



Row Ontario - Athlete Protection Policy

Effective date	Oct. 1, 2021
Archived date	
Date last reviewed	Sept. 15, 2021
Scheduled review date	Oct. 2024
Replaces and/or amends	Row Ontario Child Protection Policy
Approved by and date	RO Board of Directors Sept. 15, 2021
Appendix(-ces) to this Policy	Image Consent Form Procedures Reporting Suspected Abuse of a Minor

Purpose

1. This Athlete Protection Policy describe how Persons in Authority shall maintain a safe sport environment for all Athletes.

Interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes – the ‘Rule of Two’

2. Row Ontario and its Member Organizations, strongly recommend the ‘Rule of Two’ for all Persons in Authority who interact with Athletes, whether in person or remotely (i.e., in virtual settings). The Coaching Association of Canada describes the intention of the ‘Rule of Two’ as follows:

A coach must never be alone or out of sight with a minor athlete. Two NCCP trained or certified coaches should always be present with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation such as in a locker room or meeting room. All one-on-one interactions between a coach and an athlete must take place within earshot and in view of a second coach except for medical emergencies. One of the coaches must also be of the same gender as the athlete. Should there be a circumstance where a second screened and NCCP trained or certified coach is not available, a screened volunteer, parent, or adult can be recruited.

3. Row Ontario recognizes that fully implementing the ‘Rule of Two’, as described above (and modified accordingly for Persons in Authority), in all circumstances, may not always be possible. Consequently, at a minimum, interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes must respect the following:
 - i. The training and competition environments should be open to observation so that all interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes are observable.
 - ii. Private or one-on-one situations must be avoided unless they are open and observable by another adult or Athlete.
 - iii. Persons in Authority shall not invite or have a Vulnerable Individual (or Vulnerable Individuals) in their home without the written permission and contemporaneous knowledge of the Vulnerable Individual's parent or guardian.

- iv. Vulnerable Individuals must not be in any situation where they are alone with a Person in Authority without another screened adult or Athlete present unless prior written permission is obtained from the Athlete's parent or guardian

Practices and Events

4. As it relates to practices and/or competitions, the following shall be respected:
 - a) A Person in Authority should never be alone with a Vulnerable Individual prior to or following a competition or practice unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent or guardian.
 - b) If the Vulnerable Individual is the first Athlete to arrive, the Athlete's parent should remain until another Athlete or Person in Authority arrives.
 - c) If a Vulnerable Individual would potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a competition or practice, the Person in Authority should ask another Person in Authority (or a parent or guardian of another Athlete) to stay until all of the Athletes have been picked up. If an adult is unavailable, another Athlete, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Individual, should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a Vulnerable Individual
 - d) Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual Athlete should always do so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority
 - e) If there is a concern with observing the Rule of Two, Persons in Authority and Athletes should take additional steps to achieve transparency and accountability in their interactions.

Communications

5. Communications between Persons in Authority and Athletes shall respect the following:
 - a) Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between Persons in Authority and Athletes
 - b) Persons in Authority may only send personal texts, direct messages on Social Media or emails to individual Athletes when necessary and only for communicating information related to team issues and activities (e.g., non-personal information). Any such texts, messages or emails shall be professional in tone and must be copied to another adult when the Athlete is a Vulnerable Individual.
 - c) No personal texts between Vulnerable Individuals and Persons in Authority may be sent; however, if this is necessary as indicated above, it shall include one other adult person on the message (preferably the Vulnerable Person's parent(s)/guardian(s)).
 - d) Parents and guardians may request that their child not be contacted by a Person in Authority using any form of electronic communication and/or to request that certain information about their child may not be distributed in any form of electronic communications
 - e) All communication between a Person in Authority and Athletes must be between the hours of 6:00am and 11:00pm unless extenuating circumstances justify otherwise (e.g., cancelling an early morning practice)
 - f) Communications concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is not permitted
 - g) No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation may be communicated by any medium
 - h) Persons in Authority and Athletes are not permitted to offer or ask one another to keep a secret for them

Virtual settings

6. The Rule of Two shall apply to all Minors in a virtual environment. Specifically:
 - a) For Athletes under the age of 16, where possible, a parent/guardian should be present during any virtual session;
 - b) Two adult coaches should be present or one coach and one adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, Member Organization administrator). One-on-one virtual sessions are prohibited;
 - c) Coaches shall be informed by Row Ontario of the expected standards of conduct during virtual sessions;
 - d) Parents/guardians of Minors shall be informed by Row Ontario of the activities that will take place during the virtual session, as well as the process of the virtual session;
 - e) Parents/guardians of Minors shall provide consent to the Minor participating in the virtual session, if irregularly scheduled, or prior to the first session if the sessions will take place on a regular basis;
 - f) Communications during virtual sessions shall take place in an open and observable environment. Sessions must be initiated in appropriate locations (i.e., not in personal or inappropriate locations such as bedrooms);
 - g) Virtual sessions should be recorded whenever allowed by the technology being used;
 - h) Parents/guardians should debrief with Minors on a weekly basis regarding virtual sessions.

Travel

7. Any travel involving Persons in Authority and Athletes shall respect the following:
 - a) Teams or groups of Athlete shall always have at least two Persons in Authority with them
 - b) For mixed gender teams or groups of Athletes, there will be one Person in Authority from each gender
 - c) Screened parents or other volunteers will be available in situations when two Persons in Authority cannot be present
 - d) No Person in Authority may drive a vehicle with an Athlete alone unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent or guardian
 - e) A Person in Authority may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with an Athlete unless the Person in Authority is the Athlete's parent or guardian
 - f) Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority
 - g) For overnight travel when Athletes must share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate and, for Minors, shall be within two years of age of one another and of the same gender identity

Locker Room / Changing Areas

8. The following shall apply to locker rooms, changing areas, regatta weigh-in area(s), and meeting rooms:
 - a) Interactions (i.e., conversation) between Persons in Authority and Athletes should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as a locker room, regatta weigh-in area(s), restroom or changing area. A second adult should be present for any necessary interaction between an adult and an Athlete in any such room. The Rule of Two must be respected.

- b) If Persons in Authority are not present in the locker room or changing area, or if they are not permitted to be present, they should still be available outside the locker room or changing area and be able to enter the room or area if required, including but not limited to team communications and/or emergency

Photography / Video

- 9. Any photograph or video involving Athletes shall respect the following:
 - a) Photographs and video may only be taken in public view, must observe generally accepted standards of decency, and be both appropriate for and in the best interest of the Athlete.
 - b) The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.
 - c) Examples of photos that shall be edited or deleted include:
 - i. Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing
 - ii. Suggestive or provocative poses
 - iii. Embarrassing images
 - d) If any photographs or videos will be used on any form of public media, an Image Consent Form must be completed before any images are taken and used

Physical Contact

- 10. It is recognized that some physical contact between Persons in Authority and Athletes may be necessary for various reasons including, but not limited to, teaching a skill, or tending to an injury. Any physical contact shall respect the following:
 - a) Unless it is otherwise impossible because of serious injury or other justifiable circumstance, a Person in Authority must always clarify with an Athlete where and why any physical contact will occur prior to the contact occurring. The Person in Authority must make clear that he or she is requesting to touch the Athlete and not requiring physical contact
 - b) Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact during a training session is permitted
 - c) Hugs lasting longer than five seconds, cuddling, physical horseplay, and physical contact initiated by the Person in Authority is not permitted. It is recognized that some Athletes may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a Person in Authority for various reasons (e.g., such as crying or celebrating after a performance), but this physical contact may only occur in an open and observable environment.

Enforcement

- 11. Any alleged violations of this *Athlete Protection Policy* shall be addressed pursuant to Row Ontario's *Harassment, Discipline and Complaints Policy*.

Privacy

- 12. The collection, use and disclosure of any personal information pursuant to this Policy is subject to Row Ontario's Privacy Policy.

Appendix A – Image Consent Form

1. I hereby grant to [Insert Name of Member Organization(s)], Row Ontario and Rowing Canada Aviron (collectively the “Organizations”) on a worldwide basis, the permission to photograph and/or record the Participant’s image and/or voice on still or motion picture film and/or audio tape (collectively the “Images”), and to use the Images to promote the sport and/or the Organizations through traditional media such as newsletters, websites, television, film, radio, print and/or display form, and through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. I understand that I waive any claim to remuneration for use of audio/visual materials used for these purposes. This consent will remain in effect in perpetuity; however, consent may be withdrawn by the Participant by the Participant notifying Row Ontario of such withdrawal in writing.
2. I hereby fully release, discharge, and agree to save harmless the Organizations, for any and all claims, demands, actions, damages, losses or costs that might arise out of the collection, use or disclosure of the Images or taking, publication, distortion of the Images, negatives, and masters or any other likeness or representation of the Participant that may occur or be produced in the taking of said Images or in any subsequent processing thereof, including without limitation any claims for libel, passing off, misappropriation of personality or invasion of privacy.
3. **I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE**, that I have read and understood the terms and conditions of this document. On behalf of me, my heirs, and assigns, I agree that I am signing this document voluntarily and to abide by such terms and conditions.

Signed at this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if Participant is younger than 18 years old):

Appendix B – Procedures Reporting Suspected Maltreatment of a Minor

NOTE: this Appendix B **only** applies where suspected Maltreatment occurs outside of the business, activities and Events of Row Ontario and/or Member Organizations. Such business, activities and Events include, but are not limited to competitions, practices, evaluations (including time trials or any other form of testing), treatment or consultations (i.e., massage therapy), training camps, travel associated with organizational activities, the office environment, and any meetings or social Events.

If the suspected Maltreatment occurs within the business, activities and Events of Row Ontario and/or Member Organizations, as described above, it shall be reported to the Independent Third Party in accordance with the Harassment, Discipline and Complaints Policy. It is noted that any such behaviour reported to the Independent Third Party may also need to be reported to local Children's Aid Society (CAS).

Notwithstanding the above, where any suspected Maltreatment of a Minor occurs outside of the business, activities and Events of Row Ontario and/or Member Organizations, all Row Ontario and/or Member Organization staff and volunteers are required by law under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act to report any suspected abuse of a Minor to the local CAS.

Staff must comply with the following protocol in making a report to the CAS:

Note: Utmost discretion must be observed

- If the alleged individual is outside of rowing, report immediately to the Chief Executive Officer
 - do not discuss with other staff
 - do not discuss with involved parties
 - do not discuss with family
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- Staff do not conduct an investigation of suspected Maltreatment. Investigating is the responsibility of the local CAS.
 - All staff have a personal responsibility to report any suspected case of Maltreatment of a Minor to the local CAS. Reporting a concern to another staff or Board Member is not sufficient. **Any staff with a concern must report their concern to the CAS**, even if advised against doing so by a Row Ontario volunteer or staff member.
 - The local CAS office in the home city of the individual will be contacted.
 - If staff are uncertain if a case of suspected Maltreatment is one which must be reported, they can notify the CAS of the details and the CAS will advise if the case is one which should be reported.
 - Once a report has been made, Row Ontario shall follow the instructions given by the CAS as to what action needs to be done to safeguard the Minor concerned.
 - Staff must make, and keep in a private secured file, detailed notes of the disclosure or reasons for the report and their actions and notify the Chief Executive Officer/Chair of the Board of Directors of any report of a case of suspected abuse to CAS with appropriate details of the concern.

- The Chief Executive Officer shall notify the Chair of the Board of Directors that a report of suspected Maltreatment has been made, the details of the concern, and actions recommended by the CAS for Row Ontario to follow.

Definitions of terms used in this policy can be found as a separate document in the Resource Library online on the Row Ontario website.