



Cambridge Youth Soccer - Child Protection & Welfare Policy

Child Protection & Welfare Policy

The guidelines in this document are based on the best practices from:

- [Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#)
- [Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program – Information Manual](#)
- [Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program – Support Manual](#)
- [Respect in Soccer Program](#)
- [Protecting Children & Youth in Sport](#)
- [Safe Sport Training Module](#)

Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young athletes in soccer should do so with integrity and respect for the individual. All adult actions in soccer should be guided by what is best for the individual and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within soccer and its related activities.

Policy Details

CYS is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who participate in soccer. This policy clearly demonstrates the importance placed by CYS on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in soccer.

All children and young people who participate in soccer should be able to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. While doing so they should be protected from any form of abuse be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and/or bullying. The responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in this club, Ontario Soccer and Canada Soccer.

These clear policies, practices and procedures in addition to relevant training programs will ensure that everybody at CYS know exactly what is expected of them in relation to protecting children and young people within soccer.

In pursuit of this goal CYS will:

- Advise all customers and participants of CYS (employees, coaches, players, parents and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people who participate in soccer;
- Operate within the recommended Canada Soccer codes of conduct and best practice guidelines;
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer who has completed Commit to Kids training; and
- Provide a child protection and welfare module in staff induction and development programs.

The aims of CYS Child Protection & Welfare Policy are:

- To develop a positive and pro-active position in order to best protect all children and young people who participate in soccer, in order for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment;
- To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all club members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection;
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection;
- To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout soccer.

The key principles underpinning this policy are that:

- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration;
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse of any kind regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.



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- All suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; it is essential that we work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/caregivers;
- CYS will cooperate fully with Canada Soccer in any investigation of child abuse in soccer.

CYS is committed to ensuring that children and young people can participate in all soccer activities with their safety and welfare being of paramount importance.

It is essential that this document represents a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection and welfare in soccer.

It is the responsibility of all adults involved in soccer to actively promote safe and best practice standards whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities to children and young people in their care.

Procedure for Dealing with Child Abuse Concerns or Allegations

It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Club Children's Officer ("CCO"). All allegations of child abuse must be referred to the CCO. All submissions of suspected child abuse are confidential.

When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to appropriate authorities and this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

The following are some examples that constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- a specific indication from a child that they were abused;
- a statement from a person who witnessed abuse;
- an illness, injury or behavior consistent with abuse;
- a symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence;
- consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

The following steps will be followed when dealing with any allegation of abuse:

Step 1

Any allegation of abuse should be reported immediately and following the first instance to the CCO. Should the CCO be unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist they can informally consult with the Club Operations (General) Manager and the appropriate person(s) at the District and Provincial governing associations. They will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

Coaches/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and appropriate support should be provided for staff/volunteers including counselling where necessary.

Step 2

Should CYS become aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by an adult during the execution of their duties, the CCO will privately inform the individual of the following:

- the fact that the allegation has been made against him/her;
- the nature of the allegation.



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Step 3

The adult should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The CCO will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report.

The report should contain observations, dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, the Children's Aid Society and/or local law enforcement agency shall be contacted.

Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.

Step 4

The CCO, if reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities, will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine any statutory investigation.

Step 5

All subsequent actions following an allegation of abuse against an adult will be taken in consultation with the Club Operations Manager and Club President. An immediate meeting will be sought with these individuals for this purpose. Should the accused be the Club Operations (General) Manager or the Club President, the CCO will with the SouthWest Soccer General Manager and the Ontario Soccer Director of Administration, to determine the course of action taken.

Step 6

Any adult who is the subject of a statutory investigation into alleged child abuse, is required to stand down from all soccer activities until the investigation is completed.

When a person is asked to stand down it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure in keeping with standard procedures/guidelines and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The adult concerned should be advised that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory requirements. The individual should be treated with respect and fairness, and also be assured that all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Communication with remaining members will be limited to information of an investigation until such time a decision is rendered by the CCO and committee.

Step 7

CYS will carefully consider the outcome of the statutory investigation and will then assess if there are any outstanding disciplinary issues in relation to their internal rules or infringements of the [Canada Soccer Best Practice Guidelines](#). It must be remembered that the fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Internal CYS disciplinary proceedings can only be initiated after the Statutory Authorities have completed theirs.

Other Types of Allegations

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to resolve, however they cannot be ignored. All complaints relating to inappropriate behavior/poor practice should be brought to the attention of the CCO. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. All complaints should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. It is important to record all such complaints and actions taken.



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Rumors

Rumors should not be allowed. Any rumors relating to inappropriate behaviors circulating in the club should be brought to the attention to the CCO and checked out promptly. All ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected; therefore, appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within the club.

The following points will be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations;
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should only be discussed with those who need to know;
- Information will be conveyed to the parents/guardians of a child about whom there are concerns in a sensitive way. Giving information to others on a “need to know” basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.

Safety Policy

All coaches/volunteers at CYS have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control; therefore, coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train. In this respect:

- Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times. There must be minimum of 2 adults when interacting with players; no coach, manager or volunteer works [alone](#).
- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment.
- CYS safety rules should be adhered to at all times.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the start and finish times of training sessions, games and team events.
- Records of attendance should be maintained. CYS requires that these records of attendance be submitted to the Club at the conclusion of the season.
- Ensure the use of any recommended safety equipment.

CYS Club Children’s Officer

The appointment of CCO is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any club. They act as a resource to members with regard to children's issues and also ensure that children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk of their experiences.

The CCO should have the following functions:

- To promote the [Code of Ethics & Good Practice](#);
- To influence policy and practice and to prioritize children's needs;



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- To ensure that children know how and whom they can report their concerns to within the Club;
- To encourage the participation of parents/guardians in Club activities;
- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys their participation in soccer;
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's soccer;
- To report regularly to the Club Board of Directors; and
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or Club transfers by club members.

The CCO does not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with Children's Aid Society.

CYS has appointed the Programs Manager as Club Children's Officer; they can be reached at: kaela@cambridgesoccer.ca

Best Practices

In keeping children and young people at the forefront of planning and practice, our coaches can be confident that participants will enjoy their experiences and that their actions are regarded as safe and in keeping with the principle that the safety and welfare of children is of paramount consideration.

CYS coaches/volunteers are given a position of trust by parents/guardians and players and are expected to operate to the highest standards of behavior whilst in the company of underage players (under 18years). Our coaches are also expected not to engage in any activity that could reasonably be viewed as bringing the club or soccer in general into disrepute.

It is important for our coaches to note that in adhering to these guidelines ensures not only a safe environment for children but also a safe environment in which coaches and volunteers can operate.

Most coaches work in an environment where it is recognized that, in a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a 'hands on approach', i.e., it may be necessary to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the participant concerned and their parents/guardians.

Coaches must realize that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the player, but by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety; therefore, coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to risk.

Where possible, CYS coaches/volunteers should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone (always employ "Rule of Two" supervision).
- Taking children to their homes.
- Taking children on journeys alone in their care.
- Cultivating an online relationship with a child (including but not limited to social media platforms, email, messaging)

Our Coaches/volunteers should never:

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.



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- Share a room with a young person alone on away trips.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young person.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult and permission from the Technical Committee
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of young people.

Glossary of Terms

In order to prevent child sexual abuse at Cambridge Youth Soccer, it is first necessary to understand child sexual abuse, how offenders groom, signs of a disclosure and the impact of abuse on victims. In understanding child sexual abuse a major step is taken towards addressing the problem constructively and promoting positive change. The following definitions lay the groundwork for better awareness about child sexual abuse and will help foster discussions among employees and volunteers.

Child

For the purposes of the Cambridge Youth Soccer, and in keeping with the Government of Canada, "minor child" is defined as a person under the age of 18, and all CYS youth (child, minor, minor child) referenced documents are to be interpreted as pertaining to youth under the age of 18.

[Provincial definition of a minor child.](#)

Adult

For the purposes of the Cambridge Youth Soccer, and in keeping with the Government of Canada, "adult" is defined as a person over the age of 18.

Physical Abuse

The use of force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or at risk of being injured. Physical abuse can be overtly aggressive (e.g. beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking, or assaulting a child with a weapon) or can be more subtle and less obvious (e.g. bumping, pushing, restraining, pinching, squeezing an arm or leg).

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a chronic pattern of behaviour towards a child that causes negative effects on his/her emotional development. Examples include verbal threats, social isolation, ignoring, intimidation, put-downs, exploitation, and unreasonable demands. A single episode of name-calling would be considered inappropriate, but would not necessarily constitute emotional abuse. Repetitive name-calling or the intentional damaging of a child's self-esteem, however, would be considered abusive. A single incident of high intensity emotional abuse/trauma would also qualify.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide basic needs including physical, educational, emotional, etc. Neglect can also include such things as failure to provide proper medical care, adequate clothing or supervision.

Child Sexual Abuse

Any form of adult/child sexualized interaction constitutes child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse of a child may occur through behaviours that do not involve actual physical contact.



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Contact sexual abuse includes:

- Touching the genital area, over or under clothing
- Touching breasts, over or under clothing
- Touching another's genital area
- Oral sex
- Vaginal or anal penetration with a part of the body (e.g. finger, penis) or with an object

Non-contact sexual abuse includes:

- Invitation to touch another in a sexual way
- Voyeurism (i.e. "Peeping Tom")
- Encouraging or forcing a child to masturbate or to watch others masturbate
- Indecent exposure (i.e. "flashing" or showing genital areas)
- Involving children in the viewing or production of pornographic materials, or watching sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

A Child in Need of Protection

[Because every province and territory in Canada has a legal definition of child abuse, insert the definition of a "child in need of protection" from your Provincial Act]

Bullying

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Grooming

An individual who sexually abuses a child often uses a variety of techniques to gain sexual access to the child. The individual first gains the trust of the child and the adults around the child. An emotional connection is purposely built to reduce the likelihood that the child will disclose the abuse.

This process is known as grooming. Grooming is often a slow, gradual and escalating process of building trust and comfort with a child. The offender's goal is to have the child see him/her as a caring adult the child can trust and whose directions they should follow.



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Grooming also includes the process of making inappropriate behaviour seem normal. This process of normalizing inappropriate behaviour can range from the telling of sexual jokes to physical contact. Once trust has been established, the result can be a child who is very confused, one who is torn between what they know to be wrong and their feelings for the offender.

Although the purpose of grooming is to non-violently access and control children, in extreme cases offenders may also attempt to physically maintain control over children.

In extreme cases, some offenders may attempt to gain control over a child through the use of threats (to the child, his/her pets or family) and/or physical force. This type of violence may be used to overcome resistance, maintain compliance, and/or prevent the child from disclosing the abuse.

It is of the utmost importance to realize that the reason cooperative and compliant children are victims is not because they were groomed, manipulated or brainwashed but simply because they are children.

Commit to Kids Training

The Commit to Kids (C2K) online training is for individuals who work with children, either through employment or on a volunteer basis. It is recommended that individuals who take the training have a copy of the full C2K program available to reference.

This online training consists of eight separate modules that address the following:

- the definition of child sexual abuse
- the grooming process
- handling disclosures of child sexual abuse
- the impact of child sexual abuse
- creating a Child Protection Code of Conduct for your organization
- policies and procedures to use to protect children in your organization
- the C2K program for child-serving organizations

A certificate of completion will be issued upon completion of all modules and a successful knowledge validation test.

Statutory Authority

A statutory authority is a body set up by law which is authorised to enact legislation on behalf of the relevant country or state.

Technical Committee

The CYS Technical Committee is comprised of the Technical Director, Grassroots Club Head Coach, Performance Manager and Technical Coach.



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Outstanding Disciplinary Issues

Disciplinary issues as outlined by Ontario Soccer under [Section 12](#) of the Operational Procedures document and/or any issues that have not yet been resolved by the CCO and committee.

Duties of a Team Official

As outlined by Cambridge Youth Soccer under the Roles and Responsibilities of each specific type of Team Official recognized by Ontario Soccer.

Safety and Welfare of the Child

The safety of children is potentially at risk from accidents and injuries, as well as crime. Providing a safe environment, putting prevention measures into practice, and teaching children methods of self-protection are all ways to reduce the potential for harm to children.

Parent/Caregiver

For the purpose of this document, parents/caregivers are identified as being the adults, parents, or guardians in the family who provide care and supervision for the children.

Additional Resources

[Commit to Kids](#) – Canadian Centre for Child Protection

[CyberTip](#)

[Safe Sport Canada](#)

[Coaches Association of Canada](#)

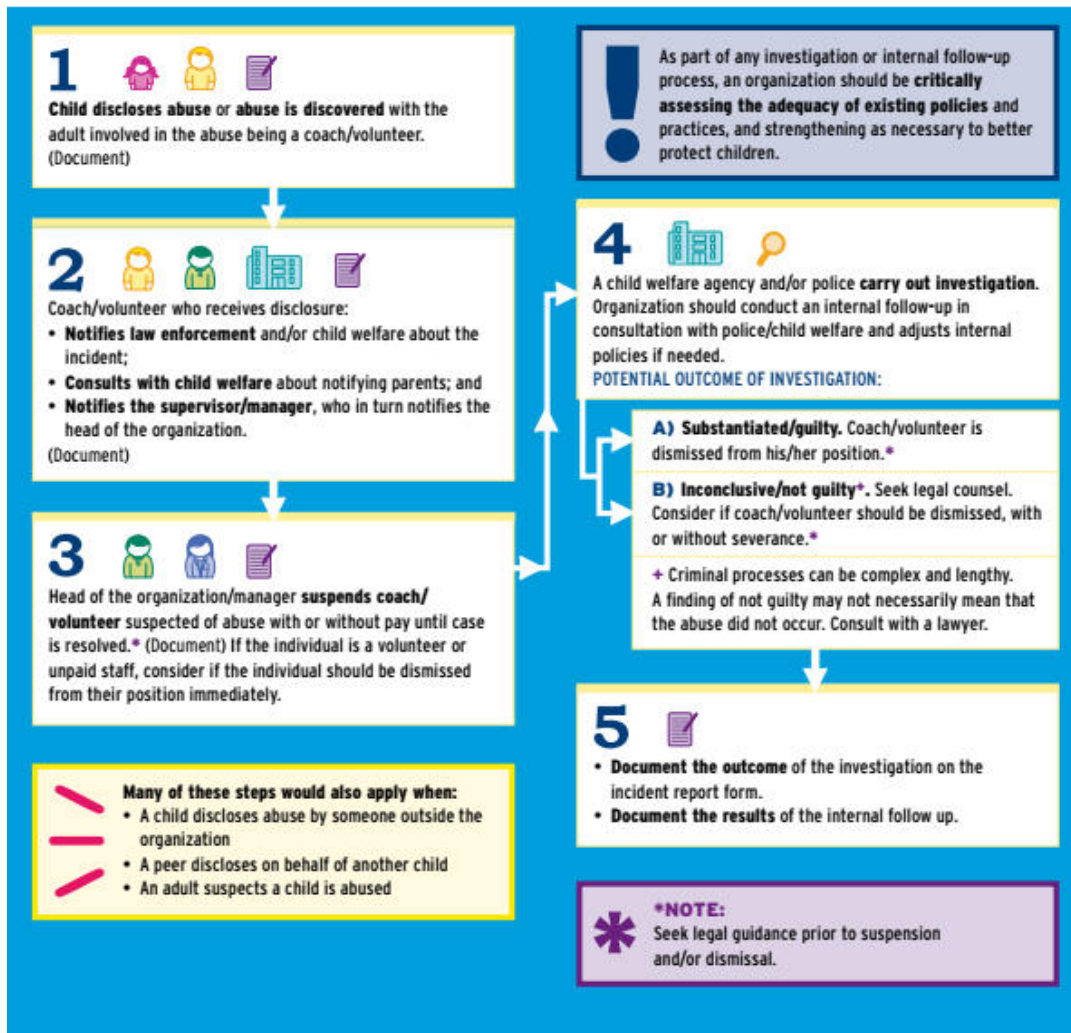
[Ontario Child Protection Tools Manual](#)



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CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE STEPS FOR REPORTING:

This card is a component of the Commit to Kids® program. It is intended as a quick reference for use in a sporting environment and is not meant to be exhaustive or to replace legal advice. Consult with child welfare, law enforcement and legal counsel if child abuse is alleged or suspected.



The safety of the child and other children in the organization must be ensured at all times in the process.



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