

PROTECTION POLICY

Effective date	April 1 st 2026
Archived date	-
Date last reviewed	March 10 th , 2026
Scheduled review date	November 2029
Replaces and/or amends	Athlete Protection Policy – Oct 1, 2021
Approved by and date	
Appendix(-ces) to this Policy	Appendix A – Image Consent Form

Purpose

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

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

2. Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) and its Members, including Row Ontario 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).
3. Row Ontario recognizes that fully implementing the ‘Rule of Two’, at the highest standard of two screened and trained Athlete Support Personnel 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 and/or any Vulnerable Participants 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 Participant (or Vulnerable Participants) in their home without the written permission and contemporaneous knowledge of the Vulnerable Participant's parent or guardian.
 - iv. Vulnerable Participants 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 Vulnerable Participant’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 Participant prior to or following a competition or practice unless the Person in Authority is the Vulnerable Participant’s parent or guardian.
 - b) If the Vulnerable Participant is the first Athlete to arrive, the Vulnerable Participant’s parent should remain until another Individual or Person in Authority arrives.

- c) If a Vulnerable Participant 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 Participant, should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a Vulnerable Participant.
- d) Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual Athlete should always do so in an open and observable environment.
- 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 not communicate directly to Individual Athletes except 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 (preferably the Vulnerable Person's parent(s)/guardian(s)) when the Athlete is a Vulnerable Participant.
 - c) 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
 - d) 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)
 - e) Communications concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is not permitted
 - f) No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation may be communicated by any medium
 - g) Persons in Authority and Athletes are not permitted to offer or ask one another to keep a secret for them for any unethical, inappropriate, prohibited, or improper purpose

Virtual settings

- 6. The Rule of Two shall apply to all Vulnerable Participants 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 certified and screened Athlete Support Personnel should be present or one with another adult (parent, guardian, volunteer). One-on-one virtual sessions are prohibited;
 - c) Coaches, and where relevant, Athlete Support Personnel shall be informed by Row Ontario of the expected standards of conduct during virtual sessions;
 - d) Parents/guardians of Vulnerable Participants 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 Vulnerable Participants 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 appropriate open and observable environment. Sessions must be initiated in appropriate locations (i.e., not in personal or inappropriate locations such as bedrooms);
- g) Unless otherwise prohibited by professional regulations or where an Athlete and/or Vulnerable Participant does not provide consent, virtual sessions between Persons in Authority and Athletes and/or Vulnerable Participant must be recorded whenever allowed by the technology being used;
- h) Parents/guardians should debrief with Vulnerable Participants 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 Vulnerable Participants shall always have at least two Persons in Authority with them
 - b) For mixed gender teams or groups of Vulnerable Participants, there will be a mix of Persons in Authority acceptable to the Vulnerable Participants and their parents/guardians.
 - 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 a Vulnerable Participant 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, 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, restroom or changing area unless there is an emergency. A second screened 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 where Vulnerable Participants are present and be able to enter the room or area if required, such as in an 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 in any location 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) Individuals (or parent/guardian in case of a Minor) should sign an image consent form (as part of the registration process) that describes how an Individual's image may be used by organization.
- e) Without consent, Individuals may not be photographed or filmed; and no images of Individuals may be posted publicly or privately. If consent is given, it may be revoked at any time.

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 they are requesting to touch the Athlete and not requiring physical contact prior to the contact occurring.
 - 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 unrelated to teaching a skill or tending to an injury 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 and should be limited in duration.

Enforcement

11. Any alleged violations of this *Protection Policy* shall be addressed pursuant to Row Ontario's *Complaints and Discipline 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)], and RCA and, as applicable, my Provincial Rowing Association (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 the age of majority):
