



## OTTAWA TFC\*

### POLICY TO PROTECT CHILDREN

#### INTRODUCTION

Ottawa TFC (Ottawa TFC or the Club) is committed to providing a safe environment for its players, coaches, volunteers, employees, members, directors, and officials. The safety, rights and well-being of children participating in Ottawa TFC programs is a priority in the Club's daily operations.

Ottawa TFC will conduct itself according to the policies of its governing associations (Ontario Soccer/Canada Soccer) and may rely on other organizations such as the *Canadian Center for Child Protection* and international standards such as the International Safeguards for Children in Sport for guidance and best practices in this regard.

#### POLICY

Ottawa TFC is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care and recognizes its responsibilities in promoting safe practices in the protection of children. To ensure a safe sporting environment, Ottawa TFC will have in place policies and guidelines to prevent all forms of emotional, physical and sexual misconduct.

Ottawa TFC will review and approve policies and guidelines to protect children every four years, ensuring:

- the promotion and implementation of appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protecting them from abuse while participating in Ottawa TFC activities and programs
- staff and volunteers adopt best practices to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves
- the requirement that Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials, as defined below, adopt and abide by this Policy to Protect Children
- establishment of procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse
- monitoring and evaluation of implementation of this policy

This policy is applicable and directed to all Ottawa TFC players, parents/guardians of registered players, coaches, referees, volunteers, employees, members, directors, suppliers, sponsors, and officials over the age of 18 who interact directly with children while conducting their duties at Ottawa TFC (collectively called "Adult Participants" in this policy).

\*CUSC operating as Ottawa TFC



Ottawa TFC Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials (as defined below) are governed by the rules of conduct for coaches and game officials set out within this policy. It is the policy of Ottawa TFC that all Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials will have an adult coach, adult team staff member, or parent manager present at all times when conducting their duties.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy to Protect Children is to guide all Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials in developing healthy relationships with the children involved in activities or programs delivered by Ottawa TFC and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this policy:

"Adult Participant" includes all Ottawa TFC players, parents/guardians, coaches, referees, volunteers, employees, members, directors, suppliers, sponsors, and officials over the age of 18 who interact directly with children while conducting their duties at Ottawa TFC.

"Age of Protection" (also called "Age of Consent") is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of protection in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the *Criminal Code* increases that age to 18 in the context of certain relationships. A child under the age of 18 is not able to give consent to sexual activity when the other person (who for the purposes of this policy is over the age of 18) is in a position of trust or authority over the child (e.g. coach or teacher).

"Adult" refers to anyone aged 18 and over.

"Child Sexual Abuse" can include a range of behaviours, from obvious contact offences, such as sexual touching, to less obvious non-contact offences such as making sexually explicit comments, voyeurism, exposing a child to pornography or inviting a child to touch themselves.

"Children" refers to anyone under the age of 18.

"Misconduct" refers to behaviours that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries between an adult and a child.

"Technical Coach" is a coach, under the age of 18, who interacts directly with children while conducting their duties at Ottawa TFC.

"Technical Game Official" is a referee, under the age of 18, who interacts directly with children while conducting their duties at Ottawa TFC.



## **BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES**

### ***Treating Children with Dignity and Maintaining Boundaries***

Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials must treat children with respect, dignity and fairness, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in Ottawa TFC activities and programs. In order for children to participate in these activities, the needs of the children will be put before the needs/preferences of the coaches and volunteers (for example, in applying the Rule of Two regarding transportation).

Interactions and activities with children outside or off the playing field for tournaments, teambuilding or fundraising events must be known and approved by the team manager, coach, and parents of the child.

Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials who are in doubt about the appropriateness of their behaviour or the behaviour of others, should raise the matter with the Chair of the Board of Directors of Ottawa TFC.

### ***General Rules of Behaviour***

Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials must not:

- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child and/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 that may make the child uncomfortable and/or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any behaviour that goes against Ottawa TFC's Code of Conduct or policies regardless of whether or not they are serving Ottawa TFC at that time.
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour. All suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour must be reported to the appropriate authorities (see Reporting Requirements).

### ***Inappropriate Behaviour***

All children involved in Ottawa TFC activities and programs are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. As such, inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated by Ottawa TFC. Forms of inappropriate behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following:



Inappropriate Communication - communication by Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials with a child or their family outside the context of Ottawa TFC activities is prohibited, regardless of who initiates the communication. Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials must not engage directly with children through personal letters, phone calls, or social media channels such as email, texting, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or any other channel that may become available on the internet.

Ottawa TFC sanctions the use of team-based group communication sites such as TeamSnap and SportsEngine for communication amongst coaches, team members and parents.

Inappropriate Contact - Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials are not to spend unauthorized time with a child outside Ottawa TFC designated/sanctioned events. It is recognized that there will be times where coaches and volunteers will be in contact with children at other activities outside the realm of Ottawa TFC sanctioned activities, however, as a good practice, Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials should not be alone with children without family members or others present.

Inappropriate Physical Contact - Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials must never physically touch children in inappropriate ways. If required, massage, rubdown, stretching, icing/taping, will only be conducted in open areas with other adults present.

Displays of Affection - Ottawa TFC recognizes that children require positive reinforcement and encouragement of their behaviour. However, judgment must always be used with children in displaying affection which can be misconstrued.

Favouritism - Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials are not to single out children by providing special attention, gifts, or privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate.

Personal Photos/Videos - Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials are not to take pictures or videos of children on their personal cell phone, camera or video camera for personal use. Pictures or videos taken as requested by Ottawa TFC or within the context of Ottawa TFC activities are acceptable (within the Club's policy and commitment to parents/guardians on the use of photographs/images), and may remain the property of Ottawa TFC.

Other forms of inappropriate behaviour include:

- violence towards a child
- discrimination towards a child based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, faith or creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap



- telling sexual jokes to a child, or making comments to a child that are suggestive, explicit or personal
- showing a child material that is sexual in nature, in any form whatsoever
- intimidating or threatening a child
- bullying, mocking, belittling or making fun of a child
- inappropriate physical contact with children, such as pats on the bottom
- inappropriate language [swearing]

Rule of Two - Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials, other than the parent/guardian of a child, must never be alone with a child in a non-visible place, such as in a car or a change-room. There must always be another adult present in these circumstances, such as a parent/guardian, coach or adult volunteer.

Ottawa TFC teams will not conduct practices with only one adult present, or transport children alone to and from games/practices. Children between the ages of 12-17 may be transported by one adult in pairs or more (e.g. coaches may transport two players over the age of 12 to and from games and practices).

All meetings with players on an individual basis will be conducted in the presence of another adult (such as another coach or the player's parent/guardian). Ottawa TFC believes in constructive feedback for all players and recognize that this feedback, during and post-game/practice is encouraged but will always be done on the playing/training ground or in a similar venue within a visible setting.

Limited exceptions - use of judgment always comes into play and Ottawa TFC recognizes that there will be Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials who are related by family to children in its programs and exceptions to the policies regarding Communication and Inappropriate Contact would apply in these instances.

Inappropriate behaviour will be a matter determined by Ottawa TFC having regard to all circumstances, including past behaviour, allegations or suspicions regarding such behaviour.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Potentially Illegal Behaviour - allegations or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour (such as child sexual abuse) witnessed first-hand or learned of, must be promptly reported to law enforcement (Ottawa Police) and/or child welfare (Children's Aid Society of Ottawa). In addition, these allegations or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Directors of Ottawa TFC.

Potentially illegal behaviour or inappropriate behaviour may come to the attention of Adult Participants through a child or other third party, or be witnessed first-hand. Adult Participants who are unsure of the potential illegality of the behaviour, should discuss the issue with the



Chair of the Board of Directors of Ottawa TFC, who will support witnesses through the process of reporting.

***Note: All adults have an independent responsibility and duty to report all suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour directly to appropriate law enforcement and/or child welfare agencies.***

Other Inappropriate Behaviour - inappropriate behaviour, such as set out above, witnessed or learned of should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Directors of Ottawa TFC. Ottawa TFC will follow up on all reports received and gather information to determine what, if any, formal or other disciplinary action is required.

## **CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK FOR EMPLOYEES, COACHES, REFERREES, AND VOLUNTEERS**

Police Records Checks - Canadian Police Information Clearance (CPIC) checks and Vulnerable Sector Scans (aka Police Record checks) must be conducted on all Ottawa TFC employees, coaches U9-U18\*, team officials (as defined from time to time). Police records checks are to be renewed every three years.

Vulnerable Sector Checks - will be conducted on all Ottawa TFC employees, coaches U9-U18\*, team officials (as defined from time to time). Criminal Records Checks are to be conducted on all team officials. All checks are to be kept on file permanently.

If a CPIC check or Vulnerable Sector Scan is returned "NOT CLEAR" the prospective employee, coach, team personnel, or volunteer will be asked to:

- a) either submit to a Criminal Record Check with fingerprinting verification and to submit to disclosure and verification of the crimes committed that he/she has been convicted of; or
- b) withdraw their application for employment, or to a coach or volunteer at Ottawa TFC.

***Note: Without verification of convictions and without a clear vulnerable sector scan, individuals cannot be placed in a position of trust with children.***

***\*Note that U4-U8 players are always accompanied to practice and games by a parent/guardian thereby removing the requirement for coaches in this age group to have a Police Records Check.***

## **TRAINING AND AWARENESS**



All Adult Participants, Technical Coaches and Technical Game Officials who work directly with children at Ottawa TFC, will receive appropriate training to familiarize themselves with child

protection issues and responsibilities. All employees and coaches at Ottawa TFC will carry out refresher training in this area every three years. Records of completion of this training will be tracked and retained on file.

Training will be undertaken by individuals identified by Ottawa TFC as having responsibility for dealing with complaints and disciplinary procedures relating to child abuse and inappropriate behaviour towards children.

The Chair of the Board of Directors/Chair of the Discipline Committee has completed "Commit to Kids" online training.

### **OTTAWA TFC PRIMARY LIAISON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

The Chair of the Board of Directors/Chair of the Discipline Committee will be the primary liaison for child protection at Ottawa TFC, with the General Manager acting as secondary liaison. Contact information is available on the Ottawa TFC website ([www.ottawatfc.com](http://www.ottawatfc.com)). All concerns or reports should be directed to the primary liaison, by email at [chair@ottawatfc.com](mailto:chair@ottawatfc.com).

### **VIOLATIONS UNDER THIS POLICY**

Violations under this Policy can have serious consequences for Ottawa TFC. Individuals not respecting and abiding by this Policy could face disciplinary action by Ottawa TFC. Disciplinary action could include dismissal of an employee, lifetime banishment from play or participation in any Ottawa TFC activity, as well as legal action.

### **COMPLAINT PROCESS**

The primary or secondary liaison will acknowledge receipt of all concerns and reports received by email within a 24-hour period. An internal investigation will be conducted in all instances and findings/action taken will be documented and, where appropriate, communicated with the complainant. Some complaints may be dealt with under Ottawa TFC's Discipline Policy.