



SOUTHWEST LONDON COMPETITIVE SOCCER

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Latest Revised: March 18th 2022

Southwest London Competitive Soccer Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct between Adults/Adolescents and Children

- i. Southwest London Competitive Soccer and members (inclusive of all parents and supporters) will ensure guidelines for appropriate/inappropriate conduct between Adults/Adolescents and Children are met.

Guidelines for Appropriate/Inappropriate Conduct between Adults/Adolescents and Children

Soccer offers incredible experiences for both children and teens (and parents/caregivers). These experiences are integral to enhancing child development. Positive experiences are tied to healthy relationship between athletes and coaches, as well as to safe environments where adults are accountable for their actions and behaviors.

These guidelines will be used to establish a common understanding of expectations for adults interacting with children in sport, and a sense of safety for those who need to bring forward any concerns of misconduct towards children.

For the purpose of this document 'a coach or adult' refers to any person working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with children in sport (including parents). 'Children' refers to anyone under eighteen (18) years old.

The Coach/Trainer and Athlete Relationship

Generally, coaches are in a position of trust, and it's through professional boundaries that this foundation of trust between coaches/trainers and athletes is built. If boundaries are broken, the outcome is negative consequences.

The coach and athlete relationship is also characterized by a power imbalance in favor of the coach. Athletes are taught to respect and listen to their coaches, and they are dependent upon the coach's knowledge and training to further develop their skills.



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INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Trust and power can be used to breach the coach-athlete relationship. This often happens through boundary violations, which occur when the adult places their needs above the child and gains personally/professionally at the child's expense. The responsibility is always with the adult to establish appropriate boundaries with children.

Age of Protection in Canada

The age of protection (also called the age of consent) is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of protection in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the Criminal Code increases that age to 18 in the context of certain relationships. If the child is:

- 14 or 15 years old the age difference must be LESS THAN 5 years AND the relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.
- 16 or 17 years old the relative positions of the parties must be such that child is able to give consent.
- For all children aged 12-17: If the other person is in a position of trust or authority over the child (i.e. a coach, teacher, etc.) the child is dependent on the other person or the relationship is exploitative of the child, the child is NOT able to give consent, making sexual activity in the context of such relationships illegal. In these situations, only a person ages 18 or older is capable of consent.

The increased age considers the inherent vulnerability of the child and is meant to protect the child in situations that involve a power or other imbalance. Appropriate and Inappropriate Behavior Individuals working or volunteering in sport and expected to model behavior that upholds public confidence and enhances healthy relationships with children and families.



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Examples of Appropriate Behavior

- Respectful language and attitude towards others (including opposition);
- Respectful of personal physical and emotional boundaries;
- Responding to children to meet the child's needs and not the adult's;
- Engaging with children in a manner that would be seen by a reasonable observer as maintaining reasonable boundaries;
- Allowing practices open to observation by parents;
- Communication with children (including electronic) is transparent and accountable.

Examples of Inappropriate Behavior

- Disrespectful language;
- Humiliation or intimidating children;
- Inappropriate touching of children (i.e. massaging, stroking, caressing, roughhousing, tickling);
- Confiding or sharing overly personal information with a child;
- Asking children to keep secrets;
- Electronic communication with children that is persona and not directly tied to coaching duties;
- Communication that is sexual or flirtatious;
- Pictures taken with personal devices or in change rooms.

Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

All interactions and activities with children should be (including electronic communication) transparent, accountable, within the duties of coaching/volunteering, in response to meet the needs of the player/child.



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INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Concerns and Reporting

In cases where a child is in immediate harm parents or coaches must call 911 and report the incident to the authorities.

It can be difficult to respond to a situation where you notice a coach and athlete relationship that appears inappropriate. Reporting inappropriate behavior creates accountability so proper action can be taken and expectations can be re-established.

Parents or coaches who have concerns should speak with the **Team Manager**, and/or **Club General Manager**, and/or **Club President**. Parents and coaches should also have regular age-appropriate conversations with children about personal safety and boundary-breaking behavior.

Some topics to talk with children about are the qualities of healthy relationships, importance of personal boundaries, and how to get help/where to bring concerns.

For this information and more visit: www.kidsintheknow.ca/safetysheets

If you are concerned about a sexual image that has been shared, visit www.cybertip.ca
This site has information for teens and adults.

For more information on reporting inappropriate conduct and sexual abuse, visit www.commit2kids.ca/safesport