



ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

1. This Policy describe how Persons in Authority can maintain a safe sport environment for Athletes.

Interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes

2. For interactions between Persons and Authority and Athletes, Softball Canada strongly recommends the 'Rule of Two' for all Persons in Authority who interact with athletes. The 'Rule of Two' is a directive that says that an athlete must never be alone one-on-one with an unrelated Person in Authority.
3. Softball Canada recognizes that fully implementing the 'Rule of Two' in all circumstances may not be possible. Consequently, at a minimum, interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes must respect the following:
 - a) Transparent
 - i. Encourage parents to appropriately support their children's involvement
 - ii. Allow the training environment to be open to observation by parents. Ensure an open and observable environment for all interactions between Persons in Authority and athletes. This could include leaving the door open when having a meeting, moving away from others in a public space but staying within eyesight.
 - iii. Avoid private or one-on-one situations unless they are open and observable by another adult or athlete.
 - b) Authorized
 - i. Limit any situation when a Person in Authority is alone with an athlete
 - ii. Ensure Persons in Authority do not invite or have an athlete(s) in the home without the written permission of the athlete's parent or guardian
 - iii. Ensure athletes do not find themselves in a situation where they are alone with a Person in Authority without another screened adult or athlete present unless prior written permission is obtained from the athlete's parent or guardian
 - iv. When only one athlete and Person in Authority travel to a competition, at the competition the Person in Authority and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and away from the venue
 - c) Accountable
 - i. If a situation arises where an interaction that breaks the spirit of the 'Rule of Two' arises, Persons in Authority should make themselves accountable by reporting it to a staff or volunteer supervisor

Practices and Competitions

4. Softball Canada strongly recommends:

- a) Teams or groups of athletes will always have at least two Persons in Authority with them
- b) For mixed gender teams or groups of athletes, there will be one Person in Authority from each gender identity
- c) Screened parents or other volunteers will be available in situations when two Persons in Authority cannot be present
- d) A Person in Authority should never be alone with an athlete prior to or following a competition 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 competition 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
- e) 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

Communications

- 5. Softball Canada will strongly recommend the following communication guidelines for all Persons in Authority who interact with athletes:
 - a) Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between Persons in Authority and athletes
 - b) Persons in Authority may only send personal texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individual athletes when necessary and only for communicating information related to team issues and activities (e.g., non-personal information). Any such texts, messages or emails shall be professional in tone
 - c) Electronic communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes that is personal in nature should be avoided. If such communication occurs, it must be recorded and available for review by another Person in Authority and/or by the Athlete's parent/guardian (when the Athlete is a Vulnerable Participant)
 - d) Parents and guardians have the right to request that their child not be contacted by Persons in Authority using any form of electronic communication and/or to request that certain information about their child may not be distributed in any form of electronic communications
 - e) All communication between Persons in Authority and athletes must be between the hours of 6:00am and midnight unless extenuating circumstances exist
 - f) No communication concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is permitted
 - g) No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation is permitted
 - h) Persons in Authority are not permitted to ask athletes to keep a secret for them
 - i) A Person in Authority should not become overly-involved in an athlete's personal life

Travel

- 6. Softball Canada will strongly recommend the following travel guidelines for all Persons in Authority who travel with athletes:
 - a) No Person in Authority may drive an athlete alone unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian
 - b) 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

- c) Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority
- d) For overnight travel when athletes must share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate (e.g., within 2 years of age) and of the same gender identity

Locker Room / Changing Areas

- 7. Softball Canada will strongly recommend the following guidelines for the locker room, changing area, and meeting rooms:
 - a) Interactions (i.e., conversation) between Persons in Authority and athletes should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, restroom or changing area. A second adult should be present for any necessary interaction between an adult and an athlete in any such room (e.g., adhering to the Rule of Two).
 - b) 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, including but not limited to team communications and/or emergency

Photography / Video

- 8. Softball Canada will strongly recommend the following photography / video guidelines and the use of an Image Consent Form (**Appendix A – Image Consent Form**):
 - a) Parents/guardians should sign an image release form (i.e., as part of the registration process) that describes how an athlete's image may be used by Softball Canada
 - b) Photographs and video may only be taken in public view, must observe generally accepted standards of decency, and be both appropriate for and in the best interest of the athlete.
 - c) The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.
 - d) Examples of photos that should be edited or deleted include:
 - i. Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing
 - ii. Suggestive or provocative poses
 - iii. Embarrassing images

Physical Contact

- 9. Softball Canada understands that some physical contact between Persons in Authority and athletes may be necessary for various reasons including, but not limited to, teaching a skill or tending to an injury. Softball Canada will strongly recommend the following touch guidelines:
 - a) Unless it is not possible because of serious injury or other circumstance, a Person in Authority should always clarify with an athlete where and why any touch will occur. The Person in Authority must make clear that he or she is *requesting* to touch the athlete and not *requiring* the physical contact
 - b) Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment on the part of the athlete during a training session, is permitted
 - c) Making amends, such as an apology or explanation, is encouraged to further help educate athletes on the difference between appropriate and inappropriate contact
 - d) Hugs lasting longer than 5 seconds, cuddling, physical horseplay, and physical contact initiated by the Person in Authority is not permitted. Softball Canada is aware that some athletes may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a Person in Authority for various reasons (e.g., such as crying after a poor performance), but this physical contact should always be limited to circumstances where the Person in Authority believes it is in the best interest of the athlete.

Appendix A – Image Consent Form

1. I hereby grant to Softball Canada (collectively the “Organizations”) on a worldwide basis, the permission to photograph and/or record the Participant’s image and/or voice on still or motion picture film and/or audio tape (collectively the “Images”), and to use the Images to promote the sport and/or Softball Canada through traditional media such as newsletters, websites, television, film, radio, print and/or display form, and through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. I understand that I waive any claim to remuneration for use of audio/visual materials used for these purposes. This consent will remain in effect in perpetuity.
2. I hereby fully release, discharge, and agree to save harmless Softball Canada for any and all claims, demands, actions, damages, losses or costs that might arise out of the collection, use or disclosure of the Images or taking, publication, distortion of the Images, negatives, and masters or any other likeness or representation of the Participant that may occur or be produced in the taking of said Images or in any subsequent processing thereof, including without limitation any claims for libel, passing off, misappropriate of personality or invasion of privacy.
3. **I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE**, that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document. On behalf of me, my heirs, and assigns, I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily and to abide by such terms and conditions.

Signed at this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if Participant is younger than the age of majority):
