



TWILIGHTER RUGBY CLUB

est. 1975

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Twighterrugby.com

ABUSE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

1. The Twilighter Rugby Club is committed to a sport environment free from abuse. The purpose of this policy is to stress the importance of that commitment by educating participants about abuse, outlining how the Twilighter Rugby Club will work to prevent abuse, and how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by the Twilighter Rugby Club.

2. ZERO TOLERANCE STATEMENT

1. The Twilighter Rugby Club has zero tolerance for any type of abuse. Participants are required to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse to the Twilighter Rugby Club to be immediately addressed under the terms of the applicable policy.

3. EDUCATION – WHAT IS ABUSE

1. Vulnerable participants can be abused in different forms.
 - a) **Physical abuse** involves single or repeated instances of deliberately using force against a person in such a way that the person is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking, or assaulting a participant with a weapon. It also includes holding a person under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.
 - b) **Sexual abuse** and exploitation involve using a person for sexual purposes. Examples of sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a person to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a person in prostitution or pornography.
 - c) **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a participant needs for his or her physical, psychological, or emotional development and well being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a dependent with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care, or protection from harm.
 - d) **Emotional abuse** involves harming a person's sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a person 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.
2. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to, to exert power and to control over them, and/or to 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.

3. Abuse in sport can include emotional maltreatment, neglect, and physical maltreatment.

a) **Emotional Maltreatment** – A coach’s failure to provide a developmentally-appropriate and supportive environment. Emotional abuse is at the foundation of all other forms of maltreatment (sexual, physical and neglect). In sports, this conduct has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete when it is persistent, pervasive, or patterned acts (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. Over-pressuring: whereby the coach 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 personally (e.g., belittling them or calling them worthless, lazy, useless, fat or disgusting).
- x. Routinely or arbitrarily excluding athletes from practice.
- xi. Using conditioning as punishment.
- xii. Throwing sports equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, athletes.
- xiii. Body shaming – making disrespectful, hurtful, or embarrassing comments about an athlete’s physique.

b) **Neglect** - acts of omission (i.e., the coach should act to protect the health/well-being of an athlete but does not). 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. (May be subject to legal ramifications for failing to act.)

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 illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete.
 - iv. 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).
 - v. Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete.
 - vi. 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.
 - vii. Using excessive exercise as punishment (e.g., stretching to the point of causing the athlete to cry, endurance conditioning until the athlete vomits).
4. Importantly, emotional, and physical maltreatment does not include professionally accepted coaching methods (per the NCCP) of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.
5. Potential warning signs of abuse can include:
- a) Recurrent unexplained injuries.
 - b) Alert behaviour: seems to always be expecting something bad to happen.
 - c) Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather.
 - d) Startles easily, shies away from touch or shows other skittish behaviour.
 - e) Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong.
 - f) Withdrawn from peer.
 - g) Behavior fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative, or extremely demanding).
 - h) Acting either inappropriately beyond their age or inappropriately younger than their age.
 - 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 person.

VULNERABLE ABUSE

6. Abuse of vulnerable adults 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:
- 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, for example:
 - 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.

- d) All forms of sexual abuse are also applicable to vulnerable abuse.

7. Potential warning signs of abuse of vulnerable adults can include:

- a) Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
- b) Unexplained physical injuries
- c) Dehydration, malnutrition, or lack of food
- d) poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
- e) Over-sedation

4. PREVENTING ABUSE

1. The Twilghter Rugby Club will enact measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training, practice, and monitoring.

SCREENING

- 2. Persons in authority who coach, volunteer, officiate, deliver developmental programs, or who accompany a team to an event or competition, who are paid staff, or otherwise engage with vulnerable participants who fall under the Twilghter Rugby Club's authority shall be screened according to the organization's *Screening Policy*.

- 3. The Twilghter Rugby Club will use the *Screening Policy* to determine the level of trust, authority, and access that each person in authority has with vulnerable participants. Each level of risk will be accompanied by increased screening procedures which may include the following, singularly or in combination:
 - a) Completing an application form for the position sought which includes alerting person in authority that they must agree to adhere with the organization's policies and procedures (including this *Abuse Policy*).

- b) Completing a screening declaration form.
 - c) Providing a driver's abstract (for Individuals who transport vulnerable individuals).
 - d) Other screening procedures, as required.
4. A person in authority's failure to participate in the screening process or pass the screening requirements as determined by a Screening Committee, will result in the person in authority's ineligibility for the position sought.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

5. The Twilghter Rugby Club will deliver orientation and training to those persons in authority who have access to, or interact with, vulnerable participants. The orientation and training, and their frequency, will be based on the level of risk, as described in the Screening Policy.
6. Orientation may include, but is not limited to: introductory presentations, facility tours, equipment demonstrations, parent/athlete meetings, meetings with colleagues and supervisors, orientation manuals, orientation sessions, and increased supervision during initial tasks or period of engagement.
7. Training may include, but is not limited to: certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.
8. At the conclusion of the orientation and training, the Twilghter Rugby Club will maintain a record that the person in authority has received and completed the training.

PRACTICE

9. When persons in authority interact with vulnerable participants, they are required to enact certain practical approaches to these interactions. These include, but are 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 person in authority.
 - c) Ensuring that more than one person is responsible for team selection (thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one person in authority).
 - d) Ensuring that all electronic communication with vulnerable participants is open and observable.
 - e) When traveling with vulnerable participants, the person in authority will not transport vulnerable participants without another person present and will not stay in the same overnight accommodation location without additional supervision.

MONITORING

10. The Twilghter Rugby Club will regularly monitor those persons in authority who have access to, or interact with, vulnerable participants. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk, as described in the *Screening Policy*.
11. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to: regular status reports, logs, supervisor meetings, supervisor on-site check-ins, feedback provided directly to the organization (from peers and parents/athletes), and regular evaluations.

5. REPORTING ABUSE

1. Reports of abuse that are shared confidentially with a person in authority by a vulnerable participant may require the Person in Authority to report the incident to parents/guardians, the Twilghter Rugby Club or local authorities. Persons in authority must respond to such reports in a non-judgemental, supportive and comforting manner but must also explain that the report may need to be escalated to the proper authority or to the vulnerable participant's parent/guardian.
2. Complaints or reports that describe an element of abuse will be addressed by the process(es) described in the Twilghter Rugby Club's *Discipline and Complaints Policy* and the *Investigations Policy*.

6. REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Version 1.1 of this Policy has been reviewed and approved by the Twilghter Rugby Club executive board on 24/05/2023.

Version 1.0 – 08/05/2023 DAL