



Athlete Safety Policy

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Athlete Safety Policy is to provide minimum standards for safety and to create expectations for all Individuals involved in Volleyball BC programs, events, and activities.

2. DEFINITIONS

In addition to the definitions included in other Volleyball BC policies, as amended from time to time, the following definitions apply to this Policy:

- a) **Adult** – A person over the age of majority in British Columbia.
- b) **Child** - A person(s) under the age of majority in British Columbia.
- c) **Individuals** - all persons employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with or on behalf of Volleyball BC including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, athletes, volleyball clubs, coaches, mission staff, referees, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents or guardians, spectators, and Directors and Officers.
- d) **Person in Authority** – any person who holds a position of trust or authority over a Vulnerable Individual pursuant to the role assigned to them. Persons in Authority (PIA) include, but are not limited to coaches, managers, trainers, referees, staff, and administrators.
- e) **Vulnerable Adults** – Any person over the age of majority in the applicable jurisdiction who by nature of a physical, emotional, or psychological condition is dependent on other persons for care and assistance in day-to-day living.
- f) **Vulnerable Individuals** – Includes Children and Vulnerable Adults (people who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority).

3. APPLICATION AND AUTHORITY

- This Policy applies to any Individuals employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with or on behalf of Volleyball BC. This includes but is not limited to, employees, contractors, athletes, volleyball clubs, coaches, mission staff, referees,

volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents or guardians, spectators, and Directors and Officers.

- This Policy applies to all Individuals' conduct during and involvement with Volleyball BC business, teams, programs, competitions, events and activities including, but not limited to, games, practices, training camps, workshops, conferences, any travel associated with Volleyball BC activities, teams and competitions, the Volleyball BC office environment and any meetings concerning Volleyball BC business.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Volleyball BC is committed to a sport environment that is safe for all participants. This policy outlines the practical rules, expectations, and guidelines, for all Individuals to ensure that safety is embedded into all Volleyball BC activities. In particular, the policy is intended to support Persons in Authority in their understanding of the inherent power imbalance that exists in their relationship with Vulnerable Individuals so that they do not abuse it, consciously or unconsciously.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Open and Observable Environments

- Open, observable, and justifiable interactions and communications are strongly recommended to foster safety, enhance protection, and help reduce vulnerability of both an athlete and Person In Authority. The Coaching Association of Canada's Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and safety-trained adults with a participant, especially a Minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation. Vulnerable situations include but are not limited to:
 - Closed doors meetings
 - Medical treatments
 - Travel to and from trainings, competitions, events, or activities
 - Any training or competitive environments without a second coach or responsible adult present
 - Electronic communications
- Volleyball BC follows "Open and Observable Environments" which is Volleyball Canada's version of Rule of 2. As in Rule of 2, this practice still involves making meaningful and concerted efforts to avoid situations where a Person In Authority might be alone with an athlete and/or Vulnerable Individual. The name refers to the fact that interactions between an individual and an individual who is in a position of trust/authority should be in an environment or space that is both "open" and "observable" to others.
- 'Open' environment
 - An open environment is an environment that is not closed or concealed from others.
 - Interactions should not take place behind closed doors or in secluded locations.
 - Others should be aware the interaction is taking place

'Observable' environment

- An observable environment is a space where others can see or take note of the interaction.
- Before interacting with someone ask yourself:
 - *Is this an open interaction?*
 - *Are we in a closed or secluded place?*
 - *Who knows this meeting/interaction is taking place?*
 - *Does the athlete (or individual in a position of lesser power) have an easy & accessible exit path?*
 - *Is this interaction observable?*
 - *Is anyone else with us?*
 - *Can anyone see us?*
 - *Can anyone hear us?*

5.2 Training, Competitions and Other Volleyball Activities

- All training and competition environments must be open to observation. Individuals should self-identify situations during training, competitions or other volleyball activities that may put themselves or athletes in a vulnerable position and consider ways to avoid or alter the environment to promote safety.
- Two Persons in Authority should always be present with an athlete, especially a Minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation such as in a locker room or meeting room.
- All one-on-one interactions between a Person in Authority and an athlete must take place within earshot and in view of the second Person in Authority except for medical emergencies. One of the Persons in Authority must also be of the same gender identity as the athlete.
- Should there be a circumstance where a second Person in Authority is not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited to act as a substitute.
- For private conversations, coaches and athletes can have a one-to-one conversation in an open and observable environment such as in the corner of the gymnasium, in a café, in a glass-walled office, outside the gymnasium in an open location, as just a few examples. If the topic is sensitive in nature, the coach should include another coach, support staff member or parent in the meeting with the athlete. A closed-door meeting can take place if a second Person in Authority is present at all times
- 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 change room, meeting room, restroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for any necessary interaction in any such room.
- If Persons in Authority are not present in a changing area, or if they are not permitted to be present, they must be available outside the changing area, within earshot and be able to enter the room or area if required.

- 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
- More than one Person in Authority will be involved in team selection, thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one Individual.
- Individuals must ensure a safe environment by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved athletes.
- 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.
- While there are circumstances where one on one medical treatment may be necessary due to the injury or treatment type, when at all possible medical staff should have their interactions take place in open and observable spaces

5.3 Communication

- Establish, monitor, and reinforce clear, appropriate, and consistent communication boundaries with athletes of all ages.
- Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. A good practice is to pre-establish a message group with coaches and support staff already included and provide this to athletes for sending communications to coaches. Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between Persons in Authority and relevant athletes.
- If an athlete sends a Person in Authority a message directly, the Person In Authority should include another coach, parent, or support staff member in the response. The designated parent or guardian of Minor athletes should be included in any individual communications from Persons in Authority.
- Persons in Authority may only send individual texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individual athletes when necessary and only for the purpose of communicating information related to team issues and activities (e.g., non-personal information).
- 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.
- The content of all electronic communication between Persons in Authority and athletes

must be professional in tone and for the purpose of communicating information related to team issues or activities.

- No communication concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is permitted. No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation is permitted.
- Persons in Authority are not permitted to ask athletes to keep a secret for them.
- A Person in Authority should not become overly involved in an athlete's personal life

5.4 Travel

- It is recommended that all Minor athletes in team travel or overnight camps sign and agree to Conduct Guidelines outlining the behaviour expected of them. Should a player be found in breach of the Guidelines, the Person in Authority has the right to put in place measures to safeguard the athlete and manage the situation as appropriate. The guardian or parent of the athlete will also be notified and it may jeopardise their participation in future Volleyball BC activities.
- A Person in Authority may not be alone in a car with a Minor 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. One of the Persons of Authority must also be of the same gender identity as the athlete.
- For overnight travel when athletes share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate (e.g., within 2 years of age or both adults) and of the same gender identity.
- Athletes may only share a bed if they are of the same gender identity and with the explicit consent of the parent or guardian.
- Any transportation provided as part of a Volleyball BC activity will be organised by Volleyball BC. Participants must not accept rides or transportation from anyone else unless specified by the Individual representing Volleyball BC.
- Participants must stay with the program at all times. An individual may only leave the team if there is a minimum of 2 players together and with the permission of the Person in Authority leading the program. A risk assessment shall inform if and by what terms athletes may take leave from the Team.
- Unauthorized "after hours" social functions are strictly forbidden. Participants may only attend functions designated or authorised by the Person in Authority leading the program.

- Athletes must stay in their room after curfew and may not leave the accommodation premises unless agreed by the Individual leading the program.
- Volleyball BC has a zero-tolerance policy to the under-age consumption of alcohol and drugs.

5.5 Photography

- As part of the registration process or otherwise, parents/guardians should sign a photo release form that describes how an athlete's image may be used by Volleyball BC.
- 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.
- The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.
- Examples of photos that should be edited or deleted include:
Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing
Suggestive or provocative poses
Embarrassing images
- Without parent or legal guardian's consent in the case of a Minor athlete, or without an Adult athlete's consent, the athlete may not be photographed or filmed and no images of athletes may be posted publicly or privately. If consent is given, it may be revoked at any time.

5.6 Physical Contact

Volleyball BC 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. In this case, Volleyball BC requires the following guidelines:

- All physical interaction should be limited to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)
- 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. Verbal cues and explanations are encouraged to further help educate athletes on the difference between appropriate and inappropriate contact. The Person in Authority must make clear that he or she is *requesting* to touch the athlete and not *requiring* the physical contact.
- 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.
- Hugging, cuddling, physical horseplay, and physical contact initiated by the Person in

Authority is not permitted. Volleyball BC is aware that some younger 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.

6. SUPPORTING POLICIES

The following policies complement or intersect this Policy:

- Volleyball BC Abuse Policy
- Volleyball BC Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Volleyball BC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Volleyball BC Screening Policy

7. BREACHES AND COMPLAINTS

All Individuals involved in Volleyball BC programs and activities are required to read, understand, and comply with this policy. If any questions or situations arise in which an Individual is uncertain about the appropriate course of action, they should communicate and discuss the situation with their manager at Volleyball BC. Should circumstances arise in which a breach of policy occurs – unintentionally or otherwise - Individuals are expected to immediately notify their manager at Volleyball BC.

Any parent or guardian, athlete, or individual who feels that this policy was not adhered to during a Volleyball BC may file a complaint by contacting the Manager, Volleyball Operations at youth@volleyballbc.org

Acknowledgment and Agreement

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Athlete Safety Policy of Volleyball BC. Further, I agree to adhere to this Policy Manual and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to these guiding principles. I understand that if I violate the rules or procedures outlined in this Policy Manual, I may face corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.