



OISRA Abuse/Molestation Guidelines

Purpose of Abuse/Molestation Guidelines

The Abuse/Molestation Guidelines are not intended to serve as legal advice or to supplant legal definitions of abuse and harassment. Instead these guidelines are designed to raise awareness of areas of concern and identify "Good Practices."

Definition of a Child

For the purpose of these guidelines, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years or a student who is registered with OISRA.

Statement

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Children must be protected from harm, abuse, and degrading treatments.

Overview: These guidelines are intended to raise awareness and

- Promote Good Practices.
- Provide examples of objectionable behavior and define areas of concern.

Positions of Trust

Good Practice

- Be aware that the closeness of the coach/athlete relationship may encourage feelings that are not directly related to the sport.
- Set out and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive advice rather than criticism.

Unacceptable Behavior

- NEVER enter into a sexual relationship with a child under your care/supervision.
- NEVER use your influence over a child for your own interests.

Physical Contact

Good Practice: Physical contact is recommended only in support of the following purposes:

- To develop or demonstrate sports skills.
- To diagnose or treat an injury.
- To give appropriate sport massage.

These actions should only be carried out by appropriately qualified coaches.

Physical contact may be appropriate in other circumstances, as in congratulating a child or consoling a child who is upset. However, always ensure that physical contact is carried out in the open, or in the presence of another supervising adult.

Remember that interpretations of touching will be affected by factors such as cultural differences, religious implications, relative age, sexual orientation. *If a child is uncomfortable with physical contact, stop.*

General Supervision

Good Practice

A supervising adult should never be alone with a child in potentially compromising situations, i.e. in a hotel room, bathroom, changing room, etc.

Mixed gender teams should be accompanied by male and female responsible adults.

Unacceptable Behavior

- Do not spend time alone with a child behind closed doors.
- Do not take a child alone on a trip unless in an emergency and with written parental permission.
- Do not enter the room of a child without another responsible adult present.
- Never share a room with a child.
- Discourage sexually provocative jokes or inappropriate touching or conversation.
- Never use any form of sexually charged verbal intimacy or innuendoes.

If you are unsure:

- Always err on the side of protecting the child.
- If you are unsure of what is appropriate or necessary in a particular circumstance, you should consult school personnel or medical professionals.

Defining Abuse: Physical, Emotional, Neglect, Sexual, Bullying

Physical Abuse

- Physical injury of all types when such injury is intentional or results from neglect.
- Giving a child alcohol or inappropriate medications or drugs.
- In a sports situation, this may also occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Emotional Abuse

- May involve telling a child that he/she is useless, devaluing them.
- Constant criticism and negative feedback.
- Shouting threats or taunts.
- Unrealistic expectation of performance at levels above a child's capability.

Neglect

- Failure to provide adequate food or shelter.
- Prolonged unnecessary exposure to cold or heat.
- Unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual Abuse

- In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with children may create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.
- The power of the coach over the athlete could, if misused, lead to abusive situations developing.

Bullying

- May be physical, verbal or emotional.
- Is usually repeated over a period of time.
- May involve coaches, other athletes, or parents.
- Signs may include a drop in performance, behavioral changes, mood swings, reluctance to train/compete, frequent loss of possessions, physical injuries (bruising, scratches, etc), poor sleep, loss of appetite/weight.

Be Vigilant: Watch for signs of abuse (*physical, emotional, neglect, sexual, bullying*)

- Note changes in behavior.
- Notice drop in performance.
- Notice physical symptoms and signs.

Action

- If you observe signs of abuse (*physical, emotional, neglect, sexual, bullying*), contact school personnel and follow their protocol.

Remember

- The effects of abuse may have very long-lasting consequences for the child.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Children must be protected from harm, discrimination and degrading treatments.

Acknowledgments

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