

ATHLETICS ONTARIO



SAFE SPORT POLICY MANUAL

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES RELATED TO "SAFE SPORT" (SEE TABLE OF CONTENTS BELOW)			
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Athletics Ontario has a fundamental obligation and responsibility to promote the health, safety and physical and mental well-being of every individual who is involved in the sport of Athletics in Ontario.

Athletics Ontario takes very seriously all situations involving discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or breaches of its *Code of Conduct* or other forms of misconduct. For this reason, Athletics Ontario is committed to enacting and enforcing strong, clear, and effective policies and procedures for preventing and addressing all forms of misconduct. Athletics Ontario also has a role in providing education concerning matters relating to Safe Sport.

This Safe Sport Policy Manual outlines expected standards of behaviour that are designed to create a safe sport environment by preventing, as much as possible, inappropriate behaviour from occurring in the first place, and it contains policies and procedures to provide for consistent, timely, appropriate and meaningful action should any issues arise.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Code:

- a) *“Abuse”* – As described in Athletics Ontario’s *Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy*.
- b) *“Discrimination”* – Differential treatment of an individual based on one or more prohibited grounds which include race, citizenship, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, or disability.
- c) *“Harassment”* – A course of vexatious comment or conduct against an individual or group, which is known or ought to reasonably be known to be unwelcome. Harassment is defined by the reasonable perceptions of the recipient of the behaviour, not by those of the perpetrator. Harassment should not be confused with the discipline and demands of training for the sport of athletics. Types of behaviour that constitute Harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts;
 - ii. Persistent unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendo, or taunts;
 - iii. Racial harassment, which is racial slurs, jokes, name calling, or insulting behaviour or terminology that reinforces stereotypes or discounts abilities because of racial or ethnic origin;
 - iv. Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures;
 - v. Condescending or patronizing behaviour that is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect working conditions;
 - vi. Practical jokes that endanger a person’s safety, or may negatively affect performance;
 - vii. Hazing, which is any form of conduct that exhibits any potentially humiliating, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activity expected of a junior-ranking individual by a more senior individual, and that does not contribute to either individual’s positive development, but is required to be accepted as part of a team or group, regardless of the junior-ranking individual’s willingness to participate. This includes, but is not limited to, any activity, no matter how traditional or seemingly benign, that sets apart or alienates any teammate or group member based on class, number of years on the team or with the group, or ability;
 - viii. Unwanted physical contact including, but not limited to, touching, petting, pinching, or kissing;
 - ix. Deliberately excluding or socially isolating a person from a group or team;
 - x. Persistent sexual flirtations, advances, requests, or invitations;
 - xi. Physical or sexual assault;
 - xii. Sexual Harassment as described below;
 - xiii. Behaviours such as those described above that are not directed towards a specific person or group but have the same effect of creating a negative or hostile environment;
 - xiv. Retaliation or threats of retaliation against a person who reports harassment or other misconduct to Athletics Ontario; and
 - xv. Allegations against a person that are false or without merit.
- d) *“Participants”* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario.

- e) *“Sexual Harassment”* – A course of vexatious comment or conduct against an individual because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advance to the individual and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome. Types of behaviour that constitute Sexual Harassment include, but are not limited to:
- i. Sexist jokes;
 - ii. Threats, punishment, or denial of a benefit for refusing a sexual advance;
 - iii. Offering a benefit in exchange for a sexual favour;
 - iv. Demanding hugs;
 - v. Bragging about sexual ability;
 - vi. Leering (persistent sexual staring);
 - vii. Sexual assault;
 - viii. Display of sexually offensive material;
 - ix. Distributing sexually explicit messages or attachments such as pictures or video files;
 - x. Sexually degrading words used to describe an Individual;
 - xi. Unwelcome inquiries into or comments about an individual’s gender identity or physical appearance;
 - xii. Inquiries or comments about an individual’s sex life;
 - xiii. Persistent, unwanted attention after a consensual relationship ends;
 - xiv. Persistent unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; and
 - xv. Persistent unwanted contact.
- f) *“Social media”* – The catch-all term that is applied broadly to computer-mediated communication media such as blogs, chat rooms and forums, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, and Twitter.
- g) *“Sport Environment”* – Any place where Athletics Ontario’s business or activities are conducted. The sport environment includes but is not limited to, Athletics Ontario’s competitions, practices, tryouts, training camps, meetings, travel associated with Athletics Ontario, and Athletics Ontario’s office environment.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this Code is to promote a safe and positive environment within Athletics Ontario’s Sport Environment by making Participants aware that there is an expectation, at all times, of appropriate behaviour consistent with Athletics Ontario’s core values. Athletics Ontario supports equal opportunity, prohibits discriminatory practices, and is committed to providing an environment in which all Participants are treated with respect and fairness.

Application of this Code

3. This Code applies to Participants’ conduct in Athletics Ontario’s Sport Environment.
4. A Participant who violates this Code may be subject to sanctions pursuant to Athletics Ontario’s *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*. In addition to facing possible sanction pursuant to Athletics Ontario’s *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*, a Participant who violates this Code during a competition may be ejected immediately from the competition or the competition area, the official may delay the competition until the Participant complies with the ejection, and the Participant may be subject to additional discipline associated with the competition.
5. In addition to being subject to this Code, employees of Athletics Ontario are subject to the terms of Athletics Ontario’s human resources policies as well as the employee’s employment agreement, if applicable.

6. This Code also applies to Participants' conduct outside of Athletics Ontario's Sport Environment when such conduct adversely affects relationships within Athletics Ontario and its Sport Environment and is detrimental to the image and reputation of Athletics Ontario. Such applicability will be determined by Athletics Ontario at its sole discretion.

Responsibilities - Participants

7. Participants have a responsibility to:
 - a) Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of Athletics Ontario's members and other Participants by:
 - i. Treating each other with the highest standards of respect and integrity;
 - ii. Focusing comments appropriately and providing only constructive criticism of Participants and Athletics Ontario;
 - iii. Not engaging in making disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting or otherwise offensive comments about Participants or Athletics Ontario;
 - iv. Consistently demonstrating the spirit of sportsmanship, sport leadership, and ethical conduct;
 - v. Acting, when appropriate, to correct or prevent practices that are unjustly discriminatory;
 - vi. Consistently treating Participants fairly and reasonably; and
 - vii. Adhering to the rules of the sport and the spirit of those rules
 - b) Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes Abuse, Discrimination, Harassment, or Sexual Harassment
 - c) Abstain from the non-medical use of drugs and the use of performance-enhancing drugs or methods. More specifically, Athletics Ontario adopts and adheres to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program. Any infraction under this Program shall be considered an infraction of this Code and may be subject to further disciplinary action, and possible sanction, pursuant to Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*. Athletics Ontario will respect any penalty enacted pursuant to a breach of the Canadian Anti-Doping Program, whether imposed by Athletics Ontario or any other sport organization
 - d) Reasonably cooperate with the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) or another anti-doping organization investigating anti-doping rule violations
 - e) Refrain from associating with any person for the purpose of coaching, training, competition, instruction, administration, management, athletic development, or supervision of the sport, who has incurred an anti-doping rule violation and is serving a sanction involving a period of ineligibility imposed pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program and/or the World Anti-Doping Code and recognized by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES)
 - f) Refrain from associating with any person for the purpose of coaching, training, competition, instruction, administration, management, athletic development, or supervision of the sport, who has been expelled from Athletics Ontario or who is serving a sanction involving a period of ineligibility imposed by Athletics Ontario
 - g) Refrain from engaging in inappropriate personal or sexual relationships where there is a power imbalance between the Participants in their interactions, such as between athletes and coaches, Directors and staff, officials and athletes, etc.
 - h) Refrain from the use of power or authority in an attempt to coerce another person to engage in inappropriate activities
 - i) Refrain from consuming tobacco products or recreational drugs while participating in Athletics Ontario's programs, activities, competitions, or events
 - j) In the case of minors, not consume alcohol while participating in Athletics Ontario's programs, activities, competitions, or events
 - k) In the case of adults, not consume alcohol while participating as an athlete, coach, official, volunteer, or manager in Athletics Ontario's programs, activities, competitions, or events, and take reasonable steps to manage the responsible consumption of alcohol in social situations associated with Athletics Ontario's events
 - l) Respect the property of others and not wilfully cause damage

- m) Promote the sport in the most constructive and positive manner possible
- n) Adhere to all federal, provincial, municipal and host country laws
- o) Refrain from engaging in deliberate cheating that is intended to manipulate the outcome of a competition and/or not offer or receive any bribe that is intended to manipulate the outcome of a competition
- p) Comply, at all times, with Athletics Ontario's bylaws, policies, procedures, and rules and regulations.

Additional Responsibilities - Directors, Officers, and Committee Members

8. In addition to section 7 (above), Athletics Ontario's Directors, Officers, and committee members have additional responsibilities to:
- a) Act with honesty and integrity and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the nature and responsibilities of Athletics Ontario's business and the maintenance of Participants' confidence in Athletics Ontario
 - b) Conduct or oversee the conduct of Athletics Ontario's financial affairs in a responsible and transparent manner with due regard for all fiduciary responsibilities
 - c) Conduct themselves transparently, professionally, lawfully and in good faith in the best interests of Athletics Ontario
 - d) Be independent, impartial, and not be influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism
 - e) Behave with decorum appropriate to both circumstance and position
 - f) Keep informed about Athletics Ontario's activities, the sport community, and general trends in the sectors in which it operates
 - g) Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws under which Athletics Ontario is incorporated
 - h) Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature
 - i) Respect the decisions of the majority and resign if unable to do so
 - j) Commit the time to attend meetings and be diligent in preparation for, and participation in, discussions at such meetings
 - k) Have a thorough knowledge and understanding of all Athletics Ontario's governing documents.

Additional Responsibilities - Coaches

9. In addition to section 7 (above), coaches have many additional responsibilities. The coach-athlete relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal, sport, and athletic development of the athlete. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, consciously or unconsciously. Coaches will:
- a) Select activities and establish controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved athletes
 - b) Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes
 - c) Communicate and cooperate with sport medicine professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of athletes' medical and psychological treatments so as to avoid compromising the present and future health of athletes
 - d) Support the coaching staff of a training camp, provincial team, or national team should an athlete they are coaching qualify for participation with one of these programs
 - e) Accept and promote athletes' personal goals and refer athletes to other coaches and sports specialists as appropriate
 - f) Provide athletes (and the parents/guardians of minor athletes) with the information necessary to be involved in the decisions that affect the athletes
 - g) Act in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person
 - h) Under no circumstances provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed

- medications) or performance-enhancing substances and, in the case of minors, alcohol, and/or tobacco
- i) Respect athletes playing with other teams or clubs and, in dealings with them, not encroach upon topics or actions that are deemed to be within the realm of 'coaching', unless after first receiving approval from the coaches who are responsible for the athletes
 - j) Not solicit, either overtly or covertly, athletes coached by others to join their team or club
 - k) Not engage in an intimate or sexual relationship with any athlete under the age of 18
 - l) Disclose to Athletics Ontario any intimate or sexual relationship with an athlete they are coaching who is 18 or older and immediately discontinue any coaching involvement with that athlete, unless that intimate relationship began before the coaching relationship
 - m) Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment. Coaches have a special responsibility to respect and promote the rights of participants who are in a vulnerable or dependent position and less able to protect their own rights
 - n) Dress professionally, neatly, and inoffensively
 - o) Use inoffensive language, taking into account the audience being addressed.

Additional Responsibilities - Athletes

10. In addition to section 7 (above), athletes have additional responsibilities to:

- a) Report any medical problems in a timely fashion, when such problems may limit their ability to travel, practice, or compete
- b) Participate and appear on-time and prepared to participate to their best abilities in all competitions, practices, training sessions, tryouts, tournaments, and events
- c) Properly represent themselves and not attempt to participate in a competition for which they are not eligible by reason of age, classification, or other reason
- d) Adhere to Athletics Ontario's rules and requirements regarding clothing and equipment
- e) Act in a sportsmanlike manner and not display appearances of violence, foul language, or gestures to other athletes, officials, coaches, or spectators
- f) Dress to represent the sport and themselves well and with professionalism
- g) Act in accordance with Athletics Ontario's policies and procedures and, when applicable, additional rules as outlined by coaches or managers.

Additional Responsibilities - Officials

11. In addition to section 7 (above), officials have additional responsibilities to:

- a) Maintain and update their knowledge of the rules and rule changes
- b) Work within the boundaries of their position's description while supporting the work of other officials
- c) Act as an ambassador of Athletics Ontario by agreeing to enforce and abide by national and provincial rules and regulations
- d) Take ownership of actions and decisions made while officiating
- e) Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all Participants
- f) Assist with the development of less-experienced officials
- g) Act openly, impartially, professionally, lawfully, and in good faith
- h) Be fair, equitable, considerate, independent, honest, and impartial in all dealings with others
- i) Respect the confidentiality required by issues of a sensitive nature, which may include ejections, defaults, forfeits, discipline processes, appeals, and specific information or data about Participants
- j) Honour all assignments unless unable to do so by virtue of illness or personal emergency, and in these cases inform the assignor or Athletics Ontario at the earliest possible time
- k) When writing reports, set out all relevant facts to the best of their knowledge and recollection
- l) Dress in proper attire for officiating.

Additional Responsibilities - Parents/Guardians and Spectators

12. Spectators, including parents and guardians, are an integral part of the sport of athletics. Athletics Ontario and its member clubs work diligently to ensure the best possible experience at our events for all Participants, including spectators. While a goal is to maximize the spectator experience, the integrity of the competition must be preserved at all times. The following spectator guidelines have been developed to address everyone's safety and to preserve the authenticity and integrity of our events. In any case, spectators should not take any action that is detrimental to the athlete environment and/or experience.
13. Anyone watching a particular athletic activity or event is considered a spectator. A spectator may be a parent or guardian, a relative, or friend not directly involved in the event. Spectators are an important part of any athletic activity; however, they are not essential. Spectators should never do anything that could potentially influence the outcome of an event, including distracting athletes, other spectators or officials.
14. In addition to section 7 (above), parents/guardians and other spectators at events have additional responsibilities to:
 - a) Encourage athletes to compete within the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence
 - b) Condemn the use of violence in any form
 - c) Never ridicule a participant for making a mistake during a performance or practice
 - d) Provide positive comments that motivate and encourage participants' continued effort
 - e) Respect the decisions and judgments of officials, and encourage athletes to do the same
 - f) Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse, coercion, intimidation, and sarcasm
 - g) Respect and show appreciation to all competitors, and to the coaches, officials and other volunteers
 - h) Not harass competitors, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents/guardians, or other spectators.

Social Media

15. Athletics Ontario is aware that Individual interaction and communication occurs frequently on social media. Athletics Ontario cautions Participants that any social media conduct falling short of the standard of behaviour required by this Code may be subject to a complaint and disciplinary action under Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*.
16. Without limiting the applicability of this Code, Athletics Ontario cautions Participants that the following social media conduct may be considered an infraction of this Code and may be subject to a complaint and disciplinary action under Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*:
 - a) Posting a disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, or otherwise offensive comment on a social medium that is directed at a Participant, at Athletics Ontario, or at other persons connected with Athletics Ontario
 - b) Posting a picture, altered picture, or video on a social medium that is disrespectful, hateful, harmful, disparaging, insulting, or otherwise offensive, and that is directed at a Participant, at Athletics Ontario, or at other persons connected with Athletics Ontario
 - c) Creating or contributing to a Facebook group, webpage, blog, or online forum devoted solely or in part to promoting criticism that is not constructive or disparaging remarks or commentary about Athletics Ontario or its Participants
 - d) Inappropriate personal or sexual relationships over a social medium between Participants who have a power imbalance in their interactions, such as between athletes and coaches, Directors and staff, officials and athletes, etc.
 - e) Any instance of cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment between one Participant and another Participant (including a teammate, coach, opponent, volunteer, or official), where incidents of cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment can include but are not limited to the following conduct on any social medium, via text-message, or via email: regular insults, negative comments, vexatious behaviour, pranks or jokes,

threats, posing as another person, spreading rumours or lies, or other harmful behaviour.

17. Participants acknowledge that their social media activity may be viewed by anyone, including but not limited to Athletics Ontario, Participants and sponsors.
18. If Athletics Ontario unofficially engages with a Participant in social media (such as by retweeting a tweet or sharing a photo on Facebook) the Participant may, at any time, ask Athletics Ontario to cease this engagement.
19. When using social media, a Participant must model appropriate behaviour befitting the Participant's role and status in connection with Athletics Ontario.
20. Removing content from social media after it has been posted (either publicly or privately) does not excuse the Participant from being subject to Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*.
21. A person who believes that a Participant's social media activity is inappropriate or may violate Athletics Ontario's policies and procedures should report the matter to Athletics Ontario in the manner outlined in Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*.

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

This Policy does not take away from any of the obligations and expected standards of conduct outlined in the Code of Conduct or in any of the other policies, procedures, rules and regulations of Athletics Ontario. The purpose of this Policy is to bring attention to the special vulnerabilities of children and certain adults.

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) *“Abuse”* – Child/Youth Abuse or Vulnerable Adult Abuse as described in this Policy
 - b) *“Participants”* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario
 - c) *“Sport Environment”* - Any place where Athletics Ontario’s business or activities are conducted. The sport environment includes but is not limited to, Athletics Ontario’s competitions, practices, tryouts, training camps, meetings, travel associated with Athletics Ontario, and Athletics Ontario’s office environment.
 - d) *“Vulnerable Individuals”* – Includes children / youth (minors) and Vulnerable Adults (people who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority).

Purpose

2. Athletics Ontario is committed to a Sport Environment free from abuse. The purpose of this Policy is to educate Participants about abuse and the vulnerability of certain individuals, and to outline how Athletics Ontario will work to prevent abuse, and how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by Athletics Ontario.

Education – What is Abuse

Child/Youth Abuse

3. The following description of Child / Youth Abuse has been adapted from Ecclesiastical Insurance’s *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults* [1]:
4. “Child abuse” refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust. There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form:
 - a) **Physical abuse** involves single or repeated instances of deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.
 - b) **Sexual abuse** and exploitation involve using a child for sexual purposes. Examples of child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.
 - c) **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well-being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a dependent child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care, or protection from harm.
 - d) **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child’s sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes exposing

the child to violence.

5. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to children, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. The abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time.
6. Abuse of children in sport can include emotional maltreatment, neglect, physical maltreatment and grooming:
 - a) **Emotional Maltreatment** – failure to provide a developmentally-appropriate and supportive environment. Emotional abuse is at the foundation of all other forms of maltreatment (sexual, physical and neglect). In sports, this conduct has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete when it is persistent, pervasive or patterned acts (i.e., yelling at an athlete once does not constitute maltreatment). Examples of emotional maltreatment include:
 - i. Refusal to recognize an athlete’s worth or the legitimacy of an athlete’s needs (including complaints of injury/pain, thirst or feeling unwell)
 - ii. Creating a culture of fear, or threatening, bullying or frightening an athlete
 - iii. Frequent name-calling or sarcasm that continually “beats down” an athlete’s self-esteem
 - iv. Embarrassing or humiliating an athlete in front of peers
 - v. Excluding or isolating an athlete from the group
 - vi. Withholding attention
 - vii. Encouraging an athlete to engage in destructive and antisocial behaviour, reinforcing deviance, or impairing an athlete’s ability to behave in socially appropriate ways
 - viii. Over-pressuring; whereby the coach imposes extreme pressure upon the athlete to behave and achieve in ways that are far beyond the athlete’s capabilities
 - ix. Verbally attacking an athlete personally (e.g. belittling them or calling them worthless, lazy, useless, fat or disgusting).
 - x. Routinely or arbitrarily excluding athletes from practice
 - xi. Using conditioning as punishment
 - xii. Throwing sports equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, athletes
 - xiii. Body shaming – making disrespectful, hurtful or embarrassing comments about an athlete’s physique
 - b) **Neglect** - acts of omission (e.g., the coach should act to protect the health/well-being of an athlete but does not). Examples of neglect include:
 - i. Isolating an athlete in a confined space or stranded on equipment, with no supervision, for an extended period
 - ii. Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep
 - iii. Ignoring an injury
 - iv. Knowing about sexual abuse of an athlete but failing to report it
 - c) **Physical Maltreatment** - involves contact or non-contact behaviour that can cause physical harm to an athlete. It also includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault). Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete—such as extreme disciplinary actions or punishment—is unacceptable. Physical maltreatment can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and restricted diet. Examples of physical maltreatment include:
 - i. Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
 - ii. Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
 - iii. Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age
 - iv. Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete

- v. Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion)
 - vi. Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete
 - vii. Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose, or excessive repetition of a skill to the point of injury
 - viii. Using excessive exercise as punishment (e.g., stretching to the point of causing the athlete to cry, endurance conditioning until the athlete vomits)
- d) **Grooming** - a slow gradual and escalating process of building comfort and trust with an athlete and/or their parents/guardian that is often very difficult to recognize. The process allows for inappropriate conduct to become normalized. It is often preceded by building confidence and comfort that an individual can be trusted with the care of the athlete. Examples of grooming include:
- i. Nudity or exposure of genitals in the presence of an athlete;
 - ii. Sexually oriented conversation or discussions about personal sexual activities;
 - iii. Excessive discussions about a coach's personal life outside of coaching (e.g., family, work, medical challenges)
 - iv. Spending time with an individual athlete and/or their family outside of team activities;
 - v. Excessive gift-giving to an individual athlete;
 - vi. Socially isolating an athlete;
 - vii. Restricting an athlete's privacy;
 - viii. Providing drugs, alcohol or tobacco to an athlete;
 - ix. Becoming overly-involved in an athlete's personal life;
 - x. Making sexual or discriminatory jokes or comments to an athlete;
 - xi. Displaying material of a sexual nature in the presence of an athlete;
 - xii. Mocking or threatening an athlete
 - xiii. Putting coach's needs above needs of athlete and/or going to athlete to have coach's needs met.
7. Importantly, emotional and physical maltreatment does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods (per the National Coaching Certification Program "NCCP") of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.
8. Potential warning signs of abuse of children/youth can include[2][3]:
- a) Recurrent unexplained injuries
 - b) Alert behaviour; seems always to be expecting something bad to happen
 - c) Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather
 - d) Startles easily, shies away from touch or shows other skittish behaviour
 - e) Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
 - f) Withdrawn from peers and adults
 - g) Behavior fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative or extremely demanding)
 - h) Acting either inappropriately beyond their age (like an adult; taking care of other children) or inappropriately younger than their age (like an infant; throwing tantrums)
 - i) Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
 - j) New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
 - k) Self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or other harmful activities)
 - l) Not wanting to be alone with a particular child or young person.

Vulnerable Adult Abuse

9. Although individuals may be abused at virtually any life stage – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, or old age – the nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on an individual's situation, disability, or circumstance.

10. The following description of Vulnerable Adult Abuse has been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical Insurance's *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults* [1].

11. Abuse of Vulnerable Adults is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time:

- a) **Psychological abuse** includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate Vulnerable Adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of abuse may include, for example
 - i. Threatening to use violence
 - ii. Threatening to abandon them
 - iii. Intentionally frightening them
 - iv. Making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
 - v. Lying to them
 - vi. Failing to check allegations of abuse against them
- b) **Financial abuse** encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation, including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using a Vulnerable Adult's money or property in a dishonest manner or failing to use a Vulnerable Adult's assets for their welfare. Abuse occurs any time someone acts without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another. This type of abuse against a Vulnerable Adult may include, for example:
 - i. Stealing their money, disability cheques, or other possessions
 - ii. Wrongfully using a power of attorney
 - iii. Failing to pay back borrowed money when asked
- c) **Physical abuse** includes any act of violence – whether or not it results in physical injury. Intentionally inflicting pain or injury that results in either bodily harm or mental distress is abuse. Physical abuse may include, for example:
 - i. Beating
 - ii. Burning or scalding
 - iii. Pushing or shoving
 - iv. Hitting or slapping
 - v. Rough handling
 - vi. Tripping
 - vii. Spitting
- d) All forms of sexual abuse are also applicable to Vulnerable Adults.

12. Potential warning signs of abuse of Vulnerable Adults can include [1]:

- a) Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
- b) Unexplained physical injuries
- c) Dehydration, malnutrition, or lack of food
- d) Poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
- e) Over-sedation

Preventing Abuse

13. Athletics Ontario enacts measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training, practice, and monitoring. Clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario are strongly encouraged to enact similar measures.

Screening

14. Participants who coach, officiate, deliver AO developmental programs, are affiliated with provincial teams,

accompany a provincial team to an event or competition, are paid AO staff, or are otherwise engaged with Vulnerable Individuals involved with Athletics Ontario in the Sport Environment will be screened according to Athletics Ontario's *Screening Policy*.

Orientation and Training

15. Athletics Ontario will deliver orientation and training to those Participants described in Section 14 above who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The orientation and training, and their frequency, will be based on the level of risk, as described in the *Screening Policy*.
16. Orientation may include, but is not limited to introductory presentations, facility tours, equipment demonstrations, parent/athlete meetings, meetings with colleagues and supervisors, orientation manuals, orientation sessions, and increased supervision during initial tasks or period of engagement.
17. Training may include, but is not limited to certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.

Practice

18. When Participants interact with Vulnerable Individuals, they are required to enact certain practical approaches to these interactions. These include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Limiting physical interactions to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)
 - b) Ensuring that Vulnerable Individuals are always supervised by more than one adult
 - c) Ensuring that more than one person is responsible for team selection (thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one Participant)
 - d) Including parents/guardians in all communication (e.g., electronic, telephonic) with Vulnerable Individuals
 - e) Ensuring that parents/guardians are aware that some non-personal communication between Participants and Vulnerable Individuals (e.g., coaches and athletes) may take place electronically (e.g., by texting) and that this type of communication is now considered to be commonplace. Participants are aware that such communication is subject to Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*.
 - f) When traveling with Vulnerable Individuals, the Participant will not transport Vulnerable Individuals without another adult present and will not stay in the same overnight accommodation location without additional adult supervision.

Monitoring

19. Athletics Ontario will regularly monitor those Participants described in Section 14 above who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk, as described in the *Screening Policy*.
20. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to regular status reports, logs, supervisor meetings, supervisor on-site check-ins, feedback provided directly to Athletics Ontario (from peers and parents/athletes), and regular evaluations.

Reporting Abuse

21. Reports of abuse that are shared confidentially with a Participant by a Vulnerable Individual may require the Participant to report the incident to parents/guardians, Athletics Ontario or police. Participants must respond to such reports in a non-judgemental, supportive and comforting manner but must also explain that the report may need to be escalated to the proper authority or to the Vulnerable Individual's parent/guardian.
22. Complaints or reports that describe an element of abuse will be addressed by the process (es) described in

[1] Retrieved from: https://www.ecclesiastical.ca/guidelines_developsafetyprotectionpolicy_children-youths-vulnerableadults_faith/

[2] Adapted from: <https://www.all4kids.org/2014/03/04/warning-signs-child-abuse-neglect/>

[3] Adapted from: https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/warning_signs.htm

COMPLAINTS, DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) *“Case Manager”* – The individual appointed by the Safe Sport Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, to administer certain complaints under this Policy.
 - b) *“Complainant”* – The Party making a complaint.
 - c) *“Discipline Panel”* - The individual or individuals appointed by a Case Manager to consider a complaint.
 - d) *“Governance Committee”* - The Governance Committee as appointed by the Board of Directors of Athletics Ontario from time to time.
 - e) *“Investigator”* - The individual appointed by the Case Manager to investigate a complaint made under this policy.
 - f) *“Respondent”* - The Party responding to the complaint.
 - g) *“Participants”* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario.
 - h) *“Safe Sport Officers”* – The individuals appointed by the Chief Executive Officer to be the first point-of-contact for all complaint and discipline matters reported to Athletics Ontario.
 - i) *“Sport Environment”* - Any place where Athletics Ontario’s business or activities are conducted. The sport environment includes but is not limited to, Athletics Ontario’s competitions, practices, tryouts, training camps, meetings, travel associated with Athletics Ontario, and Athletics Ontario’s office environment.

Purpose

2. Participants are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities and obligations including, but not limited to, complying with Athletics Ontario’s bylaws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and *Code of Conduct*. Non-compliance may result in sanctions pursuant to this Policy. This Policy describes how Participants can report instances of breaches of Athletics Ontario’s bylaws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, and *Code of Conduct*, including instances of Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse (as defined in the *Code of Conduct*) and how Athletics Ontario will investigate and deal with those reports.

Application of this Policy and Jurisdiction

3. This Policy applies to all Participants.
4. This Policy applies to matters that may arise in Athletics Ontario’s Sport Environment.
5. This Policy also applies to Participants’ conduct outside of Athletics Ontario’s Sport Environment when such conduct adversely affects relationships within Athletics Ontario and its Sport Environment, is detrimental to the image and reputation of Athletics Ontario, or upon the acceptance of Athletics Ontario.
6. For complaints related to a club that is a member of Athletics Ontario, if the Safe Sport Officer determines that the complaint may be handled more effectively by the club, the Safe Sport Officer may advise the Complainant to submit their complaint to the club. The Complainant may choose not to take such advice and may continue to proceed under this Policy provided that this Policy applies pursuant to section 4 or 5 above. Except in unusual cases, Athletics Ontario will not accept a complaint that has already been handled through a club process.
7. In all cases, applicability of this Policy will be determined by Athletics Ontario at its sole discretion and shall not be subject to appeal.

8. This Policy does not prevent immediate discipline or sanction from being applied as reasonably required. Further discipline may be applied according to this Policy. Any infractions or complaints occurring within competition will be dealt with by the procedures specific to the competition, if applicable and/or Athletics Ontario's *Event Discipline Procedure*. In such situations, disciplinary sanctions will be for the duration of the competition, training, activity, or event only.

Safe Sport Officers

9. The Chief Executive Officer will appoint at least three individuals who will receive complaints, assist Complainants in completing Athletics Ontario's complaint form, and handle the responsibilities of a Safe Sport Officer as described in this Policy. The Safe Sport Officers may be employees or other representatives of Athletics Ontario (including the Chief Executive Officer) or independent individuals volunteering or retained by Athletics Ontario for this purpose. The Safe Sport Officers from time to time and their contact information will be identified on Athletics Ontario's web site.
10. A Complainant may choose the Safe Sport Officer to whom they submit their complaint, provided, however, that the Safe Sport Officer chosen to handle a complaint must be unbiased and not in a conflict of interest situation. If the initially chosen Safe Sport Officer has a bias or conflict of interest, they will advise the Complainant and another Safe Sport Officer must be chosen by the Complainant.

Case Managers

11. The Safe Sport Officer handling a complaint determined to be administered under the "Full Procedure - Handled by Case Manager" provisions of this Policy (as described below) shall, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, appoint an individual to administer the complaint and handle the responsibilities of a Case Manager as described in this Policy. The Case Manager will be appointed from a pool of individuals having expertise in dispute resolution matters and approved by the Board of Directors. Case Managers will be independent individuals volunteering or retained by Athletics Ontario for this purpose.

Investigators

12. Where a Case Manager determines that an investigation is appropriate, the Case Manager shall appoint an individual to investigate the complaint and handle the responsibilities of an Investigator as described in this Policy. The Investigator will be appointed from a pool of individuals approved by the Board of Directors. The Investigator must be an independent third-party skilled in investigating and may be the Case Manager.

Discipline Panel

13. Where a Case Manager determines that a complaint will be considered under the "Full Procedure - Handled by Case Manager" provisions of this Policy (as described below), the Case Manager shall appoint a Discipline Panel to consider the complaint and handle the responsibilities of a Discipline Panel as described in this Policy. The Discipline Panel will be appointed from a pool of individuals approved by the Board of Directors. Discipline Panel members will be independent individuals volunteering or retained by Athletics Ontario for this purpose.

Adult Representative

14. Complaints may be brought for or against a Participant who is a minor. Minors must have a parent/guardian or other adult serve as their representative during this process.
15. Communication from the Safe Sport Officer, Case Manager or Investigator, as applicable, must be directed to the minor's representative.
16. A minor is not required to attend an oral hearing, if held.

Reporting a Complaint

17. Any Participant may report a complaint in writing to a Safe Sport Officer, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the alleged incident, although this timeline can be waived or extended at Athletics Ontario's discretion. The Complainant should use Athletics Ontario's complaint form, which can be found on Athletics Ontario's website <https://athleticsontario.ca/safe-sport-information/>
18. Anonymous complaints will be evaluated and screened based on the seriousness of the matter, their merits, level of detail and ability and authority to investigate. The decision to proceed with an anonymous complaint is in the discretion of Athletics Ontario.
19. At Athletics Ontario's discretion, Athletics Ontario may act as the Complainant and initiate the complaint process under the terms of this Policy. In such cases, Athletics Ontario will identify an individual to represent Athletics Ontario.

Determination of Procedure to be Followed

20. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Safe Sport Officer shall, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, choose which procedure should be followed, and may use the following examples as a general guideline:
 - a) Simplified Procedure - the complaint alleges the following incidents:
 - i. Disrespectful, abusive, racist, or sexist comments or behaviour
 - ii. Disrespectful conduct
 - iii. Minor incidents of uninvited physical contact (e.g., tripping, pushing, elbowing)
 - iv. Minor violations of Athletics Ontario's bylaws, policies, procedures, rules, or regulations
 - v. Minor violations of Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*
 - b) Full Procedure - the complaint alleges the following incidents:
 - i. Repeated minor incidents
 - ii. Any incident of hazing
 - iii. Behaviour that constitutes harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct
 - iv. Incidents of violence (e.g., fighting, attacking, sucker punching)
 - v. Pranks, jokes, or other activities that endanger the safety of others
 - vi. Conduct that intentionally interferes with a competition or with any athlete's preparation for a competition
 - vii. Conduct that intentionally damages Athletics Ontario's image, credibility, or reputation
 - viii. Consistent disregard for Athletics Ontario's bylaws, policies, procedures, rules or regulations
 - ix. Major or repeated violations of Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*
 - x. Intentionally damaging Athletics Ontario's property or improperly handling Athletics Ontario's monies
 - xi. Abusive use of alcohol, any use or possession of alcohol by minors, or use or possession of illicit drugs and narcotics
 - xii. A conviction for any *Criminal Code* offense
 - xiii. Any possession or use of banned performance enhancing drugs or methods.

Simplified Procedure: Handled by Safe Sport Officer

Sanctions

21. Following the determination that the complaint should be handled under the Simplified Procedure provisions of this Policy, the Safe Sport Officer will review the submissions related to the complaint and determine one or more of the following sanctions:
 - a) Verbal or written reprimand
 - b) Verbal or written apology
 - c) Service or other contribution to Athletics Ontario
 - d) Removal of certain privileges
 - e) Any other sanction considered appropriate for the offense.
22. The Safe Sport Officer will inform the Complainant and Respondent of their decision in writing. Any sanction imposed will take effect immediately.
23. Records of all sanctions will be maintained by Athletics Ontario.

Request for Reconsideration

24. If the Safe Sport Officer decides not to impose a sanction on the Respondent, the Complainant may request a reconsideration from the Safe Sport Officer by informing them, within five (5) calendar days of receiving the decision, that they are not satisfied with the decision and explaining why. In their request for reconsideration, the Complainant must indicate:
 - a) Why imposing no sanction is inappropriate;
 - b) All evidence to support the Complainant's position; and
 - c) What penalty or sanction would be appropriate.
25. If the Safe Sport Officer imposes a sanction, the Respondent or Complainant may request a reconsideration from the Safe Sport Officer by informing them, within five (5) days of receiving the decision, that they are not satisfied with the decision and explaining why. Their request for reconsideration must indicate:
 - a) Why the sanction is inappropriate;
 - b) All evidence to support the Respondent's or Complainant's, as the case may be, position; and
 - c) What penalty or sanction (if any) would be appropriate.
26. Upon receiving a request for reconsideration, the Safe Sport Officer shall render a decision explaining whether they have accepted the request for reconsideration and, if so, their new decision.
27. Should the Safe Sport Officer accept the Complainant's or Respondent's, as the case may be, suggestion for an appropriate sanction, that sanction will take effect immediately.
28. Should either the Complainant or the Respondent, as the case may be, not be satisfied with the Safe Sport Officer's new decision or the Safe Sport Officer's decision to reject a request for reconsideration, they may notify the Safe Sport Officer in writing within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the Safe Sport Officer's new decision, and the initial complaint will be handled under the Full Procedure provisions of this Policy.

Full Procedure: Handled by Case Manager

Appointment and Responsibilities of Case Manager

29. Following the determination that a complaint should be handled under the Full Procedure provisions of this Policy, the Safe Sport Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, will appoint a Case Manager to oversee management and administration of the complaint. The Case Manager must be unbiased and not in a conflict of interest situation. Such appointment is not appealable.
30. The Case Manager has the responsibility, after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors, to:

- a) Determine whether the complaint is frivolous and/or within the jurisdiction of this Policy
- b) Determine whether to propose the use of Athletics Ontario's *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy*
- c) Determine whether to appoint an Investigator to investigate the allegations
- d) Appoint the Discipline Panel, if appropriate
- e) Coordinate all administrative aspects and set timelines
- f) Provide administrative assistance and logistical support to the Discipline Panel and Governance Committee as required
- g) Provide any other service or support that may be necessary to ensure a fair and timely proceeding.

Investigation

31. The Investigator, if one is appointed, must be unbiased and not in a conflict of interest situation.
32. Federal and/or Provincial legislation related to workplace harassment may apply to the investigation if the conduct complained of was directed toward a worker in a workplace. The Investigator should review occupational health and safety legislation and/or consult independent experts to determine whether legislation applies to the complaint.
33. The investigation may take any form as decided by the Investigator, guided by any applicable Federal and/or Provincial legislation. The investigation may include:
- a) Interviews with the Complainant;
 - b) Interviews with the Respondent;
 - c) Witness interviews;
 - d) Statement of facts (Complainant's perspective) prepared by Investigator, acknowledged by the complainant and provided to the respondent;
 - e) Statement of facts (Respondent's perspective) prepared by Investigator, acknowledged by the Respondent and provided to the Complainant.

Investigator's Report

34. Following timelines determined by the Case Manager, who may modify the timelines as described in this Policy, the Investigator will prepare and submit a report to the Safe Sport Officer and the Case Manager.
35. The Investigator's report shall include a summary of evidence from the parties (including both statements of facts, if applicable) and recommendations from the Investigator of whether or not, on a balance of probabilities, an incident occurred that could be considered Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, or Abuse, or a breach of Athletics Ontario's by-laws, policies, procedures, rules, regulations or *Code of Conduct*.

Investigator's Reporting

36. Should the Investigator find that there are possible instances of offence under the *Criminal Code*, particularly related to Criminal Harassment (or Stalking), Uttering Threats, Assault, Sexual Interference, or Sexual Exploitation, the Investigator shall advise the Complainant to refer the matter to police.
37. The Investigator must also inform Athletics Ontario of any findings of criminal activity. Athletics Ontario may decide whether to report such findings to police but is required to inform police if there are findings related to the trafficking of doping drugs or materials, any sexual crime involving minors, fraud against Athletics Ontario, or other offences where the lack of reporting would bring Athletics Ontario into disrepute. Athletics Ontario will adhere to all disclosure and reporting responsibilities required by any government entity, local police service, or child protection agency.

Process

38. If the Case Manager determines the complaint is:
- a) Outside the jurisdiction of this Policy or frivolous, the complaint will be dismissed immediately and the Case Manager will notify the Parties that the complaint is dismissed
 - b) Within the jurisdiction of this Policy and not frivolous, the Case Manager will notify the Parties that the complaint is accepted and of the applicable next steps.
39. The Case Manager's decision to accept or dismiss the complaint may not be appealed.
40. The Case Manager will establish timelines with the goal of procedural fairness and considering the matter in a timely fashion.
41. After notifying the Parties that the complaint has been accepted, the Case Manager may propose using Athletics Ontario's *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy* with the objective of resolving the dispute. If applicable, and if the dispute is not resolved, or if the Parties refuse to use the *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy*, the Case Manager will appoint a Discipline Panel, which shall consist of a single person, to consider the complaint. In extraordinary circumstances, and at the discretion of the Case Manager, a Discipline Panel of three persons may be appointed to consider the complaint. In this event, the Case Manager will appoint one of the Discipline Panel's members to serve as the Chair.
42. The Case Manager, in cooperation with the Discipline Panel, will then decide the format under which the complaint will be considered. This decision may not be appealed. The format may be an oral in-person hearing, an oral hearing by telephone or other electronic means, a review of documentary evidence, or a combination of these methods. The consideration of the complaint will be governed by the procedures that the Case Manager and the Discipline Panel deem appropriate in the circumstances, provided that:
- a) The Parties will be given reasonable notice of the day, time, and place of the hearing, in the case of an oral in-person hearing or an oral hearing by telephone or other electronic means
 - b) Copies of any written documents that any of the parties wish to have the Discipline Panel consider will be provided to all Parties, through the Case Manager, in advance of the hearing (if held) or completion of the review of documentary evidence
 - c) Copies of any written documents that the Case Manager considers appropriate for the Discipline Panel to consider will be provided to all Parties through the Case Manager, in advance of the hearing (if held) or completion of the review of documentary evidence
 - d) The Parties may engage a representative, advisor, or legal counsel at their own expense
 - e) The Discipline Panel may request that any other individual participate and give evidence
 - f) The Discipline Panel may allow as evidence any oral evidence and document or thing relevant to the subject matter of the complaint, but may exclude such evidence that is unduly repetitious, and shall place such weight on the evidence as it deems appropriate
 - g) If a decision may affect another party to the extent that the other party would have recourse to a complaint or an appeal in their own right, that party will become a Party to the current complaint and will be bound by the decision.
 - h) The decision will be by a majority vote of the Discipline Panel.
43. If the Respondent acknowledges the facts of the complaint, the Respondent may waive the hearing or review of documentary evidence, as the case may be. The Discipline Panel may still hold a hearing or conduct a review of documentary evidence for the purpose of determining an appropriate sanction to recommend.
44. If a Party chooses not to participate in the consideration of the complaint, the hearing and/or review of documentary evidence will proceed in any event.
45. In fulfilling its duties, the Discipline Panel may obtain independent advice.

Decision

46. After considering the matter, the Discipline Panel will determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, an infraction has occurred and, if so, the sanctions it recommends be imposed. Within fourteen (14) calendar days after the hearing's conclusion, or the conclusion of the review of documentary evidence, as the case may be, the Discipline Panel's written decision regarding the infraction, with reasons, and recommendations regarding sanctions, with reasons, will be submitted to the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee may request the Discipline Panel (or its Chair if the Discipline Panel is comprised of three individuals) to attend a meeting of the Governance Committee to make a presentation regarding the Discipline Panel's decision and recommendations.

47. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the decision and recommendations of the Discipline Panel, the Governance Committee shall issue its written decision. The Governance Committee may decide to:
- a) Accept the recommendations of the Discipline Panel regarding sanctions, or
 - b) Reject the recommendations of the Discipline Panel regarding sanctions, with an explanation, and request that the Discipline Panel reconsider its recommendations regarding sanctions.

The Governance Committee's decision, with reasons, together with the Discipline Panel's decision regarding the infraction, with reasons, will be distributed to all parties, the Case Manager, the Discipline Panel and Athletics Ontario. In the case of (b), the Discipline Panel will reconvene and, within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the explanation and request of the Governance Committee, will determine whether or not to recommend different sanctions and will submit its recommendations to the Governance Committee.

48. Within seven (7) calendar days of the receipt of the reconsidered recommendations of the Discipline Panel pursuant to section 47(b) above, the Governance Committee shall issue its written decision. The Governance Committee may decide to:
- a) Accept the recommendations of the Discipline Panel
 - b) Reject the recommendations of the Discipline Panel regarding sanctions and send the matter back to be reconsidered under Process #2 by a newly formed Discipline Panel.

The Governance Committee's decision, with reasons, together with the Discipline Panel's decision regarding the infraction, with reasons, will be distributed to all Parties, the Case Manager, the Discipline Panel and Athletics Ontario.

Sanctions

49. The Discipline Panel may recommend and the Governance Committee may apply the following disciplinary sanctions, singularly or in combination:

- a) Verbal or written reprimand
- b) Verbal or written apology
- c) Service or other contribution to Athletics Ontario
- d) Removal of certain privileges
- e) Suspension from certain teams, events, and/or activities
- f) Suspension from all Athletics Ontario's activities for a designated period
- g) Payment of the cost of repairs for property damage
- h) Suspension of funding from Athletics Ontario or from other sources
- i) Expulsion from Athletics Ontario (lifetime ban)
- j) Any other sanction considered appropriate for the offense.

50. Unless the Governance Committee decides otherwise, disciplinary sanctions will begin immediately, notwithstanding an appeal. Failure to comply with a sanction as determined by the Governance Committee will result in an automatic suspension from Athletics Ontario until such time as compliance occurs.

51. Records of all decisions will be maintained by Athletics Ontario.

Appeals

52. The decision of the Discipline Panel and/or the Governance Committee may be appealed in accordance with Athletics Ontario's *Appeal Policy*.

Suspension Pending a Hearing

53. Athletics Ontario may determine that an alleged incident is of such seriousness as to warrant suspension of a Participant pending completion of a criminal process, investigation, the hearing or review of documentary evidence, or a decision of the Discipline Panel or Governance Committee.

Criminal Convictions

54. A Participant's conviction for a *Criminal Code* offense may be deemed an infraction under this Policy and may result in expulsion from Athletics Ontario. The following *Criminal Code* offences, whenever incurred, will automatically result in expulsion from Athletics Ontario or denial of membership:

- a) Any child pornography offences
- b) Any sexual offences involving a minor
- c) Any offence of assault involving a minor

Retaliation

55. A Participant who submits a complaint to Athletics Ontario, or who gives evidence in an investigation, may not be subject to retaliation from any Participant. Any such conduct may constitute Harassment and will be subject to disciplinary proceedings pursuant to this Policy. Athletics Ontario or the Participant facing the retaliation may act as the Complainant.

False Allegations

56. A Participant who submits allegations that the Investigator determines to be false or without merit may be subject to a complaint for Harassment under the terms of this Policy and may be required to pay for the costs of any investigation that comes to this conclusion. Any Participant who is liable to pay for such costs shall be automatically deemed to be not in good standing until the costs are paid in full. Athletics Ontario or the Participant against whom the allegations were submitted may act as the Complainant.

Confidentiality

57. The complaints and discipline process is confidential and involves only Athletics Ontario, the Parties, the Safe Sport Officer, the Case Manager, the Investigator, the Discipline Panel, the Governance Committee, and any independent advisors to the Discipline Panel or Governance Committee. Information will be provided only to those who have a "need to know" or as required in the course of any investigation or resolution of the matter or as required by law. It is the responsibility of all Participants to cooperate with any investigation and dispute resolution and discipline process and to maintain strict confidentiality of all information related to the complaint and any investigations.

58. The Investigator will make every effort to preserve the confidentiality of the Complainant, Respondent, and any other party. However, Athletics Ontario and Participants recognize that maintaining anonymity of any party may be difficult for the Investigator during the investigation.

59. It is a serious breach of this Policy to break confidentiality unless disclosure of information relating to the complaint is necessary in order for the proper investigation and resolution of the matter or is required by law. Any such breach will be treated in the same manner as Harassment.

Records and Distribution of Decisions

60. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions regarding confidentiality, decisions rendered under this Policy will

be considered a matter of public record unless and to the extent decided otherwise by the Safe Sport Officer in the case of decisions resulting from Process #1 or by the Governance Committee in the case of decisions resulting from Process #2. Other individuals or organizations, including but not limited to, national sport organizations, provincial sport organizations, sport clubs, etc., may be advised of any decisions rendered in accordance with this Policy.

Timelines

61. If the circumstances of the complaint are such that adhering to the timelines outlined by this Policy is not reasonably practicable or will not allow a timely resolution to the complaint, the Safe Sport Officer or the Case Manager, as the case may be, may direct that these timelines be revised.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

Definitions

1. The following term has this meaning in this Policy:
 - a) *“Participants”* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, and Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario.

Purpose

2. Athletics Ontario supports the principles of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) and is committed to the techniques of negotiation, facilitation, and mediation as effective ways to resolve disputes. ADR also avoids the uncertainty, costs, and other negative effects associated with lengthy appeals or complaints, or with litigation.
3. Athletics Ontario encourages all Participants to communicate openly, collaborate, and use problem-solving and negotiation techniques to resolve their differences. Athletics Ontario believes that negotiated settlements can be preferable to outcomes resolved through other dispute resolution techniques. Negotiated resolutions to disputes with and among Participants are strongly encouraged.

Application of this Policy

4. This Policy applies to all Participants.
5. Opportunities for ADR may be pursued at any point in a dispute when all parties to the dispute and Athletics Ontario agree that such a course of action would be mutually beneficial.

Facilitation and Mediation

6. If all parties to a dispute and Athletics Ontario agree to ADR, including how the cost of the ADR shall be borne, a mediator or facilitator, acceptable to all parties, shall be appointed to mediate or facilitate the dispute.
7. The mediator or facilitator shall decide the format under which the dispute shall be mediated or facilitated and shall specify a deadline before which the parties must reach a negotiated decision.
8. Should a negotiated decision be reached, the decision shall be reported to Athletics Ontario. Any actions that are to take place as a result of the decision shall be enacted on the timelines specified by the negotiated decision.
9. Should a negotiated decision not be reached by the deadline specified by the mediator or facilitator at the start of the process, or if the parties to the dispute do not agree to ADR, the dispute shall be considered under the appropriate section of Athletics Ontario’s *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy* or *Appeal Policy*, as applicable.

Final and Binding

10. Any negotiated decision will be binding on the parties. Negotiated decisions may not be appealed.

APPEAL POLICY

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) *“Appeal Case Manager”* - The Individual appointed to administer an appeal under this Policy
 - b) *“Appeal Panel”* - The individual or individuals appointed by a Case Manager to consider an appeal
 - c) *“Appellant”* – The Party appealing a decision
 - d) *“Governance Committee”* - The Governance Committee as appointed by the Board of Directors of Athletics Ontario from time to time.
 - e) *“Participants”* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario
 - f) *“Parties”* – The Appellant, Athletics Ontario, and any other Participants affected by the appeal

Purpose

2. Athletics Ontario is committed to providing an environment in which all Participants involved with Athletics Ontario are treated with respect and fairness. Athletics Ontario provides Participants with this *Appeal Policy* to enable fair and expedient appeals of certain decisions made by Athletics Ontario. Further, some decisions made by the process outlined in Athletics Ontario’s *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy* may be appealed under this Policy.

Scope and Application of this Policy

3. This Policy applies to all Participants. Any Participant who is directly affected by a decision by Athletics Ontario shall have the right to appeal that decision provided there are sufficient grounds for the appeal under the ‘Grounds for Appeal’ section of this Policy.
4. This Policy applies to decisions relating to:
 - a) Eligibility
 - b) Selection
 - c) Conflict of Interest
 - d) Discipline
 - e) Membership.
5. This Policy does not apply to decisions relating to:
 - a) Employment
 - b) Infractions for doping offenses
 - c) The rules of the sport
 - d) Selection criteria, quotas, policies, and procedures established by entities other than Athletics Ontario
 - e) Substance, content and establishment of team selection criteria
 - f) Volunteer/coach appointments and the withdrawal or termination of those appointments
 - g) Budgeting and budget implementation
 - h) Athletics Ontario’s operational structure and committee appointments
 - i) Decisions or discipline arising within the business, activities, or events organized by entities other than Athletics Ontario (appeals of these decisions shall be dealt with pursuant to the policies of those other entities unless requested and accepted by Athletics Ontario at its sole discretion)
 - j) Commercial matters for which another appeals process exists under a contract or applicable law
 - k) Decisions made under this Policy.

Appeal Case Manager

6. In the case of an appeal relating to a decision rendered under Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*, the Appeal Case Manager will be an individual appointed by the Safe Sport Officer (in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer) to whom the relevant initial complaint was submitted; and in the case of any other appeals under this Policy, an individual appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. The Appeal Case Manager will administer the appeal and handle the responsibilities of an Appeal Case Manager as described in this Policy. The Appeal Case Manager will be appointed from a pool of individuals having expertise in dispute resolution matters and approved by the Board of Directors. Appeal Case Managers will be independent individuals volunteering or retained by Athletics Ontario for this purpose.
7. The Appeal Case Manager must be unbiased and not in a conflict of interest situation and should have expertise in dispute resolution matters. Such appointment is not appealable.
8. The Appeal Case Manager will establish timelines with a goal of procedural fairness and considering the appeal in a timely fashion.

Appeal Panel

9. Where an Appeal Case Manager determines that an appeal will be considered under this Policy, the Appeal Case Manager shall appoint an Appeal Panel to consider the appeal and handle the responsibilities of an Appeal Panel as described in this Policy. The Appeal Panel will be appointed from a pool of individuals approved by the Board of Directors. Appeal Panel members will be independent individuals volunteering or retained by Athletics Ontario for this purpose.

Timing of Appeal

10. Participants who wish to appeal a decision have seven (7) calendar days from the date on which they received notice of the decision to submit, in writing to Athletics Ontario, the following:
 - a) Notice of the intention to appeal
 - b) Contact information of the Appellant
 - c) Name and contact information of any affected Parties, when known to the Appellant
 - d) Date the Appellant was advised of the decision being appealed
 - e) A copy of the decision being appealed, or description of decision if written document is not available
 - f) Grounds for the appeal
 - g) Detailed reasons for the appeal
 - h) All evidence that supports these grounds
 - i) Requested remedy or remedies
 - j) An administration fee of two hundred dollars (\$200), which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.
11. Selection criteria for events may indicate a shorter appeal period. When a shorter appeal period is necessary, the date to submit an appeal will be clearly stated in the selection criteria.
12. A Participant who wishes to initiate an appeal beyond the seven (7) calendar day period must provide a written request stating the reasons for an exemption. The decision to allow, or not allow, an appeal outside of the seven (7) calendar day period will be at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors and may not be appealed.

Grounds for Appeal

13. An appeal may be heard only if there are sufficient grounds for appeal. The following are the only grounds for appeal:
 - a) Athletics Ontario made a decision that it did not have the authority or jurisdiction (as set out in its governing documents) to make
 - b) Athletics Ontario failed to follow its own procedures (as set out in its governing documents)

- c) Athletics Ontario made a decision that was influenced by bias (where bias is defined as a lack of neutrality to such an extent that the decision-maker appears not to have considered other views)

14. The Appellant must demonstrate, on a balance of probabilities, that Athletics Ontario made an error as described in the 'Grounds for Appeal' section of this Policy, and that this error had, or may reasonably have had, a material effect on the decision or decision-maker.

Screening of Appeal

15. Upon receiving the notice of the appeal, the fee, and all other information (as outlined in the 'Timing of Appeal' section of this Policy), Athletics Ontario and the Appellant may first attempt to resolve the appeal under Athletics Ontario's *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy*.

16. Appeals resolved by mediation under Athletics Ontario's *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy* will result in the administration fee to be refunded to the Appellant.

17. Should the appeal not be resolved by using the *Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy*, the Safe Sport Officer or the Chief Executive Officer, as the case may be, will appoint an Appeal Case Manager who has the responsibility, after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors, to:

- a) Determine if the appeal falls under the scope of this Policy
- b) Determine if the appeal was submitted in a timely manner
- c) Decide whether there are sufficient grounds for the appeal

18. If the appeal is denied because it does not fall under the scope of this Policy, because it was not submitted in a timely manner, or on the basis of insufficient grounds, the Appellant will be notified, in writing, of the reasons for this decision. This decision may not be appealed.

Procedure for Consideration of Appeal

19. If the Appeal Case Manager is satisfied there are sufficient grounds for an appeal, the Appeal Case Manager will appoint an Appeal Panel, which shall consist of a single person, to consider the appeal. In extraordinary circumstances, and at the discretion of the Appeal Case Manager, an Appeal Panel of three persons may be appointed to consider the appeal. In this event, the Appeal Case Manager will appoint one of the Appeal Panel's members to serve as the Chair.

20. The Appeal Case Manager shall notify the Parties that the appeal will be heard. The Appeal Case Manager, in cooperation with the Appeal Panel, shall then decide the format under which the appeal will be considered. This decision may not be appealed. The format may be an oral in-person hearing, an oral hearing by telephone or other electronic means, a review of documentary evidence, or a combination of these methods. The consideration of the appeal will be governed by the procedures that the Appeal Case Manager and the Appeal Panel deem appropriate in the circumstances, provided that:

- a) The Parties will be given reasonable notice of the day, time and place of the hearing, in the case of an oral in-person hearing or an oral hearing by telephone or other electronic means
- b) Copies of any written documents that any of the Parties wish to have the Appeal Panel consider will be provided to all Parties, through the Appeal Case Manager, in advance of the hearing (if held) or completion of the review of documentary evidence
- c) Copies of any written documents that the Appeal Case Manager considers appropriate for the Appeal Panel to consider will be provided to all Parties through the Appeal Case Manager, in advance of the hearing (if held) or completion of the review of documentary evidence
- d) The Parties may engage a representative, advisor, or legal counsel at their own expense
- e) The Appeal Panel may request that any other individual participate and give evidence
- f) The Appeal Panel may allow as evidence any oral evidence and document or thing relevant to the subject matter of the appeal, but may exclude such evidence that is unduly repetitious and shall

place such weight on the evidence as it deems appropriate

- g) If a decision in the appeal may affect another party to the extent that the other party would have recourse to an appeal in their own right under this Policy, that party will become a Party to the appeal in question and will be bound by its outcome
- h) The decision to uphold or reject the appeal will be by a majority vote of the Appeal Panel

21. If a Party chooses not to participate in the consideration of the appeal, the hearing and/or review of documentary evidence will proceed in any event.

22. In fulfilling its duties, the Appeal Panel may obtain independent advice.

Appeal Decision

23. After considering the matter, the Appeal Panel will determine whether to reject or uphold the appeal. Within fourteen (14) calendar days after the hearing's conclusion or the conclusion of the review of documentary evidence, as the case may be, the Appeal Panel's written decision, with reasons and, if applicable, recommendations regarding the appropriate steps to be taken for the appropriate reconsideration of the matter or regarding sanctions, as the case may be, will be submitted to the Board of Directors. In making its decision, the Appeal Panel will have no greater authority than that of the original decision-maker. The Appeal Panel may decide to:

- a) Reject the appeal and confirm the decision being appealed
- b) Uphold the appeal and refer the matter to the Board of Directors to be dealt with as described in the 'Upholding Appeal' section of this Policy
- c) Uphold the appeal and recommend a different sanction or sanctions to be decided upon and imposed by the Board of Directors.

24. If the Appeal Panel's decision is to reject the appeal and confirm the decision being appealed, the Appeal Panel's written decision, with reasons, will be distributed to all Parties and the Appeal Case Manager.

Upholding Appeal

25. If the Appeal Panel's decision to uphold the appeal is based on grounds that relate to the investigation of the original complaint, the manner in which the original complaint was considered or bias, then within seven (7) calendar days of the receipt of the decision and recommendations of the Appeal Panel, the Board of Directors shall issue its written decision regarding the appropriate steps to be taken for the appropriate reconsideration of the matter. The steps to be taken may include the following, and in any such case, the procedures set out in the *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy* shall apply:

- a) Conducting a new or further investigation
- b) Appointing a new Discipline Panel to consider the matter.

The Board of Directors' decision, with reasons, together with the Appeal Panel's decision as to upholding the appeal, with reasons, will be distributed to all Parties, the Appeal Case Manager and the Appeal Panel.

26. If the Appeal Panel upholds the appeal and recommends a different sanction or sanctions, then within seven (7) calendar days of the receipt of the decision and recommendations of the Appeal Panel, the Board of Directors shall issue its written decision regarding the sanctions to be imposed. The Board of Directors may decide to:

- a) Accept the recommendations of the Appeal Panel
- b) Reject the recommendations of the Appeal Panel and send the matter back to be reconsidered under Process #2 under the *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy* by a newly formed Discipline Panel.

The Board of Directors' decision, with reasons, together with the Appeal Panel's decision as to upholding the appeal, with reasons, will be distributed to all Parties, the Appeal Case Manager and the Appeal Panel.

Confidentiality

27. The appeal process is confidential and involves only the Parties, the Safe Sport Officer, the Appeal Case Manager, the Appeal Panel, the Board of Directors and any independent advisors to the Appeal Panel. Information will be provided only to those who have a “need to know” or as required in the course of any investigation or resolution of the matter or as required by law. It is the responsibility of all Participants to cooperate with any investigation and appeal process and to maintain strict confidentiality of all information related to the appeal and any investigations.
28. It is a serious breach of this Policy to break confidentiality unless disclosure of information relating to the appeal is necessary in order for the proper investigation and resolution of the matter or is required by law. Any such breach will be treated in the same manner as Harassment.

Records and Distribution of Decisions

29. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions regarding confidentiality, decisions rendered under this Policy will be considered a matter of public record unless and to the extent decided otherwise by the Board of Directors. Other individuals or organizations, including but not limited to, national sport organizations, provincial sport organizations, sport clubs, etc., may be advised of any decisions rendered in accordance with this Policy.

Timelines

30. If the circumstances of the appeal are such that adhering to the timelines outlined by this Policy is not reasonably practicable or will not allow a timely resolution to the appeal, the Case Manager may direct that these timelines be revised.

Final and Binding

31. Decisions of the Appeal Panel and the Board of Directors are final and binding on Athletics Ontario and all Parties to the appeal.

EVENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

**** This Event Discipline Procedure does not supersede or replace Athletics Ontario's Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy ****

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Procedure:
 - a) *"Event"* – An event sanctioned by Athletics Ontario
 - b) *"Participants"* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, and Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario

Purpose

2. Athletics Ontario is committed to providing a competition environment in which all Participants are treated with respect. This Procedure outlines how alleged misconduct during an Event will be handled.

Scope and Application of this Procedure

3. This Procedure will be applied to all Athletics Ontario-sanctioned Events unless the Event host states any modifications to this Procedure (and the reasons for those modifications) in the Event's registration or invitation package and Athletics Ontario approves such modifications. Changes to this Procedure must also be outlined in the Event host's sanctioning request, when applicable.
4. If the Event is being sanctioned by Athletics Canada (such as in the case of a national championships), a national or regional games federation, or an international federation, the event discipline procedure of the sanctioning organization will replace this procedure. Incidents involving Participants must still be reported to Athletics Ontario to be addressed under Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*, if necessary.
5. This Procedure does not replace or supersede Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*. Instead, this Procedure works in concert with the *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy* by outlining, for a designated person with authority at an Event, the procedure for taking immediate, informal, or corrective action in the event of a possible violation of Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*.

Misconduct During Events

6. Incidents that violate or potentially violate Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*, which can occur during a competition, away from the area of competition, or between parties connected to the Event, shall be reported to a designated person (usually the head official or on-site convenor) responsible at the Event.
7. The designated person at the Event shall use the following procedure to address the incident that violated or potentially violated Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*:
 - a) Notify the involved parties that there has been an incident that violated or potentially violated Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*
 - b) Convene a jury of either one person or three people (one of whom shall be designated the Chairperson), who shall not be in a conflict of interest or involved in the original incident, to determine whether Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct* has been violated. The designated person at the Event may serve on the jury
 - c) The jury will interview and secure statements from any witnesses to the alleged violation

- d) If the violation occurred during a competition, interviews will be held with the officials who officiated or observed the competition and with the coaches when necessary and appropriate
 - e) The jury will secure a statement from the person(s) accused of the violation
 - f) The jury will render a decision and determine a possible penalty
 - g) The Chairperson of the jury will inform all parties of the jury's decision.
8. The penalty determined by the jury may include any of the following, singularly or in combination:
- a) Oral or written warning
 - b) Oral or written reprimand
 - c) Suspension from future competitions at the Event
 - d) Ejection from the Event
 - e) Other appropriate penalty as determined by the jury.
9. The jury does not have the authority to determine a penalty that exceeds the duration of the Event. A full written report of the incident and the jury's decision shall be submitted to Athletics Ontario following the conclusion of the Event. Further discipline may then be applied pursuant Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy* if appropriate.
10. Decisions made in the scope of this Procedure may not be appealed.
11. This Procedure does not prohibit other Participants from reporting the same incident to Athletics Ontario to be addressed as a formal complaint under Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*.
12. Athletics Ontario shall record and track all reported incidents.

SCREENING POLICY

Preamble

1. Screening personnel and volunteers is a vital part of providing a safe sporting environment and has become a common practice among sport organizations that provide programs and services to the sport community.

Application of this Policy

2. This Policy applies to all individuals applying for a position with Athletics Ontario that involves trust and/or authority. Examples of individuals to whom this Policy applies include individuals applying for positions as directors, officers or employees of Athletics Ontario, coaches or members of the integrated support team for provincial teams, and officials and volunteers at events or programs organized and run by Athletics Ontario.
3. Not all individuals applying for a position with Athletics Ontario will be required to obtain a criminal record check or submit all of the screening documents referred to in this Policy because not all positions pose a risk of harm to Athletics Ontario or Participants (as defined in Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*). Athletics Ontario will determine which individuals will be subject to screening using the following guidelines (Athletics Ontario may vary the guidelines at its discretion):

Level 1 – Low Risk - Individuals involved in low risk assignments who are not in a supervisory role, not directing others, not involved with finances, or do not have unsupervised access to Vulnerable Individuals (as defined in Athletics Ontario's *Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy*). Examples:

- a) Parents, youth, or other volunteers who are helping out on a non-regular or informal basis
- b) Officials

Level 2 – Medium Risk – Individuals involved in medium risk assignments who may be in a supervisory role, may direct others, may be involved with finances, or who may have limited access to Vulnerable Individuals. Examples:

- a) Employees
- b) Directors

Level 3 – High Risk – Individuals involved in high risk assignments who occupy positions of trust and/or authority, have a supervisory role, direct others, are involved with finances, or have frequent or unsupervised access to Vulnerable Individuals. Examples:

- a) Coaches for provincial teams
- b) Athlete support personnel (Integrated Support Team "IST") for provincial teams
- c) Chair of the Board
- d) Chief Executive Officer
- e) Treasurer
- f) Book-keeper

Requirements and Recommendations for Clubs, Coaches, Officials and Club Executives

4. It is recommended that all clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario have a screening policy that is comparable to this Policy.
5. In accordance with Athletics Ontario's *Membership Policy*, coaches, officials and "Club Executives" (as defined in the *Membership Policy*) must submit a police record check with their membership registration or renewal. In determining the acceptability of the individual's application for membership in Athletics Ontario, a review of the applicant's will be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Policy.

Screening Officers

6. The implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of Screening Officers, who are individuals appointed

from time to time by the Chief Executive Officer. Screening Officers should possess the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities to accurately screening documents and render decisions under this Policy. In the case of the screening of an individual being considered for the position of Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Directors will appoint three (3) Screening Officers to screen the applications.

7. Screening Officers are responsible for reviewing all documents submitted and, based on the review, making decisions regarding the eligibility of individuals applying for positions with Athletics Ontario or being admitted to or maintaining membership in particular categories of Athletics Ontario as provided in Athletics Ontario's *Membership Policy*. In carrying out their duties, Screening Officers may consult with the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors and with independent experts including lawyers, police, risk management consultants, volunteer screening specialists, or any other person.
8. A Screening Officer may request that the individual attend an interview with the Screening Officer or other representatives of Athletics Ontario if the Screening Officer consider that an interview is appropriate and necessary to screen the individual's application.
9. A Screening Officer may request the individual's authorization to contact any professional, sporting or other organization in order to assess the individual's suitability for the position that they are seeking.
10. A Screening Officer may request further information from the individual on more than one occasion.
11. A Screening Officer may, where appropriate, draw an adverse inference from an individual's failure to provide information or answer queries.
12. When assessing an individual's screening application, the Screening Officer shall determine whether there is reason to believe that the individual may pose a risk to Athletics Ontario or Participants (as defined in Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*).
13. An individual having been previously penalized for a prior offence or violation of the code of conduct of any sport organization shall not prevent the Screening Officer from considering that offence or violation as part of the individual's screening application.
14. If a Screening Officer determines on the basis of the individual's screening application, in addition to any further material received by it, that the individual does not pose a risk to Athletics Ontario or Participants (as defined in Athletics Ontario's *Code of Conduct*), the Screening Officer shall approve the individual's application, subject to the Screening Officer's right to impose conditions.
15. In the case of a decision denying an application or approving an application with conditions, a copy of the decision shall be provided to the applicant and to the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors, which may disseminate the decision as they see fit in order to best fulfil the mandate of Athletics Ontario.
16. An Individual whose screening application has been denied or revoked may not re-apply for a position with Athletics Ontario for two (2) years from the date the rejected application was made.

Screening Requirements

17. A Screening Requirements Matrix is provided as **Appendix A**.
18. When an individual is first applies for a position with Athletics Ontario:
 - a) Level 1 individuals will:
 - i. Complete an Application Form (**Appendix B**), and in the case of officials a police record check
 - ii. Participate in training, orientation, and monitoring as determined by Athletics Ontario

- b) Level 2 individuals will:
 - i. Complete an Application Form (**Appendix B**)
 - ii. Complete a Screening Disclosure Form (**Appendix C**)
 - iii. Complete and provide a police record check
 - iv. Provide one letter of reference related to the position (or contact information for at least one individual whom the Screening Officer may contact as a reference)
 - v. Participate in training, orientation, and monitoring as determined by Athletics Ontario
 - vi. Provide a driver's abstract, if requested

- c) Level 3 individuals will:
 - i. Complete an Application Form (**Appendix B**)
 - ii. Complete a Screening Disclosure Form (**Appendix C**)
 - iii. Complete and provide a police record check
 - iv. Provide two letters of reference related to the position (or contact information for at least two individuals whom the Screening Officer may contact as references)
 - v. Participate in training, orientation, and monitoring as determined by Athletics Ontario
 - vi. Provide a driver's abstract, if requested

- d) The above requirements may be modified by the Screening Officers, in their discretion, on a case-by-case basis and, in the case of Level 2 and 3 individuals, after consultation with the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors.

- e) If Athletics Ontario learns that an individual has provided false, inaccurate, or misleading information, the individual may, at the discretion of the Screening Officer, immediately be removed from their position and may be subject to further discipline in accordance with Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*.

Young People

- 19. When screening people under the age of 18, Athletics Ontario will:
 - a) Not require the young person to obtain a police record check; and
 - b) In lieu of obtaining a police record check, require the young person to submit two letters of reference (or provide contact information for at least two individuals whom the Screening Officer may contact as references).

- 20. Notwithstanding the above, the Screening Officer may ask a person under the age of 18 to obtain a police record check if the Screening Officer suspects the person has an adult conviction and therefore has a criminal record. In these circumstances, the Screening Officer will be clear in their request that they are not asking for the person's youth record. Athletics Ontario understands that it may not request to see a person's youth record.

Renewal; Re-opening

- 21. Unless the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors determines, on a case-by-case basis, to modify the submission requirements, individuals who are required to submit a police record check and Screening Disclosure Form or Screening, are required to submit the documents as follows:
 - a) A police record check every year
 - b) A Screening Disclosure Form (**Appendix C**) every three years
 - c) A Screening Renewal Form (**Appendix D**) every year

- 22. If an individual subsequently receives a charge or conviction for, or is found guilty of, an offence, they will report this circumstance immediately to Athletics Ontario. Additionally, the individual will inform Athletics

Ontario of any changes in their circumstances that would alter their original responses in their Screening Disclosure Form.

23. At any time, including after either the submission of an individual's application or its approval (with or without conditions), a Screening Officer may re-open an individual's file for additional screening if it is advised of new information that, in the discretion of the Screening Officer, could affect the assessment of the individual's suitability for the relevant position with Athletics Ontario's.

Orientation, Training, and Monitoring

24. The type and amount of orientation, training, and monitoring will be based on the individual's level of risk, at the discretion of Athletics Ontario.
25. Orientation may include, but is not limited to: introductory presentations, facility tours, equipment demonstrations, parent/athlete meetings, meetings with colleagues and supervisors, orientation manuals, orientation sessions, and increased supervision during initial tasks or initial period of engagement.
26. Training may include, but is not limited to: certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.
27. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to: written or oral reports, observations, tracking, electronic surveillance (e.g., facility security cameras), and site visits.

How to Obtain Police Record Check

28. A police record check may be obtained online via <https://www.trackireg.com/ao-screening>

Procedure

29. Screening documents must be submitted to the Screening Officer.
30. Except in the case of volunteers helping out on a non-regular or informal basis, an individual who refuses or fails to provide the necessary screening documents will be ineligible to volunteer or apply for the position sought. The individual will be informed that their application will not proceed until such time as the screening documents are submitted.
31. There may be delays in receiving the results of a police record check. At their discretion, a Screening Officer may permit the individual to participate in the position for which they have applied during the delay. This permission may be withdrawn at any time and for any reason.
32. A Screening Officer will use their expertise and discretion when making decisions based on the screening documents that have been submitted.
33. Following the review of the screening documents, the Screening Officer will decide:
 - a) The individual has passed screening and is eligible for the desired position;
 - b) The individual has passed screening and is eligible for the desired position with conditions;
 - c) The individual has not passed screening and is not eligible for the desired position; or
 - d) More information is required from the individual.
34. In making their decision, the Screening Officer, in consultation with the Governance Committee, will consider the type of offense, date of offense, and relevance of the offense to the position sought.
35. A Screening Officer, in consultation with the Governance Committee, may decide that an individual has not passed screening if the screening documentation reveals any of the following:

- a) If imposed in the last three years:
 - i. Any offense involving the use of a motor vehicle, including but not limited to impaired driving
 - ii. Any offense for trafficking and/or possession of drugs and/or narcotics
 - iii. Any offense involving conduct against public morals
 - iv. Any offense involving theft or fraud
 - v. Any disciplinary action or sanctioning by a sport governing body or independent body (e.g. private tribunal, government agency)
- b) If imposed at any time:
 - i. An individual's conviction for any of the following *Criminal Code* offenses:
 - a. Any offense of physical or psychological violence
 - b. Any offense involving trafficking of illegal drugs
 - c. Any offense involving a minor
 - d. Any offense involving the possession, distribution, or sale of any child-related pornography
 - e. Any sexual offense.

Conditions and Monitoring

36. Excluding the incidents above which, if revealed, could cause the individual to not pass screening, a Screening Officer, in consultation with the Governance Committee, may determine that incidents revealed on an individual's screening documents may allow the individual to pass the screening process and be eligible for a desired position with *conditions* imposed. Screening Officer, in consultation with the Governance Committee, shall have the discretion to apply and remove conditions, determine the length of time for the imposition of conditions, and determine the means by which adherence to conditions may be monitored.

Records

37. All records will be maintained in a confidential manner and will not be disclosed to others except as required by law, or for use in legal, quasi-legal, or disciplinary proceedings.
38. The records kept as part of the screening process include but are not limited to:
- a) An individual's Application Form
 - b) An individual's police record check (for a period of three years)
 - c) An individual's Screening Disclosure Form (for a period of three years)
 - d) An individual's Screening Renewal Form (for a period of one year)
 - e) Records of any conditions attached to an individual's registration
 - f) Records of any discipline applied to any individual by Athletics Ontario or by another sport organization.

Appendix A – Screening Requirements Matrix

Risk Level	Roles (Note Young People Exception Below)	Training Recommended/Required	Screening
Level 1 Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Parents, youth or volunteers acting on a non-regular or informal basis b) Officials 	Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing by meet or program director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an Application Form (Appendix B) • Officials must also submit a police record check • Participate in training, orientation, and monitoring as determined by Athletics Ontario
Level 2 Medium Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Employees b) Directors 	Recommended based on role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders • Commit to Kids Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect in Sport Activity Leaders (Officials) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 Requirements • Complete a Screening Disclosure Form • Complete and provide a police record check • Provide one letter of reference related to the position or reference contact information • Provide a driver's abstract, if requested
Level 3 High Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Coaches for provincial teams b) Athlete support personnel (IST) for provincial teams c) Chair of the Board d) Chief Executive Officer e) Treasurer f) Book-keeper 	Recommended based on role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders • Commit to Kids Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Ethical Decisions Certified (Coaches) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 Requirements • A second letter of reference or reference contact information

Young People

When screening young people (under the age of 18), Athletics Ontario will:

- a) Not require the young person to obtain a police record check; and
- b) In lieu of obtaining a police record check, require the young person to submit up to two (2) additional letters of reference.

Appendix B – Application Form

Note: Individuals who are applying to volunteer or work within certain positions with Athletics Ontario must complete this Application Form. Individuals need to complete an Application Form once for the position sought. If the individual is applying for a new position within Athletics Ontario, a new Application Form must be submitted.

NAME: _____
First Middle Last

CURRENT PERMANENT ADDRESS:

Street City Province Postal

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ **GENDER IDENTITY:** _____
Month/Day/Year

EMAIL: _____ **PHONE:** _____

POSITION SOUGHT: _____

By signing this document below, I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures of Athletics Ontario, including but not limited to the *Code of Conduct* and the policies included in Athletics Ontario's *Safe Sport Policy Manual*. Policies are located at the following link: <https://athleticsontario.ca/safe-sport-information/>

For applicants other than informal volunteers and officials: I recognize that I must pass certain screening requirements depending on the position sought, as outlined in the *Screening Policy*, and that a Screening Officer will determine my eligibility to work in the position.

NAME (print): _____ **DATE:** _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Appendix C – Screening Disclosure Form

NAME: _____
First Middle Last

OTHER NAMES YOU HAVE USED: _____

CURRENT PERMANENT ADDRESS:

Street City Province Postal

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ GENDER IDENTITY: _____
Month/Day/Year

CLUB (if applicable): _____ EMAIL: _____

Note: Failure to disclose truthful information below may be considered an intentional omission and the loss of responsibilities with Athletics Ontario or other privileges

1. Have you been convicted of a crime? If so, please complete the following information for *each conviction*. Attach additional pages as necessary.

Name or Type of Offense: _____

Name and Jurisdiction of Court/Tribunal: _____

Year Convicted: _____

Penalty or Punishment Imposed: _____

Further Explanation: _____

2. Have you ever been disciplined or sanctioned by a sport governing body or sport organization (e.g. club) or dismissed from a coaching or volunteer position? If so, please complete the following information for each disciplinary action or sanction. Attach additional pages as necessary.

Name of disciplining or sanctioning body: _____

Date of discipline, sanction or dismissal: _____

Reasons for discipline, sanction or dismissal: _____

Penalty or Punishment Imposed: _____

Further Explanation: _____

3. Are criminal charges or any other sanctions, including those from a sport governing body or sport organization (e.g. club), currently pending or threatened against you? If so, please complete the following information for each pending charge or sanction. Attach additional pages as necessary.

Name or Type of Offense: _____

Name and Jurisdiction of Court/Tribunal: _____

Name of disciplining or sanctioning body: _____

Further Explanation: _____

PRIVACY STATEMENT

By completing and submitting this Screening Disclosure Form, I consent and authorize Athletics Ontario to collect, use and disclose my personal information, including all information provided on the Screening Disclosure Form as well as my police record check for the purposes of screening, implementation of the *Screening Policy*, administering membership services, and communicating with National Sport Organizations, Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations, clubs, and other organizations involved in the governance of sport. Athletics Ontario does not distribute personal information for commercial purposes.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the information contained in this Screening Disclosure Form is accurate, correct, truthful and complete.

I further certify that I will immediately inform Athletics Ontario of any changes in circumstances that would alter my original responses to this Screening Disclosure Form. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of volunteer responsibilities or other privileges and/or disciplinary action.

NAME (print): _____

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Appendix D – Screening Renewal Form

NAME: _____
First Middle Last

CURRENT PERMANENT ADDRESS:

Street City Province Postal

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ **GENDER IDENTITY:** _____
Month/Day/Year

EMAIL: _____ **PHONE:** _____

By signing this document below, I certify that there have been no changes to my criminal or disciplinary record since I last submitted a police record check or Screening Disclosure Form to Athletics Ontario. I further certify that there are no outstanding charges and warrants, judicial orders, peace bonds, probation or prohibition orders, or applicable non-conviction information, and there have been no absolute and conditional discharges.

I agree that any police record check or Screening Disclosure Form that I would obtain or submit on the date indicated below would be no different than the last police record check or Screening Disclosure Form that I submitted to Athletics Ontario. I understand that if there have been any changes, or if I suspect that there have been any changes, it is my responsibility to obtain and submit a new police record check or Screening Disclosure Form to Athletics Ontario instead of this form.

I recognize that if there have been changes to the results available from the police record check or Screening Disclosure Form, and that if I submit this form improperly, then I am subject to disciplinary action and/or the removal of responsibilities with Athletics Ontario or other privileges at the discretion of Athletics Ontario.

NAME (print): _____ **DATE:** _____

SIGNATURE: _____

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Policy is to allow people to have a discreet and safe procedure by which they can disclose incidents of wrongdoing without fear of unfair treatment or reprisal.

Application

2. This Policy applies to individuals and organizations (“persons”) that observe or experience incidents of wrongdoing and report such incident or observations under the expectation that, except as may be required by law, their identity will not be disclosed to anyone other than the Safe Sport Officer to whom they submit their report. “Safe Sport Officers” are the individuals appointed by the Chief Executive Officer to be the first point-of-contact for all complaint and discipline matters reported to Athletics Ontario.
3. The Safe Sport Officer may recommend to a person making a report under this Policy that the matter should be handled under Athletics Ontario’s *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*.
4. Matters reported under the terms of this Policy may be required by law to be referred directly to law enforcement agencies.

Wrongdoing

5. Wrongdoing includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Violating the law
 - b) Intentionally or seriously breaching Athletics Ontario’s *Code of Conduct* or other policies in Athletics Ontario’s *Safe Sport Policy Manual*
 - c) Creating or ignoring risks to the life, health, or safety of a Participant
 - d) Directing a person to commit a crime, serious breach of an Athletics Ontario policy, or other wrongful act; or
 - e) Fraud

Pledge

6. Athletics Ontario pledges not to dismiss, penalize, discipline, or retaliate or discriminate against any person who discloses information or submits, in good faith, a report under the terms of this Policy.
7. Any individual affiliated with Athletics Ontario who breaks this pledge will be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting Wrongdoing

8. A person who believes an incident of wrongdoing has occurred should prepare a report that includes the following and submit the report to one of the Safe Sport Officers identified on Athletics Ontario’s website:
 - a) Written description of the act or actions that comprise the alleged wrongdoing, including the date and time of the act or action;
 - b) Identities and roles of other individuals (if any) who may be aware of, affected by, or complicit in, the wrongdoing;
 - c) Why the act or actions should be considered to be wrongdoing.

Authority

9. Athletics Ontario has appointed the Safe Sport Officers to receive reports made under this Policy. <https://athleticsontario.ca/safe-sport-information/>
10. After receiving a report, the Safe Sport Officer has the responsibility to:

- a) Assure the person of Athletics Ontario's pledge
- b) Determine if the report is frivolous, vexatious, or not submitted in good faith (e.g., the submission of the report is motivated by personal interests and/or the content of the report is obviously false or malicious)
- c) Determine if this Policy applies
- d) Determine whether to recommend that the matter be handled under Athletics Ontario's *Complaints, Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy*
- e) Determine if the local police service must be contacted
- f) Determine whether to recommend mediation or alternate dispute resolution be used to resolve the issue
- g) Determine whether the Chair of the Board and/or Chief Executive Officer should or can be notified of the report
- h) Begin an investigation
- i) Determine whether to consult, without revealing the identity of the person making the report, with the Chair and/or Chief Executive Officer about the responsibilities listed in this section.

Alternate Liaison

11. As an alternative to reporting the alleged wrongdoing to a Safe Sport Officer under this Policy, the person may choose to contact a third-party organization such as the Athletics Canada Commissioner's Office, the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) or the Canadian Sport HELpline.
12. The Safe Sport Officer will not disclose the person's identity to anyone without the person's consent, except as may be required by law.
13. A person who is unsure whether he, she or they should submit a report, or who does not want to have his, her or their identity known, may contact any of the Safe Sport Officers for informal advice about the process.

Investigation

14. If the Safe Sport Officer determines that an investigation should be launched, the Safe Sport Officer will engage an independent investigator. The investigator will be chosen from a pool of individuals approved by the Board of Directors. The Safe Sport Officer will notify the Chair of the Board that an investigation will be conducted by an independent investigator without the nature of the investigation, content of the report, or identity of the person who submitted the report being disclosed.
15. An investigation launched under this policy, should generally take the following form:
 - a) Follow up interview with the person who submitted the report
 - b) Identification of Participants who may have been affected by the wrongdoing
 - c) Interviews with such-affected individuals
 - d) Interview with the person(s) about whom the report was submitted
16. In all stages of the investigation, the investigator will take every precaution to protect the identity of the person who submitted the report and the specific nature of the report itself. However, the Safe Sport Officer shall advise the person submitting the report that there are some instances where the nature of the report and/or the identity of the person who submitted the report will or may be inadvertently deduced by individuals participating in the investigation.
17. The investigator will prepare and submit a report to the Safe Sport Officer for review and action.

Decision

18. Within fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the investigator's report, the Safe Sport Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Board or the Chief Executive Officer, will recommend to the Governance Committee what corrective action, if any, is required. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to including:
 - a) Enacting and/or enforcing policies and procedures aimed at eliminating the wrongdoing or further opportunities for wrongdoing;
 - b) Discipline, suspension, termination, or other action as permitted by Athletics Ontario's Bylaws, policies and procedures.
19. Within fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the recommendations of the Safe Sport Officer, the Board of Directors will make a decision concerning the corrective action, if any, to be taken.
20. Communication concerning the corrective action, if any, to be taken will be provided to the person who submitted the report at the conclusion of the matter.

Confidentiality

21. Confidentiality at all stages of the procedures outlined in this Policy – from the initial report to the final decision – is assured for all individuals, subject to legal requirements to report certain matters to government agencies, the local police service or child protection agencies. However, persons reporting matters under this Policy must recognize that requiring strict confidentiality may limit the ability of an investigator to investigate the alleged wrongdoing and the authority of Athletics Ontario to take certain corrective actions.

CONCUSSION AWARENESS

REMOVAL FROM SPORT AND RETURN TO COMPETITION GUIDELINES

These guidelines provide general information only and are not intended to, and do not, constitute any medical advice, medical diagnosis, symptom assessments or medical opinions.

Athletics Ontario takes the health and well-being of all its participants seriously, whether they are training, in competition or engaged in related events. While concussions and suspected concussions occur only occasionally in the sport of athletics (track and field, cross country, road running, trail running or race walking), they do happen.

Athletics Ontario is committed to increasing awareness, amongst its members on head injury prevention and concussion identification and management.

Application

- (a) These guidelines bring attention to the issue of concussions, highlight best practices and provide resources for clubs, coaches, athletes, and parents for dealing with a concussion.
- (b) During Athletics Ontario Championship competitions, Athletics Ontario will have a designated person(s) who follow the Concussion Guidelines, including the Removal from Sport and Return to Sport Protocols.
- (c) Athletics Ontario requires all Participants to follow to these guidelines and requires all clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario to enact club procedures to ensure adherence to these guidelines.
- (d) Athletics Ontario requires all clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario to have a designated person(s) who will have specific responsibilities to ensure that the removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols, are followed and that there is such a designated person present at all training, competition and related events.
- (e) Athletics Ontario requires that athletes under 26 years of age, parents of athletes under 18, coaches, team trainers and officials confirm every year that they have reviewed Ontario's Concussion Awareness Resources.

Definitions

- (a) *"Concussion"* is a brain injury and is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces. This biomechanical force can be caused by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere in the body creating a whiplash affect. An athlete DOES NOT require direct contact with the head or loss of consciousness to acquire a concussion.
- (b) *"Participants"* – Individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, Athletics Ontario including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, parents and guardians and spectators at events, Directors and Officers of Athletics Ontario, and clubs that are members of Athletics Ontario.

CONCUSSION INFORMATION

(a) Awareness

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen. It affects the way a person may think and remember things, and can produce a variety of symptoms. Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion.

A concussion can happen at home, school, practice or competition. Anyone from parents, coaches, sport and recreation leaders, school professionals, athletes, and officials can play an important role in learning how to identify signs and symptoms of concussion; and understanding what to do if they think an athlete has experienced one.

(b) Symptoms and Signs

An athlete does not need to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion.

There are many signs and symptoms associated with a concussion and they can be divided into 3 categories: Physical, Behavioral/Emotional and Cognitive. The following chart includes some of the more common signs and symptoms but is not exclusive.

PHYSICAL	BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE
Headache or "Pressure in head" Neck pain Nausea/vomiting Dizziness Blurred vision Balance problems Sensitivity to light or noise	Fatigue or low energy Confusion Drowsiness Trouble falling asleep More emotional Irritability Sadness Nervous/anxious	Feeling slowed down Feeling like "in a fog" "Don't feel right" Difficulty concentrating Difficulty remembering

Adapted from: Guidelines for Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury & Persistent Symptoms 2nd ed. and SCAT 3

The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. In some cases, athletes may take many weeks or months to heal. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that an individual may take longer to heal.

While most children and teens with concussions recover quickly and fully, some may have concussion symptoms that last for days, weeks, months – even years. Repeat concussions can result in brain swelling or permanent brain damage. Concussions should be treated on a case by case basis as no two concussions are the same.

REMOVAL-FROM-SPORT PROTOCOL

The following outlines a process for immediate removal of an athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion.

1. REMOVE THE ATHLETE

Designated person(s) to immediately remove the athlete from further training, practice or competition if the athlete has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the concussion or suspected concussion was sustained from an activity associated with Athletics Ontario.

2. CALL 9-1-1 IF EMERGENCY

Designated person(s) to call 9-1-1 if, in their opinion, doing so is necessary (e.g., if there is an emergency and any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear).

3. INFORM

If the athlete is under 18 years of age, designated person(s) to inform the athlete's parent or guardian about the removal from further training, practice or competition.

A medical assessment determines whether the athlete has a concussion. An athlete will not be permitted to return to training, practice or competition until they receive medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to do so.

Designated person(s) to advise the athlete, and the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, that the athlete is required to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete will be permitted to return to training, practice or competition.

4. GIVE PROTOCOLS

Designated person(s) to provide the athlete and, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian with Athletics Ontario Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols as soon as possible after the athlete has been removed from further training, practice or competition.

5. RECORD THE INCIDENT

Make and keep a record of incidences where an athlete is removed from further training, practice or competition because they are suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the athlete is later diagnosed with a concussion.

The sport organization must limit the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information to that which is reasonably necessary for the purpose of carrying out the sport organization's protocols, and to limit access to such personal information to only those individuals who require it for the purpose of fulfilling their duties or obligations under the Act. Personal information collected under this protocol shall be retained, disclosed and disposed of in a secure manner and in accordance with the sport organization's personal information retention policy. The sport organization shall create a retention policy for personal information.

6. RETURNING TO TRAINING, PRACTICE OR COMPETITION

Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition, except in accordance with Athletics Ontario Return-to-Sport protocol.

RETURN-TO-SPORT PROTOCOL

The following outlines a return-to-sport process for an athlete who has been removed from training, practice or competition due to a suspected or diagnosed concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained or is suspected of having been sustained during a sport activity associated with Athletics Ontario.

1. RECEIVE CONFIRMATION

Ensure that an athlete who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice or competition until the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides confirmation to the designated person(s) that the athlete:

- a) Has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and has not been diagnosed as having a concussion, and
- b) Has been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition by the physician or nurse practitioner.

2. IF DIAGNOSED WITH HAVING A CONCUSSION

If an athlete has been diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion the athlete must proceed through the graduated return-to-sport steps.

The Return-to-School Plan (Learning and Physical Activity)

Students in elementary and secondary school with a diagnosed concussion must follow their school board's return-to-school plan, which supports a student's gradual return to learning and return to physical activity. Contact the school for more information.

3. GRADUATED RETURN-TO-SPORT STEPS

It is important to note that typical recovery times vary from person to person, and that some individuals may require more time to progress through the graduated return-to-sport steps.

The graduated return-to-sport steps may include the following activities. It is typically recommended that an athlete with concussion rest for 24 to 48 hours before beginning step 1.

	Activities	Goal of Step	Duration
STEP 1: Symptom-limiting activities	Daily activities that don't make symptoms worse, such as moving around the home and simple chores	Gradual reintroduction of daily school, and work activities	At least 24 hours
STEP 2: Light aerobic activity	Light activities such as walking or stationary bicycle at slow to medium pace for 10 to 15 minutes	Increase heart rate	At least 24 hours
STEP 3: Sport-specific exercise	Individual physical activity such as running or skating No contact or head impact activities	Add movement	At least 24 hours

STEP 4: Non-contact training, practice drills	Harder training drills Add resistance training (if appropriate)	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking	At least 24 hours
STEP 5: Unrestricted Training & Practice	Unrestricted training and practice-with contact where applicable	Restore confidence and assess functional skills	At least 24 hours Obtain clearance from physician or nurse practitioner before unrestricted training, practice or competition
STEP 6: Return-to-Sport	Unrestricted competition		

An athlete is typically ready to progress to the next step when they can do the activities at their current step without new or worsening symptoms. If at any step symptoms get worse, they should stop and return to the previous step before trying again. If symptoms do not improve or if the symptoms continue to worsen, the athlete should return to the physician or nurse practitioner.

4. SHARE MEDICAL ADVICE

An athlete, or the athlete’s parent or guardian must share the medical advice or recommendations they receive with the designated person(s) before being permitted to return to training, practice or competition through the graduated return-to-sport steps, if any.

5. DISCLOSING DIAGNOSIS

The designated person(s) must inform the athlete and, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete’s parent or guardian of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to any other sport organization with which the athlete is registered or school that the athlete attends.

6. MEDICAL CLEARANCE

The athlete, or the athlete’s parent or guardian must provide the designated person(s) a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete is permitted to move on to unrestricted training, practice or competition.

7. RECORD PROGRESSION

The sport organization must make and keep a record of the athlete’s progression through the graduated return-to-sport steps until the athlete, or the athlete’s parent or guardian, has provided a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to the designated person(s).

The sport organization must limit the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information to that which is reasonably necessary for the purpose of carrying out the sport organization's protocols, and to limit access to such personal information to only those individuals who require it for the purpose of fulfilling their duties or obligations under the Act. Personal information collected under this protocol shall be retained, disclosed and disposed of in a secure manner and in accordance with the sport organization's personal information retention policy. The sport organization shall create a retention policy for personal information.