



Vancouver Athletic Football Club

VAFC Child Protection Code of Conduct

Vancouver Athletic Football Club (VAFC) has modelled our Child Protection Code of Conduct (the Code) on the work of other established sports organisations* to guide our employees/volunteers in their interactions with children.

The safety, rights and well-being of children we serve are at the core of our club. Sport plays a vital role in shaping the youth of tomorrow. VAFC relies on our employees/volunteers to serve as role models and put our young athletes on a path to success. We nurture supportive relationships with children while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries.

The dynamic between VAFC employees/volunteers and athletes gives rise to a power imbalance and a culture of unquestioned trust that can result in abuse. As such, it is imperative that all persons in positions of authority be held to a high standard of conduct. The intent of the Code of Conduct is to guide our employees/volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the children involved with the club and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

The Code provides behaviour guideposts that identify inappropriate or concerning behaviour at an early stage to help better protect athletes and employees/volunteers.

Treating Children with Dignity and Maintaining Boundaries

All employee/volunteers must:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity
- Establish, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in activities or programs delivered by VAFC

It is important to monitor your own behaviour towards children and pay close attention to the behaviour of your peers and to ensure that behaviour is appropriate and respectful and will be perceived as such by others.

All of your interactions and activities with children:

- should be known to, and approved by the VAFC Board, where applicable, and the parents of the child
- tied to your duties,
- designed to develop the child's skills in the sport program, and



- follow the Rule of Two (Any one-on-one interaction between an employee/volunteer and an athlete must take place within earshot and view of another employee/volunteer. If possible, one of the employees/volunteers should be the same gender as the athlete. If an employee/volunteer is not available, another screened volunteer, parent or adult can be recruited. An exception is made for medical emergencies.

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behaviour or other interactions.

If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behaviour or the behaviour of others, you should discuss it with i) Director of Policy and Safety and ii) Director of Human Resources.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour toward a child include:

- embarrassing
- shaming
- blaming
- humiliating
- putting them down

General Rules of Behaviour

Employee/volunteers of VAFC must not:

- Engage in any sort of physical contact with a child that may make the child 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 within or outside of duties with the child, that may make the child uncomfortable or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in any behaviour that goes against (or appears to go against) VAFC's mandate, policies, or Code of Conduct to Protect Children, regardless of whether or not they are serving VAFC at that moment.
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour. It is an employee's/volunteer's duty to report the matter to the designated person, Child Welfare Agency, or law enforcement, NOT to investigate.

What Constitutes Inappropriate Behaviour

In assessing whether behaviour is inappropriate, one should consider whether the behaviour would raise concerns in the mind of a reasonable observer. The behaviour may also be assessed by determining whose needs are being met (the athlete or the employee/volunteer) and what objective appears to be guiding the interaction.

Inappropriate behaviour include:



1. **Inappropriate Communication.** Communication with a child or his/her family outside of the context of duties for VAFC, regardless of who initiated the exchange. For example:
 - Personal phone calls not tied to duties with the child
 - Electronic communications (email, text message, instant message, online chats, social networking including “friending”, etc.) not tied to duties with the child
 - Personal letters not tied to duties with the child
 - Excessive communications (online or offline)
2. **Inappropriate Contact.** Spending unauthorized time with a child outside of designated duties with VAFC.
3. **Favouritism.** Singling out a child or certain children and providing special privileges and attention. For example, paying a lot of attention to, giving or sending personalized gifts, or allowing privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate.
4. **Taking Personal Photos/Videos.** Using a personal cell phone, camera or video to take pictures of a child, or allowing any other person to do so, as well as uploading or copying any pictures you may have taken of a child to the Internet or any personal storage device. Pictures taken as part of your job duties are acceptable, however, the pictures are to remain with VAFC and not be used by you in a personal capacity.
5. **Inappropriate behaviour also includes:**
 - Telling sexual jokes to a child or making comments to a child that are or is in any way suggestive, explicit or personal.
 - Showing a child material that is sexual in nature, including, signs, cartoons, graphic novels, calendars, literature, photographs, screensavers, or displaying such material in plain view of a child, or making such material available to a child
 - Intimidating or threatening a child
 - Making fun of a child

Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children involved in activities or programs delivered by VAFC.

Whether or not a particular behaviour or action constitutes inappropriate behaviour will be a matter determined by VAFC having regard to all of the circumstances, including past behaviour, and allegations or suspicions related to such behaviour.

Reporting Requirements

All employee and volunteers must report suspected child sexual abuse, inappropriate behaviour or incidents that they become aware of, whether the behaviour or incidents were personally witnessed or not.

Where to report:

1. All allegations or suspicions of **potentially illegal behaviour** (for example, child sexual abuse) that a employee/volunteer witnesses first-hand, must be promptly reported to:
 - a. Director of Policy and Safety,



- b. police and/or
 - c. child welfare.
2. To ensure the protection of all children in our care, all allegations or suspicions of **potentially illegal behaviour** that an employee/volunteer learns of must also be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare, who will make the determination as to whether the allegation or suspicion requires further investigation.
3. All allegations or suspicions of **inappropriate behaviour** (see above examples), that a employee/volunteer learns of or witnesses first-hand, must be reported to the VAFC Director of Policy and Safety and the Vice President.

Keep in mind that you may learn of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour through the child or some other third party, or you may witness it first-hand. Examples of the type of behaviour you may learn of or witness and that you must report as set out above include:

- Potentially Illegal behaviour by an employee/volunteer of VAFC
- Potential Illegal behaviour by a third party, such as a Parent, Teacher or Babysitter

If you are not sure whether the issue you have witnessed or heard about involves potentially illegal behaviour or inappropriate behaviour, discuss the issue with the designated person within VAFC who will support you through the process. Remember: You have an independent duty to report all suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour directly to police and/or child welfare.

Follow-up Reporting

When an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behaviour is reported, police and/or a child welfare agency will be notified. VAFC will follow up internally as appropriate.

When an allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour is made, VAFC will follow up on the matter to gather information about what happened and determine what, if any, formal or other disciplinary action is required.

In the case of inappropriate behaviour, if:

- multiple behaviours were reported
- inappropriate behaviour is recurring, or
- the reported behaviour is of serious concern

VAFC may refer the matter to the child welfare agency or police.

VAFC
Vancouver Athletic FC

References

BC Soccer Associations



Sep 15, 2023 V2.0

[BC Soccer Rule of Two Policy](#)

[Safe Sport Program Assessment Report & Plan](#)

[Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#)

[Commit to Kids](#)

[Ontario Volleyball](#)

Reviewed:

/ds /sw id cf