



Safe Sport

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE SPORT

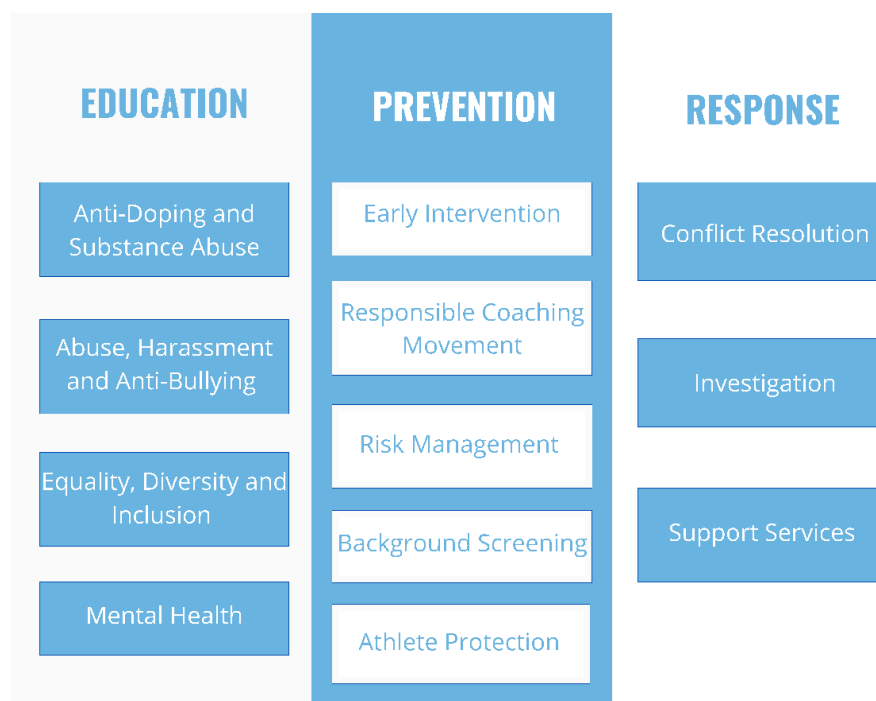
Cheer Nova Scotia is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers' physical, emotional and social development by promoting an environment free from abuse and misconduct. Everyone has the right to participate in a safe and inclusive environment that is free from abuse, harassment or discrimination.

Cheer Nova Scotia believes the welfare of everyone involved in the sport is a foremost consideration and in particular, the protection of children/athletes in the sport is the responsibility of each individual, member and special interest group in the cheerleading community.

SAFE SPORT OPERATIONAL STATEMENT

The Cheer Nova Scotia Safe Sport Program will focus on three key areas: **Education, Prevention and Response**, all of which will be supported by strong governance, policies and procedures. The goal is to ensure that all members of Cheer Nova Scotia, have the resources to provide and access a fun, healthy, inclusive and safe environment.

SAFE SPORT FRAMEWORK



EDUCATION

Anti-Doping and Substance Abuse

Cheer Nova Scotia strongly opposes the use, possession, and the supply of banned substances and practices in sports by athletes, coaches, team support personnel, administrators and officials. Cheer Nova Scotia adopts and adheres to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program (CADP) run by the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport (CCES), as stated in our Anti-Doping Policy. The CADP is a set of rules with respect to the use of prohibited substances and methods in sport that serves to protect the integrity of the sport and the rights to clean athletes.

Resources

Anti-Doping Policy - Read more about our Anti-Doping Policy [here](#).

[Canadian Anti-Doping Program \(CADP\)](#) – Find more information here about the CADP.

[Cannabis in Sport](#) – Despite the legalization of cannabis in Canada, it continues to be a prohibited substance within CNS.

[World Anti-Doping Agency](#) - WADA works towards a vision of a world where all athletes compete in a doping-free sporting environment.

Abuse, Harassment and Anti-Bullying

Cheer Nova Scotia is committed to providing fun, healthy, inclusive and safe environments, free of abuse, harassment and bullying, none of which will be tolerated.

Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of physical acts or gestures. Bullying in any manner is prohibited in connection with all Cheer Nova Scotia sanctioned activities or events.

For more information on how Cheer Nova Scotia prevents abuse, harassment, and bullying, view our Harassment Policy [here](#).

Below are a number of resources to help clubs and organizations foster abuse, harassment and bully-free environments.

Resources

[PREVnet](#) – A national network of leading researchers and organizations, working together to stop bullying in Canada.

[Harassment in Sport](#) – Canadian Center for Ethics in Sports

[Kids in the Know](#) – Canadian Center for Child Protection

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Cheer Nova Scotia is an inclusive organization and welcome full participation of all individuals in our programs and activities, irrespective of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability. Cheer Nova Scotia will encourage participation in the sport of cheerleading and will ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion are key considerations when developing, updating or delivering Cheer Nova Scotia policies and programs.

For more information on how Cheer Nova Scotia promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, view our Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy [here](#).

Resources

[Canadian Center for Gender + Sexual Diversity Sport Inclusion Program](#) - aims to challenge homophobia and transphobia in athletics.

[The Inclusion Club](#) – Collection of videos for education and training to ensure inclusion in sports.

[Physical Literacy Inclusion](#) – Education on how to develop programs for individuals with disabilities.

[True Sport](#) - True Sport is dedicated to the notion that good sport can make a great difference.

Mental Health

Cheer Nova Scotia believes the psychological health and safety of athletes is vital to strong performances on and off the cheerleading mat. There are often stigmas around seeking help for mental health issues that can prevent some people from getting the help they need. In becoming more aware of the types of mental illnesses and common signs and symptoms, one can help identify problems and help connect people to appropriate supports.

The Canadian Center for Mental Health and Sport (CCMHS) is a registered charity supporting the mental health and performance of competitive and high-performance athletes and coaches. The CCMHS is the first Center in Canada to offer collaborative sport-focused mental health care services designed to help athletes and coaches achieve their performance goals while preserving their mental health and well-being. To learn more about the CCMHS and the resources they provide, click the link below:

[Canadian Center for Mental Health and Sport](#)

PREVENTION

Early Intervention

Early intervention is the process of identifying and responding early to signs of high risk and/or inappropriate behaviour. You may observe these signs through the direct behaviour of an individual or through the change in personality and/or behaviour of the victim. One of the goals of early intervention is to prevent the escalation of serious issues and behaviours that could lead to a person being harmed.

See Something? Say Something.

Recognizing and responding to high risk behaviours or signs of abuse is part of our roles as leaders. If you witness inappropriate behaviour or behaviour that makes you uncomfortable, it is your responsibility to say something, whether it is directly to the individual, a colleague or superior.

Responsible Coaching Movement

The [Responsible Coaching Movement](#) (RCM) is a multi-phase system-wide movement, coordinated by the Coaching Association of Canada and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport that has the potential to affect all sport organizations and coaches. The RCM is a call to action for organizations to implement realistic change based on their individual state of readiness. The RCM is the result of extensive ongoing consultation with the Canadian Sport Community. These consultations will guide the different phases of the RCM that will address the role coaches play with issues relating to the health and safety of athletes, both on and off the cheer mat.

Risk Management

Risk Management is the process of identifying and evaluating the chance of loss or harm, then taking steps to combat the potential risk. A number of organizations have put together resources to assist the sport community in developing their own Risk Management protocols.

The Canadian Centre for Ethics (CCES) in Sport has developed [The Risk Management Project](#) as an initiative designed to help enhance the effectiveness of decision-making among sport leaders using a consistent, sport-specific, and integrated risk management process.

In addition to the Risk Management Project, the CCES has also compiled the [Canadian Sport Risk Registry](#) which contains a number of common risks and solutions that sports leaders are faced with.

Background Screening

As of October 2020, Cheer Nova Scotia has created a standardized screening protocol for coaches, officials and volunteers. To see the current screening requirements for coaches within Cheer Nova Scotia, click [here](#).

To learn more about best screening practices, check out the following resources:

[Volunteer Canada](#)

[Scouts Canada Volunteer Screening Policy](#)

Athlete Protection

Cheer Nova Scotia has developed the Athlete Interaction Policy to protect athletes while they are participating in training and competitive environments. We are committed to making cheerleading in Nova Scotia enjoyable for all participants by ensuring that all sport environments are ones where individuals feel safe and respected.

The Rule of Two serves to protect athletes in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that more than one adult is present. It is recommended that this second adult is another screened/certified coach, however when not available, the second adult can be a parent or guardian of the child.

For more information on the Rule of Two and the best practices, click [here](#).

Cheer Nova Scotia also recognizes that physical conduct with children is a necessary and important component when working with children in a sport setting. However, the physical contact must be appropriate. 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.

For more information on the Proper Spotting Guidelines and access to Cheer Nova Scotia's Athlete Interaction Policy, click [here](#).

RESPONSE

Conflict Resolution

Cheer Nova Scotia believes that everyone in the sport has the right to enjoy the sport at whatever level they participate.

Conflict is inevitable and occurs naturally when people interact. Conflict can be positive. When two people disagree, it means they care enough to take a stand. Individuals and teams need conflict to grow and to generate new ideas. Conflict can be productive or non-productive, depending on how the issues are handled. Resolving a conflict at an early stage may prevent a situation from getting worse and may reduce the risk of it turning into a formal complaint.

Tips for resolving conflict:

Here are a few tips on how to resolve conflict situations. For more specialized information, check out the Resources below.

- Pause, breathe deeply and get grounded to make sure you are calm when you have the discussion.
- Choose the right time and place for conflict resolution.
- Zoom out and look at the situation from a neutral place to give you perspective.
- Focus on the problem, not on the person with whom you are having the conflict.
- Really listen. Active listening means more than just waiting for your turn to speak.
- Reflect empathy by acknowledging the person's feelings even if you do not agree with their perspective.
- Be aware that your non-verbal communication – your tone of voice, hand gestures, body language and facial expressions – form the majority of your communication.

- Avoid the four behaviours that fuel a conflict situation: criticism, contempt, stonewalling and defensiveness.
- Take responsibility for your behaviour and for your part in the conflict.
- Use assertive communication. Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements to reduce defensiveness.
- Let everyone offer possible solutions. Explore the possibilities together. Once decided, have everyone commit to the resolution.
- Involve a third party if you have not been able to come to an agreement yourselves.

Resources

Coaches Canada – [5 Approaches to Conflict Management](#)

SDRCC – [Main Causes of Disputes and Prevention Strategies: A Must for Sport Administrators](#)

Associated for Applied Sports Psychology - [Coaching Through Conflict: Effective Communication Strategies](#)

Investigation

Cheer Nova Scotia believes that everyone in the sport has the right to participate fully and to enjoy safe environment that is free of abuse, harassment or discrimination.

An investigation is a neutral fact-finding to determine whether the unacceptable conduct actually occurred. This document provides some guiding principles on what to do if you are faced with a complaint. Investigations that are not properly conducted create risk for your organization, so you are strongly encouraged to consult with others with more knowledge and experience. Depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish to consult with:

- Your Coaches
- Your Gym Owners/Board of Directors
- Cheer Nova Scotia Executive
- A Lawyer or Human Resources professional
- The resources listed below

Guiding Principles

- Take action if there is an allegation of unacceptable conduct as soon as you become aware of it, even if you did not personally observe it and/or nobody has made an official complaint.
- If you think a law may have been broken or you are not sure, notify the police.
- Don't pre-judge or assume the respondent has committed the act but do take immediate steps to stop further contact between the complainant and respondent while you review the situation.
- Let the complainant and the respondent know that you have received the complaint and that you are looking into it. Ask them to keep the situation confidential.
- Speak to the complainant and learn more details. Take notes. Learn if there are witnesses or other evidence.

- Review your organizations' Complaints, Dispute Resolution or Harassment Policies or your Club Policies if applicable.
- Consult with others to decide whether you will be proceeding with an investigation, with informal conflict resolution or some other option.
- If an investigation is needed, appoint an unbiased, qualified investigator, ideally one who understands the sports environment.

Resources

Commit 2 Kids – [Steps for Reporting Inappropriate Conduct](#)

Sport Law – [Workplace Harassment Investigation](#)

Support Services

Cheer Nova Scotia has compiled the following resources available to all Canadians in need of support:

[Kids Help Phone](#) – 1-800-688-6868

A bilingual and anonymous phone counselling, web counselling and referral service for children and youth.

[Red Cross Community Services](#)

Red Cross is helping build safe communities throughout Canada. They provide a number of services in communities including health services, water safety, first aid education, and prevention of violence, bullying and abuse.

[Victim Services Government of Canada](#)

The Canadian government provides a number of services to victims of crime, including emotional support, counselling, advocacy and safety planning.

The Cheer Nova Scotia Safe Sport Program is supported by the following policies. Click the links below to see the full policy document.

[Anti-Doping Policy](#)

[Harassment Policy](#)

[Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy](#)

[Screening Policy](#)

[Athlete Interaction Policy](#)

[Dispute and Resolution Policy](#)