

ABBOTSFORD UNITED SOCCER CLUB



Code of Conduct to Protect Children in Soccer

Effective Date: August 1, 2021

AUSC Member Safety Commitment

Our mandate is always to create the best soccer experience possible for every child and all members in our programs. This includes providing a caring, friendly, safe and harassment free soccer environment.

AUSC is committed to investigating reported incidents of misconduct or harassment in a prompt, objective, and sensitive manner taking necessary corrective action and providing appropriate support for victims. No individual shall be penalized in any way for making a complaint or giving evidence that aids in investigation of such misconduct.

What is it?

AUSC has developed the following Child Protection Code of Conduct to guide coaching staff and volunteers in their interactions with children; develop healthy relationships; and model appropriate boundaries for children. The safety, rights and well-being of children we serve are at the core of our daily programs. We nurture supportive relationships with children while balancing and encouraging appropriate boundaries.

AUSC Child Protection Code of Conduct is committed to ensuring all children are protected and safe from all forms of misconduct and inappropriate forms of behavior (i.e. bullying, harassment, sexual misconducts, racial, religious, and gender status). A Code of Conduct is an important part of AUSC creating safe environments for children. The safety, rights and well-being of children participating in our programs is a priority in our daily operations. Hence, it is the responsibility of all staff, board members, coaches, referees, parents and volunteers to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of AUSC players and to protect them from any form of harm, and/or maltreatment.

List Examples of Misconducts (Important to note this list is not exhaustive)

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding cleats/clothing, threatening gestures);
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality; or
- Verbal name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing, blaming, shaming, embarrassing, humiliating,

All actions and behavior included may be:

- Planned or unintentional;
- Individual or group action(s);
- Isolated or continual in nature.

Inappropriate behavior includes (list not exhaustive):

1. **Inappropriate Communication.** Communication with a child or his/her family outside of the context of duties for the organization, regardless of who initiated the exchange. For example:
 - Personal phone calls not tied to duties with the child
 - Electronic communications (email, text message, instant message, online chats, social networking including “friending”, etc.) not tied to duties with the child
 - Personal letters not tied to duties with the child
 - Excessive communications (online or offline)
2. **Inappropriate Contact.** Spending unauthorized time with a child outside of designated duties with the organization.

3. **Favoritism.** Singling out a child or certain children and providing special privileges and attention. (For example, paying a lot of attention to, giving or sending personalized gifts, or allowing privileges that are excessive, unwarranted or inappropriate.)
4. **Taking Personal Photos/Videos.** Using a personal cell phone, camera or video to take pictures of a child, or allowing any other person to do so, as well as uploading or copying any pictures you may have taken of a child to the Internet or any personal storage not device. Pictures taken as part of your job duties are acceptable, however, the pictures are to remain with AUSC and not be used by you in a personal capacity.

Inappropriate behaviour also includes:

5. Telling sexual jokes to a child, or making comments to a child that are or is in any way suggestive, explicit or personal.
6. Showing a child material that is sexual in nature, including, signs, cartoons, graphic novels, calendars, literature, photographs, screen savers, or displaying such material in plain view of a child, or making such material available to a child
7. Intimidating or threatening a child
8. Making fun of a child

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

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

Accountability: Treating Children with Dignity and Maintaining Boundaries

All staff/volunteers must:

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

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

All of your interactions and activities with children:

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

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behavior or other interactions. **If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behavior or the behavior of others, you should discuss it with the designated person within your AUSC (and/or contact Club General Manager).**

General Rules of Behavior

Staff/volunteers of AUSC must not:

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

Reporting Requirements and Procedure

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

Where to report:

1. All allegations or suspicions of **potentially illegal behavior** (for example, child sexual abuse) that a staff/volunteer witnesses first-hand, must be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare, and AUSC General Manager/Board.
2. To ensure the protection of all children in our care (AUSC), all allegations or suspicions of **potentially illegal behaviour** that a staff/volunteer learns of must also be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare. Police and/or child welfare will make the determination as to whether the allegation or suspicion requires further investigation.
3. All allegations or suspicions of **inappropriate behaviour** (see above examples), that a staff/volunteer learns of or witnesses' first-hand, must be reported to the designate for the AUSC (General Manager).

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

- Potentially Illegal behaviour by a Staff/Volunteer of the AUSC
- Potential Illegal behaviour by a third party, such as a Parent, Teacher, Babysitter

If you are not sure whether the issue you have witnessed or heard about involves potentially illegal behavior or inappropriate behavior, discuss the issue with the designated person (General Manager) within AUSC who will support you through the process.

Remember: You have an independent duty to report all suspicions of potentially illegal behavior directly to police and/or child welfare.

Follow up on Reporting Process

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

AUSC will follow up on the matter to gather information about what happened and determine what, if any, additional formal or other disciplinary action is required, including to referring the matter to The District, and/or BC Soccer, and/or Canada Soccer Association.