



## ABUSE POLICY

### Purpose

1. SSO is committed to a sport environment free from abuse. This Policy complements Speed Skating Canada's Abuse Policy by providing additional definitions regarding abuse with the aim of outlining how SSO will educate Individuals about abuse, work to prevent abuse, and how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by SSO.

### Zero Tolerance Statement

2. SSO has zero tolerance for any abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse through [Speed Skating Canada's Safe Sport Speak Up Line](#) to be addressed under the terms of the applicable policy.

### Education – What is Abuse and Maltreatment?

3. Individuals can be subjected to many forms of abuse and maltreatment.
4. All abuse and maltreatment are determined by the behaviour viewed objectively, not whether harm is intended or results from the behaviour.
5. Individuals can face abuse and maltreatment, which can take many forms. SSO recognizes and supports the definitions of maltreatment and abuse listed as listed in Section 5 of the [UCCSM](#) as Prohibited Behaviours (2)
  - a. Psychological Maltreatment (Section 5.2)
  - b. Physical Maltreatment (Section 5.3)
  - c. Neglect (Section 5.4)
  - d. Sexual Maltreatment (Section 5.5)
  - e. Grooming (Section 5.6)
  - f. Boundary Transgressions (Section 5.7)
  - g. Discrimination (Section 5.8)
  - h. Subjecting a *Participant* (Individual) to the Risk of Maltreatment (Section 5.9)
  - i. Aiding and Abetting (Section 5.10)
  - j. Failure to Report (Section 5.11)
  - k. Intentionally Reporting a False Allegation (Section 5.12)
  - l. Interference with or Manipulation of Process (Section 5.13)
  - m. Retaliation (Section 5.14)
6. In addition to the terms and prohibited behaviours identified in the UCCMS, for further clarity, SSO specifically recognizes the following terms<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical' s *Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults*

- a) **Child Abuse** refers to the violence, mistreatment, or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust. There are many different forms of abuse, and a child may be subjected to more than one form.
  - b) **Emotional abuse** involves harming a person's sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in or place an Individual at risk of serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It may also include exposing the child to violence.
7. An abuser may use many tactics to gain access to children, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. The abuse may happen once or occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The abuse may change form over time.
  8. Importantly, maltreatment and abuse do not include professionally accepted coaching and training methods, including skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance. Guidelines for developmentally appropriate training are outlined in the NCCP Code of Ethics for Coaches, Sport for Life's Long-Term Participant and Athlete Development Model and Speed Skating Canada's Athlete Development Matrix (ADM).
  9. Individuals regulated by professional associations, including [CAC Chartered Professional Coaches and Registered Coaches](#), are also governed by the codes of their associations. When engaging Individuals to support athlete preparation and training, Clubs and Individuals are encouraged only to engage the services of Individuals who are members of a recognized professional association or accrediting body.
  10. Potential warning signs of abuse of children or youth can include:
    - a) Recurrent unexplained injuries
    - b) Alert behaviour: The child seems always to be expecting something bad to happen
    - c) Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather
    - d) Child startles easily, shies away from touch or shows other skittish behaviour
    - e) Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
    - f) Withdrawn from peers and adults
    - g) Behavior fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative or highly demanding)
    - h) Acting either inappropriately beyond their age (like an adult, taking care of other children) or inappropriately younger than their age (like an infant, throwing tantrums)
    - i) Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
    - j) New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
    - k) Self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or other harmful activities)
    - l) Not wanting to be alone with a particular child or young person

#### *Vulnerable Adult Abuse*

11. Although Individuals may be abused at any life stage – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, or old age – the nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on an Individual's situation, disability, or circumstance.

12. The following description of Vulnerable Adult Abuse has been modified and adapted from *Ecclesiastical's Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults*<sup>2</sup>.

Abuse of vulnerable adults is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use several different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years.

13. The abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time. Two of the more common forms of Vulnerable Adult Abuse are:

- a) **Psychological abuse** includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate vulnerable adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of abuse may include, for example:
  - i. Threatening to use violence
  - ii. Threatening to abandon them
  - iii. Intentionally frightening them
  - iv. Making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
  - v. Lying to them
  - vi. Failing to check allegations of abuse against them
  
- b) **Financial abuse** encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation, including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using a vulnerable adult's money or property dishonestly or failing to use a vulnerable adult's assets for their welfare. Abuse occurs any time someone acts without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another. This type of abuse against a vulnerable adult may include, for example:
  - i. Stealing their money, disability cheques, or other possessions
  - ii. Wrongfully using a Power of Attorney
  - iii. Failing to pay back borrowed money when asked.

14. Potential warning signs of abuse of vulnerable adults can include:

- a) Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
- b) Unexplained physical injuries
- c) Dehydration, malnutrition, or lack of food
- d) Poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
- e) Over-sedation

### **Preventing Abuse**

15. SSO will enact measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, education and training, and monitoring.

#### *Screening*

16. Individuals who coach, volunteer, officiate, deliver developmental programs, are affiliated with provincial teams, accompany a team to an event or competition, are paid staff, serve on Boards of Directors or otherwise engage with Vulnerable Individuals involved with SSO will be screened according to SSO's [Screening Policy](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from: [https://www.ecclesiastical.ca/guidelines\\_developsafetyprotectionpolicy\\_children-youths-vulnerableadults\\_faith/](https://www.ecclesiastical.ca/guidelines_developsafetyprotectionpolicy_children-youths-vulnerableadults_faith/)

17. SSO will use the [Screening Policy](#) to determine the level of trust, authority, and access that each has with Vulnerable Individuals. Increased screening procedures will accompany each level of risk. Each level of risk will be accompanied by increased screening procedures which may include the following, singularly or in combination:
  - a) Completing an Application Form for the position sought (which includes alerting Individuals that they must agree to adhere with the organization's policies and procedures (including this *Abuse Policy*))
  - b) Completing a Screening Declaration Form
  - c) Providing letters of reference
  - d) Providing a Criminal Record Check ("CRC") and/or Vulnerable Sector Check ("VSC")
  - e) Providing a driver's abstract (for Individuals who transport Vulnerable Individuals)
  - f) Other screening procedures, as required
18. An Individual's failure to participate in the screening process or pass the screening requirements as determined by a Screening Committee will result in the Individual's ineligibility for the position sought.

#### *Orientation and Training*

19. SSO will deliver orientation and training to those Individuals who have access to or interact with Vulnerable Individuals. The orientation and training, and their frequency, will be based on the level of risk, as described in the [Screening Policy](#).
20. Orientation may include but is not limited to, introductory presentations, facility tours, equipment demonstrations, parent/athlete meetings, meetings with colleagues and supervisors, orientation manuals, orientation sessions, and increased supervision during initial tasks or periods of engagement.
21. Training may include but is not limited to certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.
22. At the conclusion of the orientation and training, Individuals will be provided with proof of completion when SSO delivers training.
23. When training is completed through a third party, Individuals will be required to acknowledge, in written form, that they have received and completed the training. Proof of completion may be requested.

#### *Practice*

24. When Individuals interact with Vulnerable Individuals, they are required to enact specific practical approaches to these interactions. These include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Limiting physical interactions to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)
  - b) Seeking consent and explaining the purpose of physical contact when spotting or providing skill instruction. See *Athlete Protection Guidelines* for additional guidance.
  - c) Ensuring that more than one adult constantly supervises Vulnerable Individuals in an open and observable environment.
  - d) Ensuring that more than one person is responsible for team selection, thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one Individual.
  - e) Removing Individuals with direct conflict of interest from discussions pertaining to team selection.

- f) Including parents/guardians in all communication (e.g., electronic, telephonic) with Vulnerable Individuals and ensuring they are aware of the *Code of Conduct* violations described in the *Social Media Policy*
- g) Ensuring they are aware of the restrictions related to travel that are described in the travel section of the *Athlete Protection Guidelines*

#### *Monitoring*

- 25. SSO will regularly monitor those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk, as described in the [Screening Policy](#).
- 26. Monitoring may include but is not limited to, regular status reports, logs, supervisor meetings, supervisor on-site check-ins, feedback provided directly to SSO (from peers and parents/athletes), and regular evaluations.

#### **Reporting Abuse**

- 27. Reports of abuse that are shared confidentially with an Individual by a Vulnerable Individual may require the Individual to report the incident to parents/guardians, SSO or police. Individuals must respond to such reports in a non-judgmental, supportive, and comforting manner. Still, they must also explain that the report may need to be escalated to the proper authority or to the Vulnerable Individual's parent/guardian.

Complaints or reports that describe an element of **abuse** will be addressed by the process (es) described in Speed Skating Ontario's [Complaints and Discipline Policy](#).