

Code of Ethics and Conduct to Protect Children

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

The Golden Minor Soccer Association (GMSA) has developed the following Code of Ethics and Conduct to guide our employees/volunteers in their interactions within the club and 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.

Further to this policy, GMSA supports and complies to the [British Columbia Universal Code of Conduct \(BC UCC\)](#) and the [BC Soccer Conduct & Ethics Policy](#) for all soccer activities and related events organized, including but not limited to practices, training sessions, competitions, and fundraising events.

IMPORTANCE

Our club is committed to ensuring all children are protected and safe. A Code of Ethics and 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 this Code is to guide our staff/volunteers in developing healthy relationships with the club members and specially with the children involved in our programs and to model appropriate boundaries for children.

A. STANDARDS

Integrity in Sport

- a. All participants in soccer have an obligation to ensure that there is integrity in the sport and as such must refrain from:
 - i. Non-medical use of drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs or methods. More specifically, GMSA adopts and adheres to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program. Any infraction under this program shall be considered an infraction of this Code and may be subject to disciplinary action and possible sanction. The Member will respect any penalty enacted pursuant to a breach of the Canadian Anti-Doping Program, whether imposed by the club or any other sport organization;
 - ii. Associating with any person for the purpose of coaching, training, competition, instruction, administration, management, athletic development, or supervision of the sport, who has violated an anti-doping rule and is serving a sanction involving a period of ineligibility imposed pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program and/or the World Anti-Doping Code;
 - iii. Consuming alcohol and/or illicit drugs, while participating in soccer programs, activities, and competitions;
 - iv. Consuming alcohol in excess and using illicit drugs, cannabis, or tobacco in situations where Youth are present;
 - v. Accepting, encouraging, or participating in forms of bribery and corruption;
 - vi. Accepting or giving gifts or other benefits that influence an act that is related to their official activities. If in doubt, gifts shall not be offered or accepted;

- vii. Offering or accepting cash, other than reasonable per diems, expense reimbursement or salaries, bribes;
- viii. Forging or falsifying a document, nor use such;
- ix. Betting in connection with soccer and tolerating any form of manipulation of match results whether for financial, sporting, or political gain, and ensure information in any form that is not publicly available is not used for the above purposes for oneself or another party.

b. Participants will:

- i. Ensure information obtained while carrying out one's duties is treated as confidential if that information is received or can be understood as confidential;
- ii. Respect the confidentiality of the information after the relationship with BC Soccer ceases;
- iii. Ensure transparency in all actions and decisions;
- iv. Remain politically neutral with respect to sporting matters;
- v. Remain responsible for following GMSA's Code(s) of Conduct.

B. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

General

Those participating in sanctioned soccer have a duty and responsibility to conduct themselves appropriately respecting the F.I.F.A. Laws of the Game, Canada Soccer Rules & Regulations, British Columbia Universal Code of Conduct (BC UCC), BC Soccer Rules & Regulations and GMSA's Rules & Regulations. These laws and rules are published and readily available.

a. All participants in soccer have a responsibility to:

- i. Comply, at all times, with Canada Soccer's, BC Soccer's and GMSA's By-laws, Policies, procedures, directives, and Rules and Regulations, as adopted and amended from time to time.
- ii. Resolve conflicts in a professional and civil manner on issues that may be in dispute.
- iii. Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of all individuals involved in soccer by:
 - 1. Demonstrating respect to individuals regardless of body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, sex, and sexual orientation;
 - 2. Directing comments or criticism appropriately and avoiding public criticism of participants in soccer and sport;
 - 3. Demonstrating the spirit of fair play, sport leadership, and ethical conduct;
 - 4. Treating individuals fairly and reasonably;
 - 5. Ensuring adherence to the Laws of the Game.
- iv. Demonstrate respect for the principle of fair play, which includes:
 - 1. Respect for both the letter and spirit of the rules;
 - 2. Respect for referees and their decisions;
 - 3. Respect for opponents, including modesty in victory and composure in defeat;
 - 4. Facilitation of access to sport;
 - 5. Maintenance of self-control at all times;

- v. Any adult aged 19 years or older must report any ongoing criminal investigation, conviction, or existing bail conditions, including those for violence, child pornography, or possession, use, or sale of any illegal substance to the Risk Management Officer. GMSA's current Risk Management Officer is Ben Blain, coaching.gmsa@gmail.com.

Club Officials, Staff and Volunteers

While ignorance of the Laws of the Game or of the rules is not a defense, depending on the nature of the charge, it is viewed that a participant in a position of authority or trust is held to a higher standard when going beyond the norms of proper behaviour; i.e. behaving in an unsporting manner or not in the best interest of the game. Notably directors, committee members, and staff should be aware of various rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, and expectation within the soccer playing and administrative environment; and indeed, are charged with upholding and defending the same. Failure to act properly can be tantamount to unsporting or unethical behaviour and brings the game directly into disrepute and lead to charges.

- b. All club officials, staff and volunteers must:
 - i. Comply and be familiar with the various laws and governance documents that apply to their responsibilities;
 - ii. Act with honesty and integrity and conduct themselves in a manner which maintains the confidence of GMSA, its members and other stakeholders;
 - iii. Ensure that their organization's financial affairs are conducted with due regard for all fiduciary and operational responsibilities;
 - iv. Conduct themselves openly, professionally, lawfully and in good faith
 - v. Be independent and impartial and not influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism;
 - vi. Behave with decorum appropriate to both circumstance and position, and be fair, equitable, considerate, and honest in all dealings with others;
 - vii. Keep informed about local, provincial, and national sport community happenings, and general trends in sport;
 - viii. Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws under which GMSA is incorporated;
 - ix. Respect the confidentiality appropriate to the business at hand;
 - x. Ensure that Members are given sufficient opportunity to express opinions, and that all opinions are given due consideration and weight;
 - xi. Respect the decisions of the majority and resign if unable to do so; unless the decision of the majority is unlawful;
 - xii. Commit the time to attend meetings and be diligent in preparation for, participation in, and follow-up from such meetings.

Spectators and Parents

Spectators and Parents are an all-important part of the game and necessary to maintain the sustainability of the game. In appreciating the game to its fullest potential, spectators and parents are expected to behave in a manner that does not bring the game into disrepute and participate in ways that ensure a healthy and safe environment.

- c. Spectators and parents must:

- i. Encourage players to abide by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence;
- ii. Never ridicule a player;
- iii. Only provide positive comments that motivate and encourage participants' continued effort;
- iv. Respect the decisions and judgments of officials and encourage athletes to do the same;
- v. Respect and show appreciation to all competitors, and to the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who give their time to the sport;
- vi. Refrain from entering the training or competition area and from interfering with any activities;
- vii. Refrain from any negative or critical comments towards a Match Official.

C. TREATING CHILDREN WITH DIGNITY AND MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

- a. Club Officials, Staff and Volunteers must:
 - i. Treat all children with respect and dignity.
 - ii. Establish, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in activities or programs delivered by GMSA.

It is important for staff and volunteers to monitor their behaviour towards children and pay close attention to the behaviour of their peers to ensure that interactions are appropriate and respectful, and perceived as such by others.

- b. All interactions with children must be:
 - i. Known and approved by the board, where applicable, and the parents of the child.
 - ii. Tied to staff and volunteers' duties.
 - iii. Designed to develop the child's skills in soccer.

Club Officials, Staff and Volunteers must 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 one of the board members of GMSA who will then bring it to the board to discuss/investigate the behaviour and determine how to proceed with such matter. contact gmsapres@gmail.com**

D. GENERAL RULES OF BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS CHILDREN

- a. Club Officials, Staff and Volunteers **MUST NOT**, regardless of whether or not they are serving the club at that moment:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Engage in any **communication** with a child, within or outside of duties, that may make the child uncomfortable or that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
 - iii. Engage in any **behaviour** that goes against (or appears to go against) the club's mandate, policies, or Code of Conduct to Protect Children.
 - iv. **Conduct their own investigation** into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour – it is a staff and volunteer's duty to report the matter to the designated person, Child Welfare Agency, or law enforcement, not to investigate.

E. WHAT CONSTITUTES INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

- a. **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).
- b. **Inappropriate Contact.** Spending unauthorized time with a child outside of designated duties.
- c. **Favouritism.** 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).
- d. **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 device. Pictures taken as part of your job duties are acceptable, however, the pictures are to remain with the organization and not be used by you in a personal capacity.

Inappropriate behaviour also includes:

- e. Telling sexual jokes to a child or making comments to a child that are in any way suggestive, explicit, or personal.
- f. 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.
- g. Intimidating or threatening a child.
- h. 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 GMSA.

F. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All GMSA 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.

- a. All allegations or **suspicions of inappropriate behaviour** that a staff/volunteer learns of, or witnesses first-hand, must be reported to a GMSA board member (or contact gmsapres@gmail.com) who will then take the report to the Board for further investigation (at least 3 board members will be involved in the investigation/decision process).
- b. All allegations or suspicions of **potentially illegal behaviour (for example, child sexual abuse)** that a staff/volunteer learns of, or witnesses first-hand, must be promptly reported to police and/or child welfare and must also be reported to GMSA board member (or contact gmsapres@gmail.com) who will then take the report to the Board for further investigation (at least 3 board members will be involved in the investigation process). Police and/or child welfare will make the determination as to whether the allegation or suspicion requires further investigation.

Keep in mind that you may learn of potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour through the child or some other third party. Potentially illegal behaviours could come not only from staff or volunteers, but also from a parent, teacher, babysitter, or a coach from a different organization.

If you are not sure whether the issue you have witnessed or heard about involves potentially illegal or inappropriate behaviour, discuss the issue with GMSA board member (or contact gmsapres@gmail.com) who will then take the report to the Board for further investigation (at least 3 board members will be involved in the investigation process).

G. FOLLOW UP ON REPORTING

- a. When an allegation or suspicion of **potentially illegal behaviour** is reported, police and/or a child welfare agency will be notified. GMSA will follow up internally as appropriate.
- b. When an allegation or suspicion of **potentially inappropriate behaviour** is made, GMSA will follow up on the matter to gather information about what happened and determine what, if any, formal or other disciplinary action is required.
- c. In the case of inappropriate behaviour, if multiple behaviours were reported, inappropriate behaviour is recurring, or the reported behaviour is of serious concern, GMSA may refer the matter to a child welfare agency or to the police.

DEFINITIONS

Participant(s): everyone involved in soccer activities such as players, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators, executives, board members, trainers, etc. as well as anyone who has signed a participant code of conduct; for example, a guardian of a minor who is registered and has signed the code of conduct.

Club Officials, Staff and Volunteers: Board Members, Executive Director, Technical Director, Operational Staff, hired Coaches, Volunteer Coaches, General Volunteers, and any other individual in similar roles with GMSA.

Spectators and Parents: any individual, related or not to any of the participants, that attend a GMSA session and remain in the premises for its duration.

Match Officials: a referee, assistant referee, fourth official, match commissioner, any person in charge of safety or any other person appointed to assume responsibility in connection with a Match.

Good Faith: the sincere intention to be honest and law-abiding; good and honest intentions; act in a fair and appropriate manner.

BC SOCCER ALIGNMENT

All GMSA policies must align with BC Soccer's Bylaws, Rules & Regulations, and applicable Policies and procedures.

I agree to comply with the Code of Conduct to Protect Children for GMSA.

X

Staff/volunteer's signature

X

Date