

Prevention of Abuse Policy

Approved May 20, 2023

It is the policy of the BC Summer Swimming Association (“BCSSA”) that there shall be no abuse or neglect of any participant in any of its programs. BCSSA expects all employees, directors, volunteers, coaches, athletes, participants, officials, members, and parents/guardians of athletes and participants to take reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its participants and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care which causes physical injury or emotional damage to a child. A common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children and youth is an abuse of power or authority and/or breach of trust. Abuse is an issue of child protection. Protection refers to provincial, territorial or Aboriginal band appointed child protective services. A child may be in need of protection from harm if abuse or neglect is suspected.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern of destructive behaviour or verbal/ digital attacks by an adult on a child or youth. It can include rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, or exploiting a child or youth.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child or youth. It’s stronger than what would be considered reasonable discipline.

Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child’s or youth's basic needs: food, clothing, adequate shelter, supervision and medical care.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the use of a child or youth for sexual gratification. It includes sexual touching as well as non-touching abuse, such as making a child or youth watch sexual acts.

RULE OF TWO

BCSSA requires that the “Rule of Two” be followed for all BCSSA personnel (officials, members, volunteers, participants) who interact with Athletes, wherever possible. The “Rule of Two” is a directive that says that an Athlete must never be alone one-on-one with an unrelated adult.

BCSSA recognizes that fully implementing the “Rule of Two” may not always be possible in some instances. Consequently, at a minimum, interactions between BCSSA personnel and Athletes must respect the following:

- a) To the maximum extent possible, the training environment should be visible and accessible so that all interactions between BCSSA Personnel and Athletes are observable.
- b) Private and one-on-one situations that are not observable by another adult or Athlete should be avoided to the maximum extent possible.
- c) An Athlete may not be alone under the supervision of any BCSSA Personnel unless prior written permission is obtained from the Athlete’s parent or guardian.
- d) BCSSA Personnel may not invite or host Athletes into their home or vehicle without the written permission from parents or guardians or without parents or guardians having current or prior knowledge of the invitation or offer.

DUTY TO REPORT

The Province of BC has mandatory child protection laws that require the reporting of abuse and neglect of children and youth. As such, it is the policy of BCSSA that any BCSSA personnel (officials, members, volunteers, participants) or BCSSA partner (parent, guardian) who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant is or may be or may have suffered from emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect will immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the local child protection agency and/or the local police detachment.

Under BC law, a person is a child until she/he has reached the age of nineteen.

Those involved with BCSSA in providing aquatic opportunities for participants understand and agree that abuse or neglect, as defined above, may be the subject of a criminal investigation and/or disciplinary procedures. Failure to report an offence and thereby failure to provide safety for participants may render the adult who keeps silent legally liable for conviction under the provincial child protection acts.

RELATIONSHIP TO HARASSMENT POLICY

Some behaviour, which is defined as abuse when directed towards a child or youth, may constitute harassment and when directed towards a peer or when perpetrated between adults, BCSSA’s Harassment Policy covers such behaviour. Together, these two policies address the entire spectrum of abusive and harassing behaviour.

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