
Markham Soccer Club



Code of Conduct to Protect Children in Sport

Effective Date: July 7, 2025

Introduction

Markham Soccer Club (MSC) has developed the following Child Protection Code of Conduct to guide our employees, coaches and volunteers in their interactions with 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.

Why is the Child Protection Code of Conduct Important?

Our organization is committed to ensuring all children are protected and safe. A Code of Conduct is an important part of creating safe environments for children. The safety, rights and well-being of children participating in our programs is a priority in our daily operations.

The intent of the Code of Conduct is to guide our staff/volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the children involved in the programs delivered by our organization and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

Treating Children With Dignity and Maintaining Boundaries

All MSC coaches, employees and 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 behaviour towards children and pay close attention to the behaviour of your peers to ensure that behaviour is appropriate and respectful and will be perceived as such by others.

All 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.
- Designed to develop the child's skills in the program.

Always consider the child's reaction to any activities, conversations, behaviour or other interactions. If at any time you are in doubt about the appropriateness of your own behaviour or the behaviour of others, you should discuss it with the Executive Director of Markham Soccer Club.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour toward a child:

- Embarrassing
- Shaming
- Blaming
- Humiliating

- Putting them down

General Rules of Behaviour

Coaches, employees and volunteers 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) the organization's mandate, policies, or Code of Conduct to Protect Children, regardless of whether or not they are serving the organization at that moment.
- Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour – it is a staff/volunteer's duty to report the matter to the Executive Director, Child Welfare Agency, or law enforcement, **DO NOT** investigate.

What Constitutes Inappropriate Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour includes:

1. **Inappropriate Communication.** Communication with a child or their 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. **Favouritism.** Singling out a child or certain children and providing special privileges and attention (e.g., 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 of a child to the Internet or a personal device. Photos taken as part of your duties are acceptable, but must remain with the organization and not used in a personal capacity.

Inappropriate behaviour also includes:

5. Telling sexual jokes to a child, or making comments that are suggestive, explicit, or personal.
6. Showing a child material that is sexual in nature, including signs, cartoons, literature, photographs, or screen savers.

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 the sport organization.

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

Reporting Requirements

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

Where to report:

1. All allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour (e.g., child sexual abuse) that a coach/employee/volunteer witnesses first-hand must be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare.
2. To ensure the protection of all children in our care, all allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behaviour that a coach/employee/volunteer learns of must also be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare. Police and/or child welfare will determine if further investigation is required.
3. All allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour (see examples above) that a coach/employee/volunteer learns of or witnesses first-hand must be reported to the Executive Director of Markham Soccer Club.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES:

York Region Children's Aid Society	905-895-2318
The Catholic Children's Aid Society	416-395-1500
Jewish Family & Child Service	905-303-5838
Native Child & Family Services	905-895-2371

If you are unsure of which of the Children's Aid Societies to contact, call the York Region Children's Aid Society

Documentation of suspected abuse and neglect incident:

1. When calling Children's Aid Society, record the date/time of call and the name of the person you spoke with, and their contact information

2. Document the details of why you felt you had reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant/child is being abused or neglected, resulting in a report to Children's Aid Society
3. Documentation should include:
 - a. What you saw or heard
 - b. Be objective
 - c. Record word for word, where you can, and provide a description of any injury if applicable

You may learn of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour through the child, a third party, or by witnessing it first-hand. Examples of reportable behaviour include:

- Potentially illegal behaviour by a coach/employee/volunteer of the organization
- Potentially illegal behaviour by a third party, such as a parent, teacher, babysitter, or coach

If you are unsure whether the issue involves potentially illegal behaviour or inappropriate behaviour, speak with the Executive Director of Markham Soccer Club for guidance.

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

Follow-up on Reporting

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

When an allegation or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour is reported, Markham Soccer Club will follow up on the matter to gather information and determine what, if any, formal or other disciplinary action is required.

In the case of inappropriate behaviour, if:

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

Markham Soccer Club may refer the matter to a child welfare agency or police.

I agree to comply with the Code of Conduct to Protect Children for Markham Soccer Club.

Coach/Employee/Volunteer: _____
(PRINT NAME)

Coach/Employee/Volunteer: _____
(SIGNATURE)

Date: _____