ABUSE POLICY

This is a Pan-Canadian Policy applicable to Volleyball Canada, Volleyball Nova Scotia, and the Provincial/Territorial Associations.

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this policy:
    a) "*Abuse*" – Grooming, Child Abuse or Vulnerable Adult Abuse as described in this .
    b) "*Child/Children"* – A person(s) under the age of majority in the applicable jurisdiction.
    c) *"Independent Third Party*" – an independent person or organization that has no professional or personal ties to Volleyball Canada or Volleyball Nova Scotia
    d) *"Individuals"* – refers to all categories of members and/or registrants defined in the Bylaws of Volleyball Canada and in the Bylaws of Volleyball Nova Scotia, as applicable, as well as all persons employed by, contracted by, or engaged in activities with or on behalf of, Volleyball Canada or Volleyball Nova Scotia including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, athletes, coaches, mission staff, referees, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents or guardians, spectators, and Directors and Officers
    e) *"Provincial/Territorial Associations"* – the provincial/territorial member governing bodies for volleyball in each province/territory
    f) "*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.
    g) "*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).
    h) "*Persons 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.

Purpose

2. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia are committed to a sport environment free from Abuse. The purpose of this policy is to stress the importance of that commitment by defining Abuse and educating Individuals about Abuse, outlining how Volleyball Canada and Provincial/Territorial Associations will work to prevent Abuse, and how Abuse or suspected Abuse can be reported to and addressed by Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia.

Zero Tolerance Statement

3. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia have zero tolerance for any type of Abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of Abuse or suspected Abuse to Volleyball Canada or to Volleyball Nova Scotia so that those matters can be addressed in an expeditious manner.

Education – What is Abuse

4. Vulnerable Individuals can be abused in different forms. The following description of Child Abuse has been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical's *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults* [1] as follows:

5. "Child Abuse" refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a Child may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust, and includes the following:
    a) **Physical Abuse** involves single or repeated instances of deliberately using force against a Child in such a way that the Child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a Child with a weapon. It also includes holding a Child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.
    b) **Sexual Abuse** and exploitation involve using a Child for sexual purposes. Examples of Child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a Child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a Child in prostitution or pornography.
    c) **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a Child needs for his or her physical, psychological, or emotional development and well-being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a Child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care, or protection from harm.
    d) **Emotional Abuse** involves harming a Child's sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a Child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes exposing the Child to violence.

6. An abuser may use several different tactics to gain access to Children, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the Abuse or seeking support. The Abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The Abuse may change form over time.

7. Abuse of a Child in sport can include emotional maltreatment, neglect, physical maltreatment and grooming.

    a) **Emotional Maltreatment** – A Person in Authority's failure to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. In sports, this conduct has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete when it is persistent, pervasive or patterned (i.e., yelling at an athlete once does not constitute maltreatment). Examples of emotional maltreatment include:
        i. Refusal to recognize an athlete's worth or the legitimacy of an athlete's needs (including complaints of injury/pain, thirst or feeling unwell)
        ii. Creating a culture of fear, or threatening, bullying or frightening an athlete
        iii. Frequent name-calling or sarcasm that continually "beats down" an athlete's self-esteem
        iv. Embarrassing or humiliating an athlete in front of peers
        v. Excluding or isolating an athlete from the group
        vi. Withholding attention

vii. Encouraging an athlete to engage in destructive and antisocial behaviour, reinforcing deviance, or impairing an athlete's ability to behave in socially appropriate ways
viii. Pressuring; whereby the Person in Authority imposes extreme pressure upon the athlete to behave and achieve in ways that are far beyond the athlete's capabilities
ix. Verbally attacking an athlete (e.g., belittling them or calling them worthless, lazy, useless, fat or disgusting).
x. Routinely or arbitrarily excluding athletes from practice
xi. Throwing objects such as sports equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, athletes
xii. Body shaming – making disrespectful, hurtful or embarrassing comments about an athlete's physique

b) **Neglect** – Often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what an athlete needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well-being. Examples of neglect include:
    i. Isolating an athlete in a confined space or stranded on equipment, with no supervision, for an extended period
    ii. Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep
    iii. Ignoring an injury
    iv. Knowing about sexual abuse of an athlete but failing to report it
c) **Physical Maltreatment** – involves contact or non-contact behaviour that can cause physical harm to an athlete. It also includes any act or conduct described as physical Abuse or misconduct (e.g., child Abuse, child neglect and assault). Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity. Athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete—such as extreme disciplinary actions or punishment—is unacceptable. Physical maltreatment can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and restricted diet. Examples of physical maltreatment include:
    i. Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
    ii. Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
    iii. Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age
    iv. Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete
    v. Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion)
    vi. Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete
    vii. Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose, or excessive repetition of a skill to the point of injury
    viii. Using excessive exercise as punishment (i.e. to the point of extreme distress or vomiting)
d) **Grooming** – a slow gradual and escalating process of building comfort and trust with an athlete and/or their parents/guardians that is often very difficult to recognize. The process allows for inappropriate conduct to become normalized. It is often preceded by building confidence and comfort that an individual can be trusted with the care of the athlete. Examples of grooming include:
    i. Nudity or exposure of genitals in the presence of an athlete
    ii. Sexually oriented conversation or discussions about personal sexual activities

iii. Excessive discussions about a Person in Authority's personal life (i.e., family, work, medical challenges)
iv. Spending time with an athlete and/or their family outside of team activities
v. Excessive or inappropriate gift-giving to an athlete
vi. Socially isolating an athlete
vii. Restricting an athlete's privacy
viii. Providing drugs, alcohol or tobacco to an athlete
ix. Becoming overly involved in an athlete's personal life
x. Making sexual or discriminatory jokes or comments to an athlete
xi. Displaying material of a sexual nature in the presence of an athlete
xii. Mocking or threatening an athlete
xiii. Putting the Person in Authority's needs above needs of an athlete

8. For clarity, emotional and physical maltreatment do not include professionally -accepted coaching methods (per the NCCP) of skill enhancement, human development, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.

9. Potential warning signs of Child Abuse can include[2][3]:
    a) Recurrent unexplained injuries
    b) Alert behaviour; Child seems to always be expecting something bad to happen
    c) Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather
    d) Child startles easily, shies away from touch or shows other skittish behaviour
    e) Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
    f) Withdrawn from peers and adults
    g) Behavior fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative or extremely demanding)
    h) Acting either inappropriately beyond their age (like an adult; taking care of other children) or inappropriately younger than their age (throwing tantrums)
    i) Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
    j) New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
    k) Self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or other harmful activities)
    l) Not wanting to be alone with a particular Child or adult

Vulnerable Adult Abuse

10. Although persons may be abused at any life stage – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, or old age – the nature and consequences of Abuse may differ depending on a person's situation, disability, or circumstance.

11. The following description of Vulnerable Adult Abuse has been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical's *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults* [1].

12. Vulnerable Adult Abuse is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The Abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time, and include:

a) **Psychological abuse** includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate Vulnerable Adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of Abuse may include, for example
    i. Threatening to use violence
    ii. Threatening to abandon them
    iii. Intentionally frightening them
    iv. Making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
    v. Lying to them
    vi. Failing to check allegations of abuse against them

b) **Financial abuse** encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation, including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using a Vulnerable Adult's money or property in a dishonest manner or failing to use a Vulnerable Adult's assets for their welfare. Abuse occurs any time someone acts without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another. This type of Abuse against a Vulnerable Adult may include:
    i. Stealing their money, disability cheques, or other possessions
    ii. Wrongfully using a Power of Attorney
    iii. Failing to pay back borrowed money when asked

c) **Physical abuse** includes any act of violence – whether or not it results in physical injury. Intentionally inflicting pain or injury that results in either bodily harm or mental distress is abuse. Physical abuse may include, for example:
    i. Beating
    ii. Burning or scalding
    iii. Pushing or shoving
    iv. Hitting or slapping
    v. Rough handling
    vi. Tripping
    vii. Spitting

Vulnerable Adult Abuse includes all forms of sexual abuse. Potential warning signs of Vulnerable Adult Abuse include:
    i. Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
    ii. Unexplained physical injuries
    iii. Dehydration, malnutrition, or lack of food
    iv. Poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
    v. Over-sedation
    vi. Not wanting to be alone with a particular person

Preventing Abuse

13. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia will enact measures aimed at preventing Abuse, including screening, orientation, training, practice, and monitoring.

Practice

14. When Individuals, especially Persons in Authority, interact with Vulnerable Individuals who are not their Children, they are required to enact certain practical approaches to these interactions including, but not limited to:
    a) Limiting physical interactions to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)
    b) Ensuring that Vulnerable Individuals are always supervised by more than one adult
    c) Ensuring that more than one person is involved with team selection (thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one Individual)
    d) Ensuring that parents/guardians are aware that some non-personal communication between Persons in Authority and Vulnerable Individuals (e.g., between coaches and minor athletes) may take place electronically (e.g., by texting, direct messaging) and that this type of communication is now considered to be commonplace, especially with older Children (e.g., teenagers). Individuals are aware that such communication is subject to the *Code of Conduct and Ethics*
    e) When traveling with Vulnerable Individuals, the Person in Authority will not transport Vulnerable Individuals without another adult present and will not stay in the same overnight accommodation location without additional adult supervision.

Monitoring

15. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia may regularly monitor those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk, as described in the *Screening Policy*.

Reporting Abuse

16. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia will share all decisions regarding Abuse with one another.

17. The Policies of Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia will require that complaints, including those related to harassment, discrimination, and Abuse, must be handled by an Independent Third Party.

18. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia pledge not to dismiss, penalize, discipline, or retaliate or discriminate against any person who discloses information or submits, in good faith, a report concerning Abuse.

Communication

19. Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia will identify those persons within their respective organizations who will be responsible for implementing this policy.

Review and Amendment

20. All significant amendments to this policy will be submitted to Volleyball Canada for review by its ad hoc committee on policies.

21. This policy will be reviewed every two years. Any significant policy amendments will be approved by Volleyball Canada and Volleyball Nova Scotia.

Approval

22. This Policy was approved by Volleyball Nova Scotia and its Board of Directors on October 19, 2020.

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[1] Retrieved from: https://www.ecclesiastical.ca/guidelines_developsafetyprotectionpolicy_children-youths-vulnerableadults_faith/

[2] Adapted from: https://www.all4kids.org/2014/03/04/warning-signs-child-abuse-neglect/

[3] Adapted from: https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/warning_signs.htm