

What is a Code of Ethics?

A code of ethics defines what is considered good and right behaviour. It reflects the values held by a group. These values are usually organized into a series of core principles that contain standards of behaviour expected of members while they perform their duties. It can also be used as a benchmark to assess whether certain behaviours are acceptable.

Why a Code of Ethics in Coaching?

Core coaching values have been formalized and expressed as a series of principles in the *NCCP Code of Ethics*. These principles can be thought of as a set of behavioural expectations regarding participation in sport, coaching athletes or teams, and administering sports.

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* can help coaches to evaluate issues arising within sport because it represents a reference for what constitutes both “the good and right thing to do”. For example, the code of ethics helps coaches make balanced decisions about achieving personal or team goals and the means by which these goals are attained.

Values Underpinning the *NCCP Code of Ethics*

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* is a simplified version of the *Code of Ethics of Coaches of Canada* (formerly the Canadian Professional Coaches Association). However, both codes deal with the same fundamental values of safety, responsible coaching, engaging in relations with integrity, respecting athletes, and honouring sport. These values are expressed as 5 core ethical principles.

1. Physical safety and health of athletes
2. Coaching responsibly
3. Integrity in relations with others
4. Respect of athletes
5. Honouring sport

The following chart provides a description of each principle and outlines some implications for coaches.

Ethical Principles and Their Corresponding Behaviours/Expectations

Principle	Standards of Behaviour Expected of Coaches
Physical safety and health of athletes	Ensure that training or competition site is safe at all times
	Be prepared to act quickly and appropriately in case of emergency
	Avoid placing athletes in situations presenting unnecessary risk or that are beyond their level
	Strive to preserve the present and future health and well-being of athletes
Coaching responsibly	Make wise use of the authority of the position and make decisions in the interest of athletes
	Foster self-esteem among athletes
	Avoid deriving personal advantage for a situation or decision
	Know one's limitations in terms of knowledge and skills when making decisions, giving instructions or taking action
	Honour commitments, word given, and agreed objectives
	Maintain confidentiality and privacy of personal information and use it appropriately
Integrity in relations with others	Avoid situations that may affect objectivity or impartiality of coaching duties
	Abstain from all behaviours considered to be harassment or inappropriate relations with an athlete
	Always ensure decisions are taken equitably
Respect	Ensure that everyone is treated equally, regardless of athletic potential, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, language, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability
	Preserve the dignity of each person in interacting with others
	Respect the principles, rules, and policies in force
Honouring sport	Strictly observe and ensure observance of all regulations
	Aim to compete fairly
	Maintain dignity in all circumstances and exercise self-control
	Respect officials and accept their decisions without questioning their integrity