EDMONTON SOUTHWEST UNITED

soccer club | established 1982

CODE OF CONDUCT | PLAYER SAFETY

Approved July 6, 2025
Review on July 6, 2026 or before, as required

Commitment to Player Safety

The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants within Edmonton Southwest United Soccer Club ("SWU") programs and activities. The safety and well-being of our players, particularly minors, is our highest priority.

Any form of abusive, discriminatory, derogatory, offensive, or intimidating behaviour or language — whether by adults towards minors, or between minors — is strictly prohibited. This includes verbal, physical, emotional, or digital conduct that could harm, belittle, or intimidate another individual.

Actions or behaviours that may reasonably be perceived as grooming are unacceptable under all circumstances. Similarly, comments or conduct that are disrespectful, prejudiced, or unfairly critical of an individual's culture, ethnicity, language, gender identity, disability, sexuality, or age will not be tolerated.

This Code applies to all members of the SWU community, including directors, committee members, employees, volunteers, coaches, team managers, players, and parents/guardians. All individuals are expected to understand and uphold these standards to foster a safe, positive, and respectful soccer environment.

Unacceptable Behaviour

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited in all SWU environments and activities. Violations of this Code of Conduct will be treated as disciplinary matters and may also be referred to law enforcement where appropriate.

No individual, including directors, committee members, employees, volunteers, coaches, managers, players, parents/guardians, or other Club associates, may:

Child Abuse and Neglect

1. Ignore, dismiss, or fail to report suspected or disclosed incidents of child abuse.
2. Engage in any action that places a minor at risk of harm or abuse.

Verbal, Emotional, and Psychological Misconduct

1. Speak to or behave towards a player in a way that is, or could reasonably be perceived as, overly harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. *Examples include offensive language, excessive swearing, or intimidating gestures directed at a minor.*
2. Express inappropriate personal views on culture, race, sexuality, or other sensitive topics in the presence of a minor (unless the minor is a member of your immediate family).

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Unacceptable Behaviour *(continued)*

Sexual Misconduct and Inappropriate Relationships

1. Engage in any sexually oriented conversation with a minor, unless it is part of a specific job requirement, the individual is trained for such discussions, or the minor is a member of your family.
2. Engage in sexual contact of any kind with a minor.
3. Possess sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials (e.g., magazines, videos, messages, clothing) in the presence of a minor.
4. Be naked in the presence of a minor (unless the minor is a member of your immediate family).
5. Sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, or tent as a minor (unless the minor is a member of your immediate family).

Inappropriate Contact and Boundaries

1. Have contact with a minor outside of SWU activities or events without the Club's knowledge and consent (unless the minor is a member of your immediate family).
2. Arrange private meetings with a minor outside of SWU activities or events without parental permission and Club awareness.
3. Take a minor to your home without parental consent and the Club's knowledge (unless the minor is a member of your immediate family).
4. Engage in rough physical games (outside the reasonable scope of Club training), or inappropriate, unnecessary, or culturally insensitive physical contact with a minor. *This includes hugging, kissing, massaging, or cuddling, unless the minor is a member of your immediate family and all relevant laws are followed.*

Digital and Electronic Communications

1. Engage in private online contact with a minor or their family (including social media, messaging apps, or email) without the Club's knowledge and consent.
2. Exchange personal contact details (phone numbers, social media profiles, email addresses) with a minor, unless the minor is a member of your immediate family and the Club is aware.

Substance Use

1. Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a minor.
2. Provide or permit a minor to consume illegal drugs.
3. Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or cannabis while supervising or responsible for a minor (unless contact with the minor is incidental and you are not performing Club duties).

Discrimination and Harassment

1. Discriminate against a minor based on age, gender, race, culture, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, or vulnerability.

Photography and Recording

1. Photograph or video a minor inappropriately or continue recording if asked to stop by the minor, their guardian, or Club officials.

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Physical Contact and Touching

Directors, committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, and players are strictly prohibited from using physical discipline of any kind to manage a minor's behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, slapping, pinching, hitting, or applying any form of physical force as punishment or retaliation.

Physical contact may, at times, be necessary in emergency situations to protect minors from immediate danger. Additionally, appropriate, non-threatening physical contact can be part of normal, positive human interactions. The following guidelines apply:

1. **Consider the Child's Development**: Always take into account the minor's age, developmental stage, maturity, and required level of care. For example, gently guiding or comforting a distressed child may be appropriate.
2. **Maintain Transparency and Follow the Rule of Two:** Whenever possible, interact with minors in open, observable environments. Conversations or interactions should be visible to others and include another adult observer, in accordance with the Rule of Two.
3. **Respect Personal Boundaries:** Pay attention to a minor's verbal and non-verbal cues regarding their comfort level and need for personal space.
4. **Be Sensitive to Vulnerable Individuals:** Take extra care when interacting with minors who may misinterpret physical contact, such as those with a history of abuse or adolescents seeking inappropriate attention.
5. **Respect Cultural Differences:** Be mindful of cultural norms that may affect how your behaviour is interpreted.
6. **Use Caution During Training or Games:** If physical contact is required for instructional purposes (e.g., demonstrating a technique), clearly explain the reason for the contact in advance, and ensure it is done in a safe, respectful, and appropriate manner.
7. **Limit Physical Contact to Appropriate Gestures**: Examples of acceptable physical contact include handshakes, high-fives, a congratulatory pat on the back, or a light touch on the arm for reassurance. Massaging a minor, unless you are specifically trained and authorized to do so, or permitting a minor to massage you, is strictly prohibited.

Transportation and Off-Site Activities

The following guidelines apply when transporting minors or participating in off-site events:

- Except in emergencies or unforeseen circumstances where no alternative exists, minors should not be transported without prior consent from their parent, guardian, or caregiver.
- Any unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles is strictly prohibited.
- Minors must be transported directly to and from the designated location. Unscheduled stops are not permitted, except for reasonable, pre-approved breaks (e.g., meals, rest stops).
- Minors are not permitted to stay overnight at the residence of any committee member, volunteer, employee, coach, or contractor without prior, explicit consent from the parent or guardian.
- Separate changing and showering facilities must be provided for adults and minors, except in circumstances where the minor is a member of the adult's immediate family.

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Confidentiality

The privacy of minors must be respected at all times. Any sharing of information concerning a minor should always be guided by the best interests of the child.

- Information regarding the abuse or suspected abuse of a minor must only be disclosed to the Club's *Primary Liason for Child Protection* or law enforcement authorities. This is essential to limit the spread of confidential information and protect the minor involved.
- Directors, committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, and players must not discuss confidential matters involving a minor with individuals outside the Club in a way that identifies the child, unless explicit permission has been granted by the child and their family.
- If additional expertise beyond the Club is needed to ensure a child's safety and well-being, individuals may consult external professionals. In doing so, they must protect the child's identity and limit any identifying information to what is strictly necessary.

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to support all of the above statements

Name _____

Date _____

Role in Club _____
(Director, Committee Member, Employee, Coach, Manager, Attendant, Parent / Guardian)

Signature _____