



AKBA PLAYER PROTECTION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that coaches maintain a safe sport environment for all players.

THE 'RULE OF TWO'

The AKBA strongly recommends the 'Rule of Two' for all coaches who interact with players, whether in person or remotely. 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.

AKBA recognizes that fully implementing the 'Rule of Two' may not always be possible. However, at a minimum, interactions between coaches and players must respect the following:

- The training and competition environments should be open to observation so that all interactions between coaches and players are observable.
- Private or one-on-one situations must be avoided unless they are open and observable by another adult or player.
- coaches shall not invite or have a player in their home without the written permission and contemporaneous knowledge of the player's parent or guardian.

PRACTICES AND GAMES

As it relates to practices/competitions and/or other AKBA sanctioned events, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- A coach should never be alone with a player prior to or following a competition or practice unless the coach is the player's parent or guardian.
- The parent/guardian of the first player to arrive should remain until another player or coaches arrive.
- If a player would potentially be alone with a coach following a competition or practice, the coach should ask another coach or a parent/guardian of another player to stay until all the players have been picked up.

- Coaches giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual player should always do so within earshot and eyesight of another coach or adult.
- If there is a concern with observing the 'Rule of Two', coaches and players should take additional steps to achieve transparency and accountability in their interactions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications between coaches and players shall follow these guidelines:

- Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between coaches and players.
- Coaches may only send personal texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individual players 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 player is under the age of majority.
- No personal texts between coaches and players may be sent.
- Parents and guardians may request that their child not be contacted by a coach 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.
- Coaches and players are not permitted to offer or ask one another to keep a secret for them.

VIRTUAL SETTINGS

The 'Rule of Two' shall apply to all players under the age of 18 in a virtual environment. Specifically, where possible, a parent/guardian should be present during any virtual session. Two adult coaches should be present or one coach and one adult (parent, guardian, volunteer, AKBA administrator). One-on-one virtual sessions are prohibited.

TRAVEL

Any travel involving coaches and players shall follow these guidelines:

- Teams or groups of players shall always have at least two coaches/adults with them.
- no coach may drive a vehicle with a player alone unless the coach is the player's parent or guardian.
- A coach may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with a player unless the coach is the player's parent or guardian.
- room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two coaches/adults.
- for overnight travel when players must share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate and shall be within two years of age of one another and of the same gender identity.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO

Any photograph or video involving players shall respect the following:

- 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 player.
- The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.
- Examples of photos that shall be edited or deleted include:
 - Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing
 - Suggestive or provocative poses
 - Embarrassing images

PHYSICAL CONTACT

It is recognized that some physical contact between coaches and players 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:

- Unless it is otherwise impossible because of serious injury or other justifiable circumstance, a coach must always clarify with a player where and why any physical contact will occur prior to the contact occurring. The coach must make clear that he or she is requesting to touch the player and not requiring physical contact.
- Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact during a training session is permitted
- Hugs lasting longer than five seconds, cuddling, physical horseplay, and physical contact initiated by the coach. It is recognized that some players may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a coach 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

Any alleged violation of this policy shall be dealt with by the Board's Discipline Committee, pursuant to the AKBA's *Harassment, Discipline and Complaints* policy.

Upon receiving a complaint under this policy, members of the Board, in their sole and absolute discretion, may also notify local authorities, including but not limited to York Regional Police, Children's Aid Society, etc.