



## Athlete Interaction Policy

### 1. PREAMBLE

As the provincial sport organization governing cheerleading throughout Nova Scotia, Cheer Nova Scotia (CNS) recognizes that there are risks inherent in all facets of our governance, program delivery and business operations.

CNS is committed to managing risks to the organization and to its members, staff and volunteers. We take the safety, well-being and satisfaction of our members and participants seriously.

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for how Persons in Authority shall maintain a safe sport environment for all athletes. Cheerleading enriches the lives of everyone involved by ensuring that the training and competitive environment is one where athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers know they are safe, and are treated with respect and dignity.

All member programs must abide by this policy in order to remain a member in good standing with CNS. This policy has two pieces that must be adhered to: The Rule of Two and Proper Spotting.

### 3. RULE OF TWO

#### 3.1 Purpose

Coaches, staff, parents, team personnel and other responsible adults play an important role in ensuring athletes can participate in a safe and positive environment. This rule serves to protect minor athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that more than one adult is present. Vulnerable situations can include:

- Closed doors meetings
- Travel situations
- Training and competitive environments

### 3.2 Guidelines

The Rule of Two states that there will always be two screened and/or certified coaches with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation. This means that any one-on-one interaction between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and view of the second coach, with the exception of medical emergencies. In the event where certified coaches are not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited. In all instances, one coach/volunteer must reflect the gender(s) of the athletes participating or be of an appropriate identity in relation to the athlete(s). Ideally, a second athlete would also be part of this situation to ensure maximum protection for all.

Please refer to Appendix A at the bottom of this document for the Rule of Two infographic. Cheer Nova Scotia recommend that member gyms place a copy of the Rule of Two in their gym to be visible for all members.

## 4. PROPER SPOTTING

### 4.1 Purpose

Physical contact with children is a necessary and important component of working with and caring for children. However, it is important that the contact is appropriate. As a standard of measure, physical contact should be directly related to the individual's job description. Spotting, supporting, and shaping the athlete is an essential part of coaching cheerleading in that it helps the athlete to understand shapes, movement patterns, and complex skills, but also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance. It is the position of CNS that such physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach, or demonstrate a skill to an athlete, as well as safety actions such as spotting or catching an athlete, are acceptable and appropriate forms of touch in the sport of cheerleading.

### 4.2 Guidelines

In most cases, spotting for guidance should only be used when needed to orientate or position the athlete so that they can replicate the movements on their own. Likewise, spotting for safety should only be used when needed, with the goal of using safe progression as often as you can. When possible and safe, athletes should spot other athletes when stunting instead of involvement from the coach. The following guidelines should be used when physical spotting is necessary to ensure athlete safety.

- The ideal hand placement for spotting athletes in tumbling skills is on their hips and trunk.
- Avoid physical contact of sensitive areas of the body, i.e. genital areas, buttocks and breasts.

- If accidental, unintended touch occurs as a result of error in the performance of the athlete or the coach's spotting, apologize immediately. If this occurs more than two times, stop and take stock of the problem. Ask yourself what changes you can make to ensure that accidental, unintended touch is less likely to happen.
- Avoid placing yourself in awkward or compromising positions when spotting or assisting the athlete with stretching.

## 5. POLICY INFORMATION

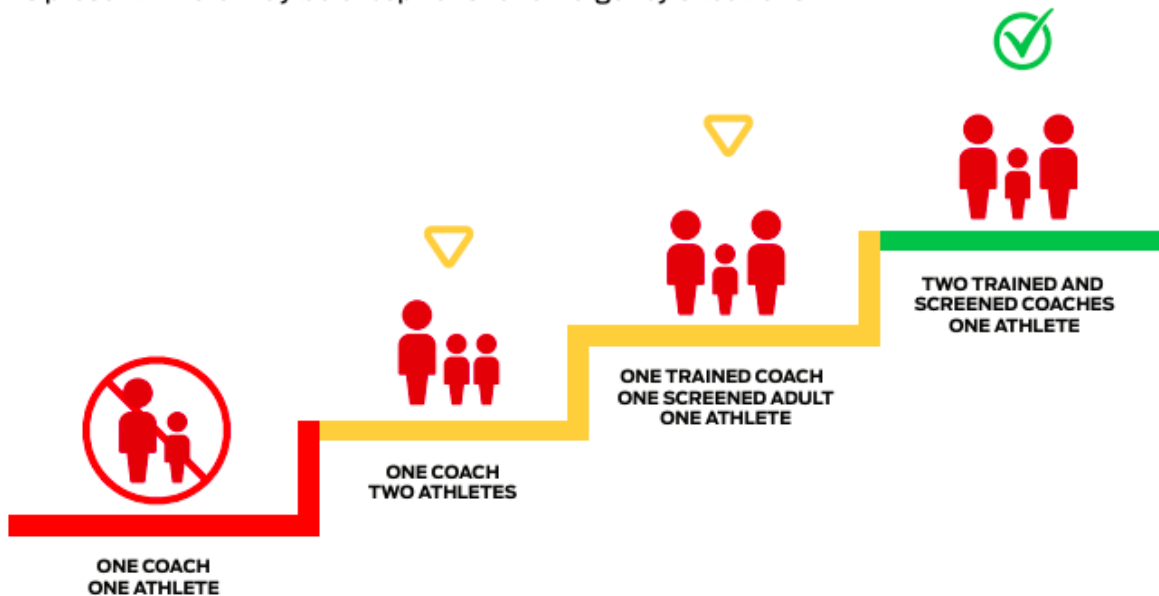
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# RULE OF TWO

The goal of the **Rule of Two** is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable and justifiable. Its purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present. There may be exceptions for emergency situations.



## GOOD RULE OF TWO IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES

- The coach is never alone and out of sight with a participant without another screened coach or screened adult (parent or volunteer) present.
- Allow training environment to be open to observation.
- Ensure a participant rides in a coach's vehicle with another adult present.
- Consider the gender of the participant(s) when selecting the screened coaches and volunteers who are present.
- Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents.