Hanover Minor Soccer Association

HMSA CODE OF CONDUCT TO PROTECT VULNERABLE PERSONS

Purpose

- Hanover Minor Soccer Association (HMSA) has developed the following Policy to Protect Vulnerable Persons to guide our employees/volunteers in their interactions with vulnerable persons. The safety, rights and well-being of the children we serve are at the core of our daily programs. We nurture supportive relationships with children while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries.
- As a soccer club focused on delivering programs to children, we must always, as coaches, team officials and/or staff, be attentive and ensure that the environment is safe and supportive to their needs. As such, HMSA expects all those directly involved with children in soccer, to always be, and present, a positive and ethical representation of themselves and HMSA, and to always consider children's safety.
- Our organization is committed to ensuring all vulnerable persons are protected and safe. A policy is an important part of creating a safe environment for children. The safety, rights and well-being of children participating in our programs is a priority in our daily operations.
- The intent of the Policy is to guide our staff/volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the children involved in sport programs delivered by our organization and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

Definitions

- ***Contractor*** - for the purposes of this Policy means any person working for the HMSA as an independent contractor, such as referees and assistant referees. The Club demonstrates due diligence and actively supports a Code of Conduct.
- ***Vulnerable Person*** - means any person under the age of 18 and any adult with a physical and/or mental impairment which impedes their ability to express or act on their wishes or to ascertain or exercise their rights.

Treating Vulnerable Persons (Children) with Dignity and Maintaining Boundaries

All staff, volunteers, and contractors **must**:

- Treat all vulnerable persons with respect and dignity
- Establish, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in activities or programs delivered by the organization

It is important to monitor your own behaviour towards children and pay close attention to the behaviour of your peers to ensure that behaviour is appropriate and respectful and will be perceived as such by others.

All of your interactions and activities with children:

- Should be known to, and approved by the board, where applicable, and the parents of the vulnerable person
- Tied to your duties, and designed to develop the child's skills in the sport program
- Designed to meet the needs of the vulnerable person, not your own needs

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behaviour or other interactions. If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behaviour or the behaviour of others, you should discuss the situation with the .

All staff/volunteers **must not**:

- Engage directly with children through the phone or social media channels such as: email, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, texting, etc. Should such communications to players be necessary it MUST always be directed to or indirectly (CC) via the parent/guardian. Club and team-based group communication sites such as email and team apps are to be utilized whenever possible
- Participate in any direct meeting with an individual player that is not done in the presence of another adult such as the team manager, assistant coach and/or the player's parent or guardian. Ad-hoc direct feedback before, during or post games/practice scenarios is encouraged but must always be done at the training ground or similar venues within in a visible setting
- Be alone with a child in a non-visible place and/or enclosed space, such as a car, change room or similar area or provide transportation to and from practices, tournaments, festivals and games to children unless accompanied by the child's guardian or with the guardian's consent.
- Leave children alone after a game or practice if their parent/guardian has not arrived to pick them up. In such cases the Coach and or Team Manager must remain with child in a visible place until the player is picked up
- Conduct practices alone with a team. Practices must be in a visible area and it is preferrable that there are parents/guardians and/or other adults who have children on the team present in the immediate vicinity from arrival at the session to departure.
- Use profanity, ridicule, verbally abuse, or engage in any unwarranted physical contact with a child

Examples of unacceptable behavior toward a child:

- embarrassing
- shaming
- blaming
- humiliating
- putting them down

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behaviour or other interactions. If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behaviour or the behaviour of others, you should discuss it with a member of the HMSA Executive.

Coaches and team officials must also be aware and keep all requirements as part of Ontario Soccer up to date. Please reference this links for more information:

General Rules of Behaviour

Staff/volunteers **must not**:

- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child or a reasonable observer feel uncomfortable, or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any communication with a child within or outside of duties with the child, that may make the child uncomfortable or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any behaviour that goes against (or appears to go against) HMSA's mandate, policies, or Code of Conduct to Protect Vulnerable Persons, regardless of whether or not they are serving the HMSA at that moment
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour – it is a staff's, volunteer's, or contractor's duty to report the matter to the Club Executive, Children's Aid Society, or law enforcement, not to investigate.

What Constitutes Inappropriate Behavior

Inappropriate behaviour includes:

1) Inappropriate Communication. Communication with a child or his/her family outside of the context of duties for the organization, regardless of who initiated the exchange. For example:

- Personal phone calls not tied to duties with the child
- Electronic communications (email, text message, instant message, online chats, social networking including "friending", etc.) not tied to duties with the child
- Personal letters not tied to duties with the child
- Excessive communications (online or offline)

2) Inappropriate Contact. Spending unauthorized time with a child outside of designated duties with the organization.

3) Favouritism. Singling out a child or certain children and providing special privileges and attention. (for example, paying a lot of attention to, giving or sending personalized gifts, or allowing privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate.)

4) Taking Personal Photos/Videos. Using a personal cell phone, camera or video to take pictures of a child, or allowing any other person to do so, as well as uploading or copying any pictures you may have taken of a child to the Internet or any personal storage device. Pictures taken as part of your job duties are acceptable, however, the pictures are to remain with the organization and not be used by you in a personal capacity.

Inappropriate behaviour also includes:

5) Telling sexual jokes to a child or making comments to a child that are or is in any way suggestive, explicit or personal.

6) Showing a child material that is sexual in nature, including, signs, cartoons, graphic novels, calendars, literature, photographs, screen savers, or displaying such material in plain view of a child, or making such material available to a child

7) Intimidating or threatening a child

8) Making fun of a child

Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children involved in activities or programs delivered by the sport organization.

Whether or not a particular behavior or action constitutes inappropriate behaviour will be a matter determined by the organization having regard to all of the circumstances, including past behaviour, and allegations or suspicions related to such behaviour.

Reporting Requirements

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must report suspected child sexual abuse, inappropriate behaviour or incidents that they become aware of, whether the behaviour or incidents were personally witnessed or not.

Where to report:

1. All allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour (for example, child sexual abuse) that a staff, volunteer, or contractor witnesses first-hand, must be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare.
2. To ensure the protection of all children in our care, all allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour that a staff, volunteer, or contractor learns of must also be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare. Police and/or child welfare will make the determination as to whether the allegation or suspicion requires further investigation.

3. All allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour (see above examples), that a staff, volunteer, or contractor learns of or witnesses first-hand, must be reported to the Club Executive.

Keep in mind that you may learn of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour through the child or some other third party, or you may witness it first-hand. Examples of the type behaviour you may learn of or witness and that you must report as set out above includes:

a. Potentially Illegal behaviour by a Staff/Volunteer of the organization

b. Potential Illegal behaviour by a third party, such as a Parent, Teacher, Babysitter, Coach

If you are not sure whether the issue you have witnessed or heard about involves potentially illegal behaviour or inappropriate behaviour, discuss the issue with the designated person within your organization who will support you through the process. Remember: You have an independent duty to report all suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour directly to police and/or Children's Aid Society.

Follow up on Reporting

When an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour is reported, police or Children's Aid Society will be notified. The Club will follow up internally as appropriate.

When an allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour is made, the organization will follow up on the matter to gather information about what happened and determine what, if any, formal or other disciplinary action is required.

In the case of inappropriate behaviour, if:

- multiple behaviours were reported
- inappropriate behaviour is recurring, or
- the reported behaviour is of serious concern

the organization may refer the matter to a child welfare agency or police.