create a EAP and designate a Safety Person. This could be a parent volunteer, the team manager, or any of the other team staff. In turn, an EAP should be prepared for the facility or site where you normally hold practices and for any facility or site where you regularly host competitions. For away competitions, ask the host team or host facility for a copy of their EAP.

An EAP can be simple or elaborate. It should cover the following:

- Designate in advance who is in charge if an emergency occurs (this may be you).
- Have a cell phone with you and make sure the battery is fully charged. If this is not possible, find out the exact location of a telephone you can use at all times.
- Have spare change in case you need to use a pay phone.
- Have emergency telephone numbers with you (facility manager, superintendent, fire, police, ambulance), as well as athletes' contact numbers (parents/guardians, next of kin, family doctor).
- Have on hand a medical profile for each athlete so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel. Include in this profile signed consent from the parent/guardian to authorize medical treatment in an emergency.
- Prepare directions for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to follow to reach the site as quickly as possible. You may want to include information such as the closest major intersection, one-way streets, or major landmarks.
- Have a first-aid kit accessible and properly stocked at all times (all coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue first-aid training).
- Designate in advance a call person: the person who makes contact with medical authorities and otherwise assists the person in charge. Be sure that your call person can give emergency vehicles precise directions to your facility or site.

### Safety Person

In addition to and in support of the Emergency Action plan, it is recommended that every team identify a member of their team personnel to serve as the "Safety Person". Again, this could be the Coach, the manager, a parent volunteer, or any of the other team staff. The Safety Person is primarily responsible for ensuring safety during all soccer-related activities, both on and off the field. All Safety Persons should utilize a proactive, preventative approach to safety while being prepared to react in the event of accidents, injuries, or medical emergencies.



## Safety Person's Responsibilities

As a Safety Person and team official you must play a leadership role in implementing effective risk management programs with your own teams, enhancing the safety of players and all involved in soccer. The following are some responsibilities that the Safety Person should assume:

- Implement an effective risk management and safety strategy with your team that strives to prevent injuries and accidents before they happen.
- Assume a proactive role in identifying and minimizing or eliminating risks during all activities, and if ever in doubt, always err on the side of caution.
- Promote and reflect the values of Fair Play and strive to instill these values in all participants and others involved in soccer.
- Ensure that all players are provided with meaningful opportunities and enjoyable experiences free from physical and/or emotional maltreatment.
- Conduct regular checks of players' equipment to ensure proper fit, protective quality and maintenance, and advise players and parents regarding the selection or replacement of equipment.
- Conduct regular checks of team equipment to ensure it is in good condition and advise the head coach and organization if equipment requires replacement.
- Conduct a safety check of the playing facility in advance of all soccer-activities to ensure it is safe, well-maintained, and in good condition.
- Promote proper conditioning, warm-up, and cool down techniques as effective methods of injury prevention.
- Maintain accurate medical information files on all players and team officials and bring these to all team activities.
- Maintain a Player Injury Log.
- Maintain a fully stocked First Aid Kit and bring it to all team activities.
- Implement an effective Emergency Action Plan with your team and practice it regularly to ensure all involved understand their roles and are prepared to act promptly when an incident occurs.
- Recognize life-threatening and significant injuries and be prepared to deal with serious injury.
- Manage minor injuries according to basic injury management principles and refer players to medical professionals when necessary.
- Recognize injuries that require a player to be removed from action.
- Refer players to medical professionals and coordinate return to play.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle with all participants by being a good role model and by educating participants regarding hygiene, performance-enhancing substances, drug and alcohol abuse, nutrition and hydration.
- Facilitate communication with players, coaches, parents, physicians, therapists, paramedical personnel, officials and other volunteers regarding safety, injury prevention and player's health status.
- Act as a Safety Person for both your team and your opponents if only one Safety Person is present.

To support the responsibilities of the Safety Person, it is recommended that the identified individual have valid First Aid and CPR Training and complete the NCCP Making Headway module focusing on concussion education. Please see below for a template for NFSC's Titans Team Emergency Action Plan.



## The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

### Emergency Action Plan

Although serious injuries or accidents are rare, you must be ready to deal with them if and when they occur. As a first step, formal training in first aid and CPR for all team staff will give you the confidence and knowledge you need to deal with emergencies effectively.

You should maintain a complete First Aid Kit to help you deal with minor injuries.

We here at NFSC encourage all teams to develop an Emergency Action Plan and write it down so everyone involved is clear on their responsibilities. Designate key individuals to carry out the plan (i.e. the person in charge, and the call person).

#### **Person in Charge**

The person in charge should be the one who is most qualified in first aid and emergency procedures. This individual will:

- Know what emergency equipment is available at your facility
- Secure a controlled and calm environment
- Assess – and tend to – the injured player
- Direct others involved until medical personnel arrive

#### **Call Person**

This individual will:

- Keep a record of emergency phone numbers and know the location of telephones in the facility
- Make the telephone call for assistance
- Guide the ambulance (if required) in and out the facility

#### **Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Checklist**

Access to telephones	<input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone, battery well charged <input type="checkbox"/> Training venues <input type="checkbox"/> Home venues <input type="checkbox"/> Away venues <input type="checkbox"/> List of emergency phone numbers <input type="checkbox"/> Change available for pay phones
Directions to access the site	<input type="checkbox"/> Accurate directions to the sites (practices, games, both home and away)
Participant information	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal profile forms <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contacts <input type="checkbox"/> Medical profiles
Personnel information	<input type="checkbox"/> The person in charge is identified <input type="checkbox"/> The call person is identified <input type="checkbox"/> Assistants are identified

- The medical profile of each participant should be up to date and located in the first aid kit.
- A first aid kit must be accessible at all times, and must be checked regularly. See the last page for possible suggestions on contents for a first aid kit



## The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

### Emergency Action Plan

#### Steps to Follow When an Injury Occurs

Note: it is suggested that emergency situations be simulated during practice in order to familiarize coaches and athletes with the steps below

<b>Step 1: Control the environment so that no further harm occurs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop all participants</li> <li>Protect yourself if you suspect bleeding (put on gloves)</li> <li>If outdoors, shelter the injured participant from the elements and from any traffic</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 2: Do a first assessment of the situation</b> If the participant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is not breathing</li> <li>Does not have a pulse</li> <li>Is bleeding profusely</li> <li>Has impaired consciousness</li> <li>Has injured the back, neck or head</li> <li>Has a visible major trauma to a limb</li> <li>Cannot move his/her arms or legs or has lost feeling in them</li> </ul> If the participant does not show the signs above, proceed to Step 3	 Activate Emergency Action Plan?
<b>Step 3: Do a second assessment of the situation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather the facts by asking the injured participant as well as anyone who witnessed the incident.</li> <li>Stay with the injured participant and try to calm him/her; your tone of voice and body language are critical.</li> <li>If possible and if it does not cause risk to the participant, have the participant move himself/herself off the playing surface. Do not attempt to move an injured participant.</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 4: Assess the injury</b> Have someone with first aid training complete an assessment of the injury and decide how to proceed. If the person trained in first aid is not sure of the severity of the injury or there is no one available who has first aid training, activate EAP. If the assessor is sure the injury is minor, proceed to Step 5.	 Activate Emergency Action Plan?
<b>Step 5: Control the return to activity</b> Allow the participant to return to activity after a minor injury only if there is no: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swelling</li> <li>Deformity</li> <li>Continued bleeding</li> <li>Reduced range of motion</li> <li>Pain when using the injured part</li> </ul>	
<b>Step 6: Record the injury on an accident report form and inform the parents.</b>	





## The Niagara Falls Soccer Club

### Emergency Action Plan

- Instant cold packs (have several of these).
- Adhesive bandages of assorted shapes and sizes.
- Blister care.
- ACE bandages (3-inch and 4-inch sizes).
- Disposable non-latex gloves (use when you are looking at a cut or abrasion).
- Alcohol-based gel hand sanitizer (for your own hands).
- Antibiotic ointment
- Sterile gauze bandages.
- Sterile gauze roll.
- Sterile saline bottle (to gently wash dirt or grass

from a cut).

- Saline rinse bottle (very effective and not painful to clean an abrasion or cut).
- Athletic tape (1-inch and 2-inch sizes).
- Paramedic scissors.
- Hydrogen peroxide -- to get blood off a uniform.
- Plastic bags to dispose of used gauze, etc.

#### Here are a few extras that are nice to have:

- Foam underwrap.
- Finger splints (popsicle sticks work well).
- CPR instructions and plastic ventilation mask.
- Watertight bags to keep items dry.

## Niagara Falls Soccer Club Concussion Policy:

### Players' Health and Safety First

In accordance with Canada Soccer, the Niagara Falls Soccer Club aligns with Canada Soccer's Concussion Policy. However, we have also paired up with [Niagara Health and Rehab Centre](#), who is teamed up with [Complete Concussion Management Inc.](#), to bring this even further.

As part of a pre-season concussion education strategy, Canada Soccer requires players and parents/guardians to:

- Review as a minimum, the Summary section of this document, OR both the Respond and Recognize sections of this document (recommended) as part of their soccer registration process.
- All participants in our sport should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the entirety of our Concussion Guidelines.

Baseline (pre-season) testing of youth (<18 years) and adult recreational athletes using any tool or combination of tools is not required for post-injury care of those who sustain a suspected or diagnosed concussion and is not recommended by Canada Soccer. However, this is something that we are looking to implement in 2021/2022 for all our Competitive and Elite players. This will also be available for any player/member within the Club that would be interested in this.

## Summary of Concussions

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions should be regarded as potentially serious.
- Most concussions recover completely with correct management.
- Incorrect management of a concussion can lead to further injury.
- Concussions should be managed according to current guidelines.
- Anyone with suspected concussion following an injury must be immediately removed from playing or training and receive a prompt assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- Concussions are managed by licensed health care professionals working within their scope of practice and expertise.
- Concussions are managed by a limited period of rest followed by avoiding physical and brain activities that make concussive symptoms worse, and once concussion related symptoms have resolved, a step-wise return to school, work and sports-related activities.
- Return to education or work must take priority over return to playing soccer.
- Concussion symptoms must have completely resolved and documented medical clearance completed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner must be received before resuming full contact practice or game play.
- The recurrence of concussion symptoms subsequent to the return to full contact practice or game play requires removal from training or playing and reassessment.

## WHAT IS A “CONCUSSION”?

Concussion is an injury to the brain resulting in a disturbance of brain function involving thinking and behavior.

## WHAT CAUSES CONCUSSION?

Concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head or an impact to the body causing rapid movement of the head.

## ONSET OF SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of concussion typically appear immediately but may evolve within the first 24–48 hours.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

All of our sport’s participants (players, but also team staff and officials).

Some soccer participants are at increased risk of concussion:

- Children and adolescents (18 years and under) are more susceptible to brain injury, take longer to recover, and are susceptible to rare dangerous brain complications, which may include death.
- Female soccer players have higher rates of concussion.



- Participants with previous concussion are at increased risk of further concussions — which may take longer to recover.

### **WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF BRAIN INJURY?**

Failure to recognize and report concussive symptoms or returning to activity with ongoing concussion symptoms set the stage for:

1. Cumulative concussive injury
2. 'Second Impact Syndrome'

Second impact syndrome is a rare occurrence. An athlete sustains a brain injury and while still experiencing symptoms (not fully recovered), sustains a second brain injury, which is associated with brain swelling and permanent brain injury or death. Brain swelling may also occur without previous trauma.

Recurrent brain injury is currently implicated in the development of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy.

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) is a progressive degenerative brain disease seen in people with a history of brain trauma. For athletes, the brain trauma has been repetitive. Originally described in deceased boxers, it now has been recognized in many sports. Symptoms include difficulty thinking, explosive and aggressive behavior, mood disorder (depression), and movement disorder (parkinsonism).

### **RECOGNIZE — LEARN THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION SO YOU UNDERSTAND WHEN A SOCCER PLAYER MIGHT HAVE A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION.**

Everyone involved in the game (including staff, coaches, officials, players, parents and guardians of children and adolescents) should be aware of the signs, symptoms and dangers of concussion. If any of the following signs or symptoms are present following an injury the player should be suspected of having concussion and immediately removed from play or training.

***"If in doubt, sit them out."***

***"It is better to miss one game than the whole season."***

### **VISIBLE CLUES OF CONCUSSION — WHAT YOU MAY SEE:**

Any one or more of the following visual clues can indicate a concussion:

- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Lying motionless on ground / slow to get up
- Unsteady on feet / balance problems / falling over / poor coordination
- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Confused or not aware of play or events
- Grabbing, clutching, or shaking of the head
- Seizure
- More emotional or irritable than normal for that person
- Injury event that could have caused a concussion

## SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION — WHAT YOU MAY BE TOLD BY AN INJURED PLAYER:

- The presence of any one or more of the following symptoms may suggest a concussion:
- Headache or “Pressure in head”
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Mental clouding, confusion, or feeling slowed down
- Trouble seeing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Drowsiness or feeling like “in a fog” or difficulty concentrating
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Difficulty with reading, learning or work
- Sleep problems: getting asleep, too much or too little
- Emotional / anger / sad / anxious

The Concussion Recognition Tool 51 is valuable for all first responders in recognizing suspected concussion and responding to more severe brain injury or potential neck injury.

### CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5<sup>©</sup>

To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults



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#### RECOGNISE & REMOVE

Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is to be used for the identification of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

#### STEP 1: RED FLAGS — CALL AN AMBULANCE

If there is concern after an injury including whether ANY of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from play/game/activity. If no licensed healthcare professional is available, call an ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/ burning in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

#### Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

#### STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma

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#### STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

- |                      |                         |                      |                            |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • Headache           | • Blurred vision        | • More emotional     | • Difficulty concentrating |
| • “Pressure in head” | • Sensitivity to light  | • More Irritable     | • Difficulty remembering   |
| • Balance problems   | • Sensitivity to noise  | • Sadness            | • Feeling slowed down      |
| • Nausea or vomiting | • Fatigue or low energy | • Nervous or anxious | • Feeling like “in a fog”  |
| • Drowsiness         | • “Don’t feel right”    | • Neck Pain          |                            |
| • Dizziness          |                         |                      |                            |

#### STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT

(IN ATHLETES OLDER THAN 12 YEARS)

Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:

- “What venue are we at today?”
- “Which half is it now?”
- “Who scored last in this game?”
- “What team did you play last week/game?”
- “Did your team win the last game?”

#### Athletes with suspected concussion should:

- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreational/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

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**ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE**

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## **REMOVE - If a soccer player has a suspected concussion he or she must be removed from activity immediately.**

Team-mates, staff, coaches, players or parents and guardians who suspect that a player may have concussion **MUST** work together to ensure that the player is removed from play in a safe manner.

If a neck injury is suspected the player **should not** be moved and should only be removed from the field of play by emergency healthcare professionals with appropriate spinal care training. Call 911. Activate your emergency action plan.

More severe forms of brain injury may be mistaken for concussion. If **ANY** of the following are observed or reported within 48 hours of an injury, then the player should be transported for urgent medical assessment at the nearest hospital (symptoms below). Call 911. Activate your emergency action plan.

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Deteriorating consciousness (more drowsy)
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Severe or increasing headache
- Repeated vomiting
- Unusual behavior change
- Seizure
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling / burning in arms or legs

### **Anyone with a suspected concussion should not:**

- be left alone until they have been assessed medically
- consume alcohol or recreational drugs in the first 24 hours, and thereafter should avoid alcohol or recreational drugs until free of all concussion symptoms
- drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner

## **RE-ENTRY — A licensed healthcare professional with expertise in the evaluation and management of head injury and concussions may review a player with suspected concussion at field side.**

A player who has been removed from play who reports NO concussion symptoms and NO visual clues of a concussion can be returned to play. Any such player should be monitored for delayed symptoms, which may appear over the next 24-48 hours. If there is any doubt whether a player has sustained a concussion, they should be removed from play and undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

## **REFER — Once removed from play, the player with suspected concussion must be referred to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner with training in the evaluation and management of head injury and concussions.**

All cases of suspected concussion require referral to medical doctors or nurse practitioners for diagnosis, even if the symptoms resolve. In geographic regions of Canada with limited access to medical doctors (rural or northern communities), a licensed healthcare professional (i.e. nurse) with support from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner can provide this diagnostic evaluation.

## **Report — Communication between players, parents, team staff, and their health care providers is vital for the welfare of the player.**

Players, parents and guardians must disclose the nature of, and status of all active injuries (including concussions) to coaches and team staff. Players need to be responsible for one another and encourage the disclosure of concussion symptoms. For children and adolescents with suspected concussion who have not been directly transferred for medical management, coaches must communicate their concerns directly with the parents or guardians.

## **RECOVER — Avoiding physical and brain activities that make concussive symptoms worse is the cornerstone of current concussion management.**

Please see below for NFSC's Concussion Policy which aligns with Canada Soccer and Ontario Soccer Guidelines. Also in here is the Return to Play Soccer Strategy which gives a detailed description on the steps that must be completed before being cleared to returning to the pitch!



### **Niagara Falls Soccer Club Concussion Policy**

While we recognize that concussions cannot be fully prevented, education and training as well as prompt and appropriate management can better protect the health and well-being of our athletes, and potentially reduce the amount of playing time missed from subsequent concussions.

As such, the Niagara Falls Soccer Club has partnered with Niagara Health & Rehab Centre (NHRC) and Complete Concussion Management™ (CCMI), a leading concussion research group, to develop and implement an evidence-based concussion policy.

#### **Policy**

1. All athletes age 13 and above will be required to have completed a comprehensive baseline test through Niagara Health & Rehab Centre prior to participation in any practice or game.
  - a. Baseline tests are valid for 1 full calendar year. Athletes must present proof of completion of a baseline test that will remain valid throughout the upcoming season in order to be accepted. If your baseline test is set to expire during the sporting season, you may be required to take a re-test to ensure validity throughout the season.
  - b. Please contact Niagara Health & Rehab Centre (289-362-3600) and indicate that you would like to register your team or athlete for baseline testing.

2. All Coaches and Trainers must complete the CCMI Concussion *Sideline Course* and download the accompanying *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application. This can be completed at [www.completeconcussions.com](http://www.completeconcussions.com).
3. If a concussion is suspected, whether occurring as a part of Niagara Falls Soccer Club or otherwise, the athlete is to be removed immediately from all practices and/or games and not permitted to return until cleared by a CCMI trained practitioner or through the *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application.
  - a. All suspected concussions must be reported through the Concussion Tracker Smartphone Application by a coach/trainer.
  - b. All suspected concussions should be encouraged to see their primary care physician or make an appointment at NHRC (or the nearest CCMI clinic) as soon as possible to receive a proper diagnosis and begin the *Return-to-Play* process. If any red flags are suspected the athlete should immediately visit the nearest emergency department.

#### 4. Niagara Falls Soccer Club Return-to-Play Process:

Each stage must be separated by at least 24 hours and the athlete must be completely symptom-free at each stage prior to progressing to the next stage. If symptoms are experienced at any stage, the athlete is to drop back to the previous stage for a period of 24 hours and be symptom-free at that stage prior to attempting the next stage again. Any stage below marked with \*\* indicates that this stage must be completed under the supervision of a CCMI trained practitioner.

#### **Stage 1 - Symptom limited rest \*\***

Once the athlete has received a diagnosis of concussion from a trained CCMI practitioner, the first step is symptom limited cognitive and physical rest. At this stage, it is important that the athlete not engage in any physical or cognitive activity that may provoke symptoms or increase the risk of a secondary injury.

#### **Stage 2 - Light 'Cognitive' Activity**

"Cognitive" means mental. At this stage, the athlete should begin incorporating short periods of light reading, homework, TV viewing, etc. If the athlete can tolerate 1 hour of light cognitive activity without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 3 the following day.

#### **Stage 3 - Half-Day of School with Modifications**

The athlete is now permitted to attend a half-day of school with modifications. Typical modifications include but are not limited to: No tests, No gym, No homework, No music class, Frequent breaks etc. If the athlete can complete a half-day of school without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 4 the following day.

#### **Stage 4 - Full Day of School with Modifications**

The athlete is now permitted to attend a full day of school. If the athlete can complete a full day of school without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 5 the following day.

#### **Stage 5 - Light Physical Activity \*\***

This stage incorporates the addition of light physical exertion to see how your brain responds to an increased

demand for blood flow. You will need to book an appointment with a CCMI practitioner to complete this stage. Dress in athletic attire and be required to complete 20-30 minutes of clinician supervised physical activity while your heart rate and blood flow are monitored.

## **Stage 6 - Non-Contact Practice - Phase I (Low Intensity)**

The athlete is now permitted to return to sport specific activity with the team in a NON-CONTACT format and administered by a coach/trainer. The athlete will be asked to complete various simple "sport-specific" drills that do not involve contact or the chance of contact. These drills will be individually based and will involve fairly low physical stress.

A list of suggested drills for every sport can be found in the concussion tracker app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus to view drills.

## **Stage 7 - Non-Contact Practice - Phase II (Higher Intensity)**

This stage will once again be administered by your coach and/or trainer. The athlete is now permitted to take place in 'dry land' training and weight training. Sport-specific drills can now be conducted at higher intensity and be more *team-based* (3-man weave, breakouts, etc.). At this stage, athletes are still NOT permitted to participate in any drills that involve contact or that have the chance for potential contact.

As in stage 6, lists of suggested drills can be found in the coach/trainer Smartphone app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus to view drills.

## **Stage 8 - Blackhawks Protocol and Re-Testing of Baseline \*\***

This stage will require you book an appointment with a trained CCMI practitioner. The Blackhawks protocol is an intensive physical exertion protocol that challenges the athlete's cardiovascular system as well as their balance (vestibular system) and assesses their readiness to return to full athletic competition. Upon successful completion of the Blackhawks program, the athlete will immediately undergo full re-testing of all baseline parameters to assess every area of neurological function to determine if the athlete has reached full brain recovery.

## **Stage 9 - Full Practice**

Upon successful completion of stage 8, it is strongly encouraged that you participate in at least 1 practice at full intensity, including contact drills, prior to participating in a game.

## **Stage 10 - Full Game-Play**

Niagara Falls Soccer Club has formed a collaborative partnership with Niagara Health & Rehab Centre and Complete Concussion Management Inc. because they are the leaders in concussion management for amateur and professional sports associations across Canada. All protocols and stages are based on the most current scientific research and this policy has been enacted to help keep our athletes safe.

This policy is subject to revisions as new research emerges.

Policy Dated: 2019

## Facility and Equipment Safety

At the Niagara Falls Soccer Club we continuously work with the City of Niagara Falls to ensure our facilities, fields, and equipment are safe, well maintained and in good condition.

As the City of Niagara Falls is responsible for the maintenance and repairs, the Niagara Falls Soccer Club Facility and Field Director, Referees, Coaches, and Players all assist daily and prior to games, in inspecting playing surfaces and associated amenities to ensure they are hazard free and suitable for play prior to the use of the Sports Fields. E.E. Mitchelson Park which is home to NFSC's athletic fields, are staffed daily and nightly and they are responsible for the regular maintenance and repairs that our facility and equipment may require.

Any Facility or Field found to contain a hazardous conditions or equipment should, and cannot be played on.

All problems or concerns should be reported immediately to the following;

- City of Niagara Falls Staff Park Attendant on site, or,
- Call the City of Niagara Falls Parks and Recreation Section at 905 356 7521, extension 4320, Monday to Friday, 8 00 am to 4 00 pm or, 905 356 1355, extension 4321 after hours weekends and holidays, or,
- Call the Niagara Falls Soccer Club Facility and Fields Director at 905 321 5109.

## Blood

An athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the game until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition.

## Jewelry

Players are not permitted to wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. NO jewelry: that includes rings, bracelets (except medical alert bracelets — which must be either made of Velcro or similar soft material, or covered with a sweatband), earrings, necklaces, other visible body piercing, etc. The practice of taping jewelry is not acceptable.

## Headscarf and Turban

At its meeting on October 2, 2012, the International Football Association Board (IFAB) approved the amendments Law 4 –The Players' Equipment ("headscarf"). The decision of the IFAB regarding the use of headscarves comes into effect immediately.

## IFAB Decision:

As outlined in Law 4 of the FIFA Laws of the Game, where head covers (excluding goalkeepers' caps) are worn, they must:

- be black or the same main colour as the shirt (provided that the players of the same team wear the same colour)
- be in keeping with the professional appearance of the player's equipment • not be attached to the shirt not be dangerous to the player wearing it or any other player (e.g. opening/closing mechanism around neck)
- not have any part(s) extending out from the surface (protruding elements)

Other headscarves are also permitted provided the above criteria are met.

## Players Wearing Casts Policy

This policy is designed to reduce inconsistencies in rulings over players wearing casts. All referees are expected to follow these policies in all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer

Law 4 states that a player may not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous [to anyone].

It further states that non-dangerous protective equipment is permitted as long as it has the sole purpose of protecting the individual physically, providing it poses no danger to the individual or any other player.

Modern protective equipment made of soft, lightweight, padded materials are not considered dangerous and are therefore permitted.

Hard casts are considered to pose a danger to both the wearer and other players and are not permitted to be worn. The practice of padding a hard cast does not reduce the element of danger.

Players wearing a soft cast will be permitted to play if the cast does not present a danger to the individual or any other player.

The referee or Supervisor of Officials (if one has been appointed to the match/tournament) will make the final decision as to the acceptability of any cast.

Any player who uses a cast with the intent to intimidate or injure an opponent shall be sent off.

## Player Insulin Pump Policy

This policy is designed to reduce inconsistencies in rulings over players with diabetes who wear an insulin pump. All referees are expected to follow these policies in all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer.

An insulin pump is designed to ensure that the player maintains a proper blood glucose level during the game. An extended period without infusion of insulin may result in hyperglycemia (excess sugar in the blood).

Law 4 states that a player may not use equipment that is dangerous to him/herself or another player. This is further expanded upon in the interpretations of the Laws of the Game whereby it is advised that player may use equipment that has the sole purpose of protecting the individual physically providing that it poses no danger to the individual or any other player.

A player wearing an insulin pump because of a medical condition is permitted to play providing he/she has received written medical clearance and is able to provide the referee with a note indicating such. The pump itself must not present a danger to the individual or any other player.

## Lightning Safety/Severe Weather

### *When thunder roars, go indoors!*

The safety of players, coaches, management, and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer. By understanding and following the below information, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Ultimately, the referee has the final say over delaying or restarting a match due to weather. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Referees are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during matches they are controlling.

If you can hear thunder, you can get hit by lightning. As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one. Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

### Additional Information

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

**To plan for a safe day, check the weather forecast first.** If thunderstorms are forecast, avoid being outdoors at that time or make an alternate plan. Identify safe places and determine how long it will take you to reach them.

**Watch the skies for developing thunderstorms and listen for thunder.** As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. If you can hear thunder, you are in danger of being hit by lightning. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one.

**Get to a safe place.** A safe location is a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect you from lightning. If no sturdy building is close by, get into a metal-roofed vehicle and close all the windows.

**Do not handle electrical equipment, telephones or plumbing.** These are all electrical conductors. Using a computer or wired video game system, taking a bath or touching a metal window frame all put you at risk of being struck by lightning. Use battery-operated appliances only.

**If caught outdoors far from shelter, stay away from tall objects.** This includes trees, poles, wires and fences. Take shelter in a low-lying area but be on the alert for possible flooding.

Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer.



When larger groups are involved, the time needed to properly evacuate an area increases. As time requirements change, the distance at which lightning is noted and considered a threat to move into the area must be increased.

Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location. Safe structure or location is defined as:

- Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and / or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.

In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle a safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. Do not touch the sides of any vehicle!

If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. Minimize your body's surface area and the ground! Do not lie flat! If unable to reach safe shelter, stay away from the tallest trees or objects such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as fences or bleachers), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.

Avoid using the telephone, except in emergency situations. People have been struck by lightning while using a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or a portable remote phone is a safe alternative to land-line phones, if the person and the antenna are located within a safe structure or location, and if all other precautions are followed.

When considering resumption of any athletics activity, wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field.

### **First aid for lightning victims**

Prompt, aggressive CPR has been highly effective for the survival of victims of lightning strikes.

- Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge and can be safely handled.
- Call for help. Victims may be suffering from burns or shock and should receive medical attention immediately. Call 9–1–1 or your local ambulance service.
- Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Use an automatic external defibrillator if one is available.



## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

### **Anti-Bullying**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. Canada Soccer is committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all participants.

### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is the severe or repeated use of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another individual that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other person or damage to the other person's property;
- placing the other person in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- creating a hostile environment for the other person at any soccer activity;
- infringing on the rights of the other person at any soccer activity; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the orderly operation of any soccer activity

If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, team personnel, staff or board member.

### **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied should do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to their parents;
- Talk to a coach, Board member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to a coach, Board member, or other designated individual;
- Make a report to their Provincial/Territorial Soccer Organization.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate organizational leadership as quickly as possible to stop the bullying behaviour as soon as possible and to make sure that memories are fresh, and behaviour can be accurately recalled.

## HOW TO HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team–related activities, **STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the children involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the children involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behaviour when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at the organization or it is reported to be occurring at our organization, address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN INVOLVED** using the following approach:

### FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. First, we get the facts.
  - a) Keep all the involved children separate.
  - b) Get the story from several sources, both adults and children, and gather all available information regarding the circumstances under which the incident occurred.
  - c) Listen without blaming.
  - d) Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
2. Then, determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviours that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
  - a) Review the definition of bullying;
  - b) To determine if the behaviour is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
    - I. What is the history between the children involved?

- II. Have there been past conflicts?
  - III. Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength and can include things like the “popularity” of the children involved.
  - IV. Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c) Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some children who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behaviour
- d) Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the children involved.

## **SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN INVOLVED**

Support the children who are being bullied

- a) Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b) Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
  - I. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out.
  - II. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the organization and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c) Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

## **Address bullying behaviour**

- a) Make sure the child who engaged in the bullying behaviour understands why his or her behaviour is unacceptable. Young people who bully must learn their behaviour is wrong and harms others.
- b) Show children that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem.
- c) Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
  - I. Sometimes children bully to fit in or to make fun of someone who is different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.

- II. Other times children act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These children may be in need of additional support.

- d) Involve the children who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:

*Please see below for NFSC's Anti-Bullying Policy*



## **The Niagara Falls Soccer Club**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in soccer in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all children and parents should be able to openly communicate the situation and know that any and all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are an open club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is suspected or happening is expected to notify the club immediately.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

##### **Bullying will not be tolerated.**

- All players, coaches and managers and parents of the Niagara Falls Soccer Club should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All managers and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players should know what the club policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying occurs or is suspected.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

#### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying consist of three basic types of abuse – emotional, verbal and physical

## **Bullying can be and does include:**

- Verbal bullying including derogatory comments, lies, false rumors, teasing, ridicule and bad names.
- Emotional bullying includes being unfriendly, sending hurtful or tormenting messages via social media forms.
- Bullying through social exclusion or isolation, being ignored and or left out
- Physical bullying includes pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence
- Being attacked because of their religion, race or color, gender or sexuality including but not limited to taunts, graffiti, gestures etc...
- Sexually unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Misuse of associated technology such as unwanted camera and video usage and social networking exposure.

## **SIGNS AND INDICATORS**

A player may indicate he or she is being bullied by signs or behavior, adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a player:

- Says he or she is being bullied
- Is afraid or unwilling to go to training, practice or games
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Is nervous and /or jumpy when a message is received (e.g. text, IM, phone, social network)
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- In some more severe situations, other indicators can include:
- Cry them-selves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts suicide, runs away or hurts themselves deliberately (self harm)
- These signs and behaviors may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## **WHY DO PLAYERS SOMETIMES BULLY OTHER PLAYERS?**

### **Players might bully because:**

- They may not have been taught that any form of bullying is unacceptable behavior and will not be condoned by the NFSC Inc.
- They think it is fun or funny
- They are lacking in their own self confidence
- They are copying older siblings, friends, parents or even club staff

- They are encouraged to bully by friends
- They themselves have been a victim of bullying

#### **AS A COACH OR MANAGER WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR PLAYER IS BEING BULLIED?**

- Ask the player directly
- Take any incidents of bullying that they tell you about seriously
- Talk calmly with the player about their experiences
- Make note of what the player says
- Reassure the player that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Understand that your player may need to change aspects of their behavior
- Never approach another parent directly
- Do not encourage your player to retaliate
- Contact the NFSC Technical Department immediately

#### **PROCEDURES**

1. Immediately report the bullying incidents/behavior to the NFSC Technical Department
2. The club will take every concern seriously, investigate the issue and report back to you in a timely manner
3. In serious cases, parents may be asked to come in to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
5. If bullying is found, it will be stopped immediately by removal of the player (s) who is bullying from the NFSC Club until a suitable process has been met through club policy.
6. A record will be kept on the incident(s), investigation and any action(s) taken
7. The bully (bullies) will be placed on probationary period with the club of no less than six (6) months

Policy Dated: August 2018



We hope you enjoy this Guide and find the information helpful.

The Niagara Falls Soccer Club continues to support and align with Canada Soccer and Ontario Soccer Guidelines. The Niagara Falls Guide to Safety is not meant to replace the Canada Soccer Guide to Safety, but rather to use as a companion guide to help the Organization to strengthen its safety policies and procedures, for betterment of the Club's Safety standards and overall Soccer experience for all our Members.

**Niagara Falls Soccer Club Inc.**  
Guide Dated 2020