



# Supporting the Participants Physical and Emotional Safety

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*This official document is DFC Academy's Guidelines for Supporting the Participant's Physical and Emotional Safety. This document is aligned with Canada and Ontario Soccer.*



***This document is a component of Canada Soccer Guide to Safety. It is intended as an important guide for DFC Academy use is not meant provide important information to all youth players, coaches, staff and parents.***

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

### Soccer as a Safe Place and the Coach as a Trusted Adult

Research shows that a caring adult is the most important factor to ensuring a quality experience for children.

For some young players, the soccer field may be one of the few safe places and, after the parent or guardian, a coach is one of the most influential people in a child's life. As such, coaches are in a unique position to be role models and mentors for young participants. All coaches and individuals who work with children have a "duty of care" to the children with whom they work. A duty of care is a legal obligation which is imposed on an individual requiring adherence to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others. Coaches are required by law to always act in the best interest of the individuals they coach and not act or fail to act in a way that results in harm. This obligation also includes a responsibility to role model appropriate boundaries and professional contact at all times.

Although child serving organizations have an obligation to ensure the safety of the children in their care, including appropriate screening and monitoring of all coaches, the vast majority of coaches are positive influences on and trusted adults in the lives of the young players they coach. As coaches work with children on a regular basis and many are able to establish a positive and healthy adult-child relationship with their players, a coach may be the person a child chooses to talk to about something happening in their life. In fact, studies have shown that children are more likely to disclose maltreatment to their coach than even their teacher.

In addition, a coach may be in position to be able to detect signs of maltreatment of children in their care.

Coaches must be able to recognize signs of maltreatment and know what to do when you feel that maltreatment has taken place. It is important that coaches know how to respond to a child in danger, and how to share information appropriately with those who can help. It is important to remember that even though a child could be displaying some or all of the signs of maltreatment, this doesn't necessarily mean that maltreatment is occurring. As a coach, if you see signs in a child that are worrying, it is not your responsibility to decide if maltreatment is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it. Under Canadian child welfare laws, if you know or suspect child maltreatment, you have a legal obligation to report it. This is known as the "duty to report". Every person in Canada has the duty to report known or suspected child maltreatment by law.



## Safeguards for Children in Sport

### DFC Academy's Safeguards aim to:

- Help create a safe sporting environment for children wherever they participate and at whatever level;
- Provide a benchmark to assist sports providers and funders to make informed decisions;
- Promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children;
- Provide clarity on safeguarding children to all involved in sport; and,

### Are based on the following principles:

- All children have the right to participate, enjoy and develop through sport, in a safe and inclusive environment, free from all forms of maltreatment; bullying, abuse, harassment, violence, discrimination, neglect and exploitation.
- Children have the right to have their voices heard and listened to. They need to know who they can turn to when they have a concern about their participation in sport
- Everyone, organizations and individuals, service providers and funders, has a responsibility to support the care and protection of young people
- Organizations providing sports activities to children and young people have a legal and moral duty of care for them
- There are certain factors that leave some children more vulnerable to abuse, and steps need to be taken to address this
- Children have a right to be involved in shaping safeguarding policy and practice
- Organizations should always act in the best interests of the child
- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and not be discriminated against based on gender, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, beliefs, religious or political affiliation
- The processes and activities for the creation, development and implementation of safeguarding measures should be inclusive

### Safeguard 1: Developing your policy

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 1- Criteria for Success.*

#### Criteria for Success:

- DFC's safeguarding policy is clearly written and easy to understand
- The policy clearly describes our understanding and definitions of all forms of maltreatment
- The policy covers your DFC's commitment to safeguard children in all aspects of work
- The policy is clear that all children have equal rights to protection
- This policy is officially endorsed by staff at the highest level of DFC Academy
- DFC Staff at the highest level of the organization have the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the policy
- All DFC staff, volunteers, carers or other representatives have signed up to the policy
- Your organization has consulted with children, parents/carers and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your policy



## **Safeguard 2: Developing a system to respond to safeguarding concerns**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 2- Criteria for Success.*

### **Criteria for Success:**

- There are clear procedures in place that provide step– by–step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety, both within and external to DFC Academy
- DFC Academy has arrangements in place to provide support to children, volunteers and staff during and following an incident, allegation or complaint
- There is an identified member of staff in your organization responsible for leading on safeguarding
- DFC Academy provides children and young people with information about their rights and about who they can turn to if they are worried, in a process which empowers them.
- DFC Academy has made information available to children and their parents/caregivers, about what is likely to happen following a disclosure, in a format and language that can be easily understood by everyone
- DFC Academy has a process for dealing with complaints in a fair and transparent way, that includes an appeals process All incidents, allegations and complaints are recorded, monitored and stored securely
- DFC Academy has consulted with children, parents/caregivers and staff as part of the initial development and/or ongoing review of your response system

## **Safeguard 3: Advice and support**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 3- Criteria for Success.*

### **Criteria for Success:**

- DFC's ensures that staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have engagement with specialist advice, support and information
- Children are provided with advice and support on keeping themselves and one another safe
- DFC acknowledges that children with additional vulnerabilities (for example, a disability) may face extra barriers to getting help
- Parents/carers in the wider community are provided with information, advice and support on safeguarding children

## **Safeguard 4: Minimizing risk to Children**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 4- Criteria for Success.*

### **Criteria for Success:**

- Risk assessments are available and conducted for activities, transport, accommodation and spaces
- Steps are taken to minimize any risks identified through a risk assessment If the risks are assessed to be too significant then the activity does not go ahead



- Training is available to help staff and volunteers recognize the additional risks some children are exposed to, because of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture

### **Safeguard 5: Guidelines on behaviour**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 5- Criteria for Success.*

#### **Criteria for Success:**

- DFC has written guidelines for behaviour (codes of conduct) which contain statements about treating people with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness
- DFC has guidance and expectations around activities that include time spent away from home, including placing children in the care of others and overnight stays
- Where organizations are involved in placing children in the care of others, frequent meetings are held with the child to discuss their experiences
- DFC has guidance around working with children who have a disability Your organization has guidance around the appropriate use of information technology and social media to make sure that children are not put in danger and made vulnerable to exploitation
- DFC has guidance on positive ways of managing the behaviour of children that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment, and are age and gender appropriate
- DFC has guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards others, particularly other children (for example, a learning agreement)
- DFC has guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of adults towards children
- There are clear consequences for not following the guidelines on behaviour that are linked to DFC organizational disciplinary procedures.
- The highest level of the organization (DFC Directors and Advisory Committee) has the responsibility to ensure that the guidelines are followed
- DFC has consulted children, parents/ carers and staff as part of the initial development and/ or on-going review of DFC's guidelines on behaviour

### **Safeguard 6: Recruiting, training, and communicating**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 6- Criteria for Success.*

#### **Criteria for Success**

- Job descriptions contain statements about treating people with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness.
- The recruitment process includes an interview, character/ employment references and a background check in line with local legislation
- All staff, volunteers and other relevant people have been trained on safeguarding and child protection, including how to report concerns
- The highest level of the organization has the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the training All staff, volunteers and relevant people with special responsibilities for safeguarding have access to regular additional training and specialist support



- DFC has consulted with children, parents/carers and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your organization's recruitment, training and development

### **Safeguard 7: Working with Partners**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 7- Criteria for Success.*

#### **Criteria for Success**

- DFC has worked with partners/members to ensure that there are shared expectations around safeguarding
- DFC has worked with partners/members to agree on how to share learning about making sport safer for children
- DFC has shared written guidance on current best practice in relation to working with children (for example sharing the International Safeguards for Children in Sport)
- DFC's safeguarding policy represents an essential part of any partnership/membership agreements
- DFC publicizes information about your policy to your community, partners, and members
- DFC works to sensitize your communities to the importance of safeguarding children

### **Safeguard 8: Monitoring and evaluation**

*Please refer to DFC's Screening Process Document aligned with Safeguard 8- Criteria for Success.*

#### **Criteria for Success**

- There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your DFC's Policy System for responding to safeguarding concerns
- Advice and support Systems to minimize the risks to children
- Guidelines for behaviour Recruitment, training and communication
- Work with partners to safeguard children
- The highest level of the organization (DFC Directors and the Advisory Committee) has the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system
- DFC has consulted with children, parents/carers and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your monitoring and evaluation system

### **Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport**

DFC Academy follows the IOC Toolkit for IFs & NOCs in addition to the International Safeguards for Children in Sport.

The full IOC Safeguarding Toolkit as well as additional information and resources are available at the following website: <https://hub.olympic.org/athlete365/safeguarding/>