SAFESPORT AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

BC SOCCER ACADEMIES ASSOCIATION

Incorporation No. S0067747
Adopted: October 23, 2025
Applies to: All programs of the Association, including the Academy Super League (ASL)

PART 1 – PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

1.1 BC Soccer Academies Association (BCSAA) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants in its programs, with the highest duty of care owed to children and youth.

1.2 The purpose of this Policy is to:

(a) prevent abuse, harassment, maltreatment, and exploitation of children and youth in BCSAA programs;

(b) establish clear standards of conduct for all adults associated with the Association;

(c) create safe mechanisms for reporting concerns;

(d) ensure all reports are investigated promptly and fairly; and

(e) comply with applicable BC law, including the Child, Family and Community Service Act (British Columbia).

1.3 This Policy applies to all directors, officers, employees, coaches, team officials, referees, volunteers, parents, and any other person participating in or associated with BCSAA programs and events, including the Academy Super League (ASL).

PART 2 – DEFINITIONS

2.1 In this Policy:

"Abuse" means any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological harm inflicted on a child or youth, including but not limited to:

(a) **Physical abuse** — any deliberate application of force to a child's body that causes or could cause injury;

(b) **Emotional abuse** — a pattern of conduct that harms a child's emotional development, including verbal attacks, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, or rejection;

(c) **Sexual abuse** — any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child, including grooming behaviour, inappropriate touching, exposure, or communication of a sexual nature;

(d) **Neglect** — failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life including supervision and protection from harm.

"Child" or "Youth" means any person under 19 years of age.

"Grooming" means behaviour by an adult intended to gain the trust of a child or their family for the purpose of facilitating abuse.

"Harassment" means a course of vexatious comment or conduct toward a person that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, including conduct based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age.

"Maltreatment" means abuse, neglect, harassment, or any other conduct that causes or risks harm to a child's physical, emotional, or psychological well-being.

"Participant" means any person participating in BCSAA programs, including players, coaches, team officials, referees, volunteers, and parents.

"Position of trust" means any role that involves direct and ongoing contact with, authority over, or responsibility for children and youth, including coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, referees, and volunteers in direct contact roles.

"SafeSport Officer" means the individual appointed by the Board under Section 5 of this Policy.

PART 3 – PROHIBITED CONDUCT

3.1 The following conduct is strictly prohibited in all BCSAA programs and activities:

(a) any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse of a child or youth;

(b) grooming behaviour toward a child, youth, or their family;

(c) any sexual contact or communication of a sexual nature between an adult in a position of trust and any child or youth participant;

(d) harassment, bullying, or intimidation of any participant;

(e) the use of physical punishment or humiliation as a disciplinary measure;

(f) excessive or inappropriate physical contact with a child or youth;

(g) one-on-one contact between an adult and a child in a private, non-public space (e.g., a closed room, vehicle, or isolated area) without another adult present;

(h) photography, video recording, or digital communication involving a child or youth without the prior consent of the child's parent or guardian;

(i) sharing personal information of a child or youth participant without the consent of the child's parent or guardian;

(j) providing alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, or any controlled substance to any child or youth; and

(k) any conduct that exploits, demeans, or endangers a child or youth participant.

3.2 Coaches, team officials, and volunteers shall not communicate with child participants via personal social media, private messaging apps, or personal email without copying a parent or guardian, except in a group channel that includes a parent or guardian or another adult official.

PART 4 – CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

4.1 All individuals in a position of trust — including coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, team officials, referees, and any volunteer with direct and ongoing contact with children and youth — must obtain a criminal record check, including a vulnerable sector check, before beginning their role with BCSAA.

4.2 Criminal record checks must be renewed every three (3) years, or immediately if the Association becomes aware of a relevant charge or conviction.

4.3 An individual with a criminal record involving violence, sexual offences, child exploitation, or related matters shall not be permitted to hold a position of trust with BCSAA. The Board shall have discretion to assess other criminal records on a case-by-case basis.

4.4 The SafeSport Officer shall maintain a confidential register of criminal record check completions and renewal dates.

4.5 Participation in a position of trust without a current criminal record check is prohibited. Any individual who fails to provide a current check when required shall be immediately removed from their role until the requirement is met.

PART 5 – SAFESPORT OFFICER

5.1 The Board shall appoint a SafeSport Officer who is responsible for:

(a) receiving and triaging all reports of abuse, maltreatment, harassment, or policy violations involving children and youth;

(b) coordinating investigations under this Policy;

(c) maintaining confidential records of all reports and their outcomes;

(d) ensuring all persons in positions of trust have completed required criminal record checks and training;

(e) advising the Board on SafeSport matters and recommending policy updates; and

(f) acting as the primary contact for participants, parents, and guardians who have concerns about child safety.

5.2 The SafeSport Officer shall be a director or officer of the Association, or a qualified individual appointed by the Board.

5.3 The SafeSport Officer's contact information shall be published on the Association's website and communicated to all registered participants and their families at the start of each season.

5.4 The current SafeSport Officer is: [NAME TO BE APPOINTED BY BOARD]

Contact: [EMAIL AND PHONE TO BE PROVIDED]

PART 6 – REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

6.1 **Mandatory Reporting to Authorities.** Every person associated with BCSAA who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected has a legal duty under the Child, Family and Community Service Act (British Columbia) to report that belief to the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or to a police authority immediately. This duty exists regardless of any other internal reporting process and cannot be overridden by any Association policy, instruction, or request.

6.2 **Internal Reporting.** In addition to any mandatory report to authorities, any person who witnesses, experiences, or has reasonable grounds to suspect abuse, maltreatment, harassment, or a violation of this Policy shall report the matter to the SafeSport Officer as soon as practicable.

6.3 Reports to the SafeSport Officer may be made:

(a) in person;

(b) by telephone;

(c) by email to the SafeSport Officer's designated email address; or

(d) by written submission delivered to the Association's registered office.

6.4 **Anonymous reporting** is permitted. The Association will make reasonable efforts to investigate anonymous reports, recognizing that the ability to investigate may be limited.

6.5 **Protection from Retaliation.** No person shall be subject to retaliation, reprisal, or adverse treatment for making a report in good faith under this Policy. Any person who retaliates against a reporter shall be subject to disciplinary action.

6.6 **False Reports.** A person who knowingly makes a false or malicious report under this Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

PART 7 – INVESTIGATION PROCESS

7.1 Upon receiving a report, the SafeSport Officer shall:

(a) assess whether the matter involves an immediate risk to a child's safety; if so, contact emergency services and/or MCFD immediately;

(b) document the report in writing within 24 hours;

(c) notify the Board (or the President if the SafeSport Officer is unavailable) of the report within 48 hours; and

(d) determine whether an interim suspension or precautionary removal of the respondent from contact with children is warranted pending investigation.

7.2 The SafeSport Officer shall conduct or coordinate a prompt and fair investigation, which shall include:

(a) interviewing the complainant, the respondent, and any relevant witnesses;

(b) reviewing any relevant documentation, communications, or evidence;

(c) maintaining confidentiality to the extent possible, consistent with the duty to protect children and comply with the law; and

(d) preparing a written investigation report with findings and recommendations.

7.3 The respondent shall be informed of the allegations and given an opportunity to respond before any final determination is made, except where doing so would compromise the safety of a child or the integrity of the investigation.

7.4 The SafeSport Officer shall present the investigation report and recommendations to the Board, which shall determine the appropriate response, which may include disciplinary action under the Association's Bylaws.

7.5 The complainant and respondent shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation within seven (7) days of the Board's determination.

7.6 All investigation records shall be retained in a secure, confidential file for a minimum of seven (7) years.

PART 8 – TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

8.1 All coaches, team officials, and volunteers in positions of trust shall complete SafeSport awareness training before beginning their role with BCSAA, and shall renew that training every two (2) years.

8.2 Approved training includes:

(a) Respect in Sport — Activity Leader (Respect Group Inc.); or

(b) Making Ethical Decisions (Coaches of Canada / Coaching Association of Canada); or

(c) such other training as the Board designates as equivalent.

8.3 The SafeSport Officer shall maintain records of completed training for all persons in positions of trust.

8.4 Participation in a position of trust without current SafeSport training is prohibited. An individual who fails to complete required training within 30 days of beginning their role shall be removed from that role until the requirement is met.

PART 9 – SCREENING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

9.1 **Two-Adult Rule.** Wherever practicable, at least two unrelated adults shall be present when working directly with child participants. No adult shall be alone with a child in a private or isolated setting without another adult present.

9.2 **Change Rooms and Private Spaces.** Adults shall not enter a change room or private space occupied by child participants without knocking and announcing their entry. Adults and children shall not use the same change facilities at the same time.

9.3 **Transportation.** Adults shall not transport child participants alone in a private vehicle without the prior written consent of the child's parent or guardian and notification to the Association.

9.4 **Photography and Video.** Photography or video recording of child participants at BCSAA events requires the prior written consent of the child's parent or guardian. Images of child participants shall not be shared on public platforms without consent.

9.5 **Digital Communication.** All digital communication between adults and child participants must be through official, transparent channels. Private one-on-one messaging between adults and child participants is prohibited without parental copying.

9.6 **Supervision at Events.** The Association shall ensure adequate adult supervision is maintained at all practices, games, tournaments, and events involving child participants.

PART 9A – CONCUSSION AWARENESS AND RETURN-TO-PLAY

Concussion Awareness

9A.1 BC Soccer Academies Association recognizes that concussions are a serious brain injury that can have significant short and long-term consequences, particularly for children and youth. The Association is committed to preventing concussions where possible and managing them safely when they occur.

9A.2 All coaches, team officials, and volunteers in positions of direct contact with players shall complete concussion awareness training before beginning their role with the Association. Approved training includes:

(a) Concussion Awareness Training Tool (CATT) — available free at cattonline.com; or

(b) such other training as the Board designates as equivalent.

9A.3 The Association shall communicate concussion awareness information to players, parents, and guardians at the start of each season, including information on recognizing the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

Recognizing a Concussion

9A.4 Common signs and symptoms of a concussion include: headache, dizziness, confusion, memory problems, nausea, sensitivity to light or noise, feeling slowed down, blurred vision, and changes in mood or behaviour. A player does not need to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion.

When a Concussion is Suspected

9A.5 If a coach, official, parent, or any other person suspects that a player has suffered a concussion during practice or play, the following steps shall be taken immediately:

(a) Remove — the player shall be removed from play immediately. A player who is suspected of having a concussion must not return to play on the same day, regardless of how they feel;

(b) Refer — the player shall be referred to a physician or nurse practitioner for assessment as soon as practicable;

(c) Report — the coach or team official shall complete an Incident Report and notify the player's parent or guardian immediately; and

(d) Rest — the player shall not return to any physical activity, including practice, until they have been assessed and cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner.

9A.6 The principle "When in doubt, sit them out" applies at all times. No coach, official, parent, or player may pressure a player to return to play when a concussion is suspected.

Return-to-Play Protocol

9A.7 A player who has suffered or is suspected to have suffered a concussion shall follow a graduated Return-to-Play (RTP) protocol before returning to full participation. The RTP protocol has six steps and the player must be symptom-free at each step before advancing to the next. Each step shall take a minimum of 24 hours:

Step 1: Complete physical and cognitive rest — Goal: Recovery

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise (walking, swimming — no resistance training) — Goal: Increase heart rate

Step 3: Sport-specific exercise (running drills — no contact) — Goal: Add movement

Step 4: Non-contact training drills — Goal: Exercise and coordination

Step 5: Full-contact practice (requires written medical clearance) — Goal: Restore confidence

Step 6: Return to full competition — Goal: Normal game play

9A.8 Medical clearance is required before Step 5. A player must provide written clearance from a physician or nurse practitioner before participating in any full-contact practice or game after a concussion.

9A.9 If a player's symptoms return or worsen at any step, they shall return to the previous step and not advance again until symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours.

9A.10 The Association shall retain a copy of the medical clearance and RTP completion record for each concussion incident for a minimum of three (3) years.

PART 9B – INJURY REPORTING AND EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

Injury Reporting

9B.1 All injuries occurring during BCSAA programs, practices, games, or events that require medical attention — or that result in a participant being removed from activity — shall be reported and documented.

9B.2 The coach or team official present at the time of an injury shall:

(a) provide or arrange immediate first aid and, if necessary, call emergency services (911);

(b) notify the player's parent or guardian as soon as practicable;

(c) complete a written Incident and Injury Report within 24 hours of the incident; and

(d) submit the completed report to the SafeSport Officer or the Association's designated administrator.

9B.3 The Incident and Injury Report shall include:

(a) the name and age of the injured participant;

(b) the date, time, and location of the incident;

(c) a description of what happened and the nature of the injury;

(d) the first aid or medical treatment provided at the scene;

(e) the names of witnesses present;

(f) whether emergency services were called; and

(g) the signature of the reporting coach or team official.

9B.4 The Association shall retain all Incident and Injury Reports in a secure file for a minimum of seven (7) years. Reports involving child participants shall be retained until the child reaches the age of 25, or for seven (7) years from the date of the incident, whichever is longer.

9B.5 Serious injuries — including any injury requiring hospitalization, loss of consciousness, fracture, or suspected spinal injury — shall be reported to the SafeSport Officer and the Board within 24 hours, and to WorkSafeBC or other applicable authorities as required by law.

Emergency Action Plans

9B.6 The Association shall maintain a written Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for each facility or field regularly used for BCSAA programs and events.

9B.7 Each Emergency Action Plan shall include:

(a) the civic address of the facility and the nearest accessible entrance for emergency vehicles;

(b) the location of the nearest telephone or confirmation that mobile phone coverage is available;

(c) the location of the nearest Automated External Defibrillator (AED), if one is present at the facility;

(d) the location of the first aid kit at the facility;

(e) the names and contact numbers of the designated first aid attendant(s) for the event or program;

(f) emergency contact numbers, including 911, BC Poison Control (1-800-567-8911), and the SafeSport Officer; and

(g) procedures for managing common emergencies including serious injury, cardiac event, severe allergic reaction, and missing child.

9B.8 The Emergency Action Plan shall be reviewed and updated at the start of each season, or whenever the Association begins using a new facility.

9B.9 The coach or team official responsible for each practice, game, or event shall:

(a) receive and review the applicable Emergency Action Plan before the start of the activity;

(b) confirm the location of the first aid kit before the start of the activity; and

(c) ensure at least one adult present has current first aid certification, where practicable.

First Aid Kits

9B.10 The Association shall ensure that a first aid kit is available and accessible at all BCSAA practices, games, and events.

9B.11 Each first aid kit shall contain, at a minimum:

(a) adhesive bandages in assorted sizes;

(b) sterile gauze pads and bandage rolls;

(c) antiseptic wipes and antiseptic cream;

(d) medical tape;

(e) scissors and tweezers;

(f) disposable gloves (at least two pairs);

(g) a CPR face shield;

(h) an instant cold pack; and

(i) a first aid instruction booklet.

9B.12 First aid kits shall be inspected at the start of each season and restocked as needed. A record of each inspection shall be maintained by the team official or coach responsible.

9B.13 It is the responsibility of each coach and team official to confirm that a first aid kit is present and accessible before the start of every practice, game, or event.

PART 10 – PARENT AND GUARDIAN RIGHTS

10.1 Parents and guardians of child participants have the right to:

(a) be informed of the existence and content of this Policy;

(b) know who the SafeSport Officer is and how to contact them;

(c) receive information about the outcome of any complaint they have filed (subject to confidentiality obligations);

(d) withdraw their child from BCSAA activities at any time; and

(e) accompany their child to any investigation interview in which their child participates.

10.2 The Association shall provide a copy of this Policy, or a plain-language summary of it, to parents and guardians of all registered participants at the start of each season.

PART 11 – POLICY REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

11.1 This Policy shall be reviewed by the Board at least once every two (2) years and updated as required to reflect changes in law, best practices, or the Association's programs.

11.2 Amendments to this Policy shall be approved by the Board and communicated to all participants and their families within 30 days of adoption.

CERTIFICATION

Adopted by the Board on	October 23, 2025
Approved by Founding Members	Araz Hajiyev / Rem Dinga
SafeSport Officer	[To be appointed]
Next scheduled review	October 2027
Authorized signatory	Araz Hajiyev, Director
Signature	_____
Date signed	_____