



VOLLEYBALLBC

SAFE SPORT SERIES

**YOUTH GUIDE**

# SAFE BEHAVIOURS IN VOLLEYBALL

Safety is a top priority for Volleyball BC and we are working to ensure that everyone has a safe and positive volleyball experience in British Columbia. Abuse, maltreatment, and unsafe practices have no place in our volleyball community. We all have a role to play in ensuring that we do not engage in unsafe behaviours and to take action if we see them.

We want to make sure that you have the knowledge and resources that you need to identify when you experience unsafe or inappropriate behaviour in volleyball. This guide is intended to help you:

Learn about and understand the Code of Conduct and expectations around behaviour.

Understand appropriate versus inappropriate behaviour.

Learn about Open and Observable Environments and what this means in volleyball.

Understand who you can share concerns with and how to report inappropriate behaviour or incidents.



## What is the Code of Conduct & Ethics?

The Code of Conduct and Ethics is an important document that governs the behaviour and conduct of all participants in Volleyball BC programs. When you register for Volleyball BC membership or programs, you must read and sign to say you will uphold the Code of Conduct & Ethics as part of the registration process.

The Code of Conduct & Ethics states that all participants will avoid any actions that are abuse, harassment, sexual harassment, violence, or discrimination.

It is a violation of the Code to engage in the behaviours outlined in the table below.

<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT</b>	Verbal, non-physical behaviour, or actions that harm an individual's sense of self-worth such as name-calling, shaming, or withholding attention.
<b>PHYSICAL MALTREATMENT</b>	Contact or non-contact behaviours that have the potential to cause physical harm including hitting, exercise as a punishment, or providing drugs and alcohol to minors.
<b>SEXUAL MALTREATMENT OR HARASSMENT</b>	Unwanted activity, comments or behavior made to individuals because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or gender expression.
<b>DISCRIMINATION</b>	Treating someone differently on the basis of their race, nationality, religion, age, sex, gender, family status, or disability.
<b>HARASSMENT</b>	A series of upsetting comments or behaviour against someone, including isolating someone, hazing, or persistent unwelcome remarks.
<b>CHILD ABUSE</b>	A child is someone under the age of 19 years. Child abuse refers to violence, mistreatment, or neglect that a child may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust.

### When does the Code apply?

The Code applies to all participants during business, activities, and events of Volleyball BC and its member clubs/organisations, including:

- Tryouts, training, and practices
- Competitions and tournaments
- Camps, clinics, and other programming activities
- Business operations and meetings
- Any travel representing Volleyball BC or the member club/organisation

The Code also applies to conduct outside of volleyball when this conduct is drawn to Volleyball BC's attention and we believe that it will reflect badly on our relationships or reputation.





## Open and Observable Environments

As part of creating a safe environment, Volleyball BC supports the idea of “Open and Observable Environments” in volleyball. Open and Observable Environments means that you avoid being alone at any time with any Person In Authority.

Persons In Authority are individuals that hold a position of trust or authority because of the role they have and this includes coaches, managers, trainers, referee allocators or mentors, staff and administrators.



### When does Open and Observable Environments apply?

- All volleyball training and competitions, especially without a second Person In Authority present
- Meetings
- Medical treatments
- Travel to and from trainings, competitions, events, or activities
- Electronic communications

### Before interacting with someone, ask yourself:

- Is this an open interaction?
- Are we in a closed or secluded place?
- Who knows this meeting/interaction is taking place?
- Do I have an easy and accessible exit path?
- Is this interaction observable?
- Is anyone else with us?
- Can anyone see us or hear us?



### Examples of Open and Observable Environments

- Always have one-to-one interactions with coaches or supervisors in an open space where others can see and hear you.
- Avoid staying alone with coaches or supervisors before or after a volleyball practice or game. Ask another athlete or parent to stay with you.
- Never email or message your coach or supervisor 1:1. Always ensure that you message in a group format or include your parent or guardian.
- Do not take photos, record anyone, or post on social media without their consent.
- Do not travel alone with a Person In Authority to practices or games unless they are your parent/guardian or there are more than two individuals.
- All physical contact by a Person In Authority should be infrequent and relevant for teaching a skill or tending to an injury.

## How do I know if a behaviour is inappropriate or breaks the Code of Conduct?

You deserve to train and compete in a safe and healthy environment. The Code of Conduct states that all participants will avoid any actions that are abuse, maltreatment, harassment, sexual harassment, violence, or discrimination. Outlined below are just some examples of what breaking the code of conduct or inappropriate behaviours might look like.

<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbally attacking someone with personal criticism, body shaming, demeaning, or derogatory comments.</li><li>• Excluding or isolating someone from the group.</li><li>• Pressuring someone to do something or pushing someone too hard.</li><li>• Using shaming or degrading nicknames.</li></ul>
<b>PHYSICAL MALTREATMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliberating hitting, punching, slapping, beating or using an object to hit someone.</li><li>• Providing alcohol, illegal drugs, or non-prescribed medications to someone.</li></ul>
<b>SEXUAL MALTREATMENT OR HARASSMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persistent, unwelcome sexual flirtations, comments, or propositions.</li><li>• Inviting someone to touch or be touched sexually.</li><li>• Display or distribution of sexually offensive material.</li></ul>
<b>NEGLECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Withholding or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.</li><li>• Persistently ignoring or isolating an individual.</li><li>• Ignoring an injury.</li></ul>
<b>HARASSMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persistent unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendo, or taunts.</li><li>• Racial slurs, jokes, name calling, or insulting behaviour.</li><li>• Deliberately excluding or socially isolating a person from a group or team.</li><li>• Practical jokes that endanger a person's safety or negatively affect performance.</li></ul>

You may have experienced some of the behaviours listed above – or you may have even spoken or behaved in one of the ways yourself. So how do we know when a behaviour is unacceptable and should be addressed? Here are some factors to consider when assessing a situation:

- **Is the behaviour sustained?** An isolated incident of inappropriate behavior may occur when someone is under stress and reacts. They may apologise and never demonstrate the same behaviour again. Ongoing and repeated incidents of the same behaviour is not acceptable.
- **Is there uneven power?** The relationship between an adult and child or between a coach and athlete is not an equal one. The adult or coach has more power or influence in the relationship and the child or athlete is potentially vulnerable to abuse or exploitation.
- **Is the behaviour contextually appropriate?** Sometimes a coach or trainer may need to touch you to demonstrate or correct a skill. In this context, physical touch may be appropriate. However, in other contexts – eg. in the changerooms or to compliment on appearance – physical touch may not be appropriate.
- **Does the behaviour have a negative impact on you?** How do you perceive the behaviour? Behaviours that cause physical or psychological distress may not be appropriate.

**HELPFUL TIP:** viaSport BC has developed a [flag tool](#) that can help you figure out if a behaviour is ok or not. You anonymously answer questions about a situation and it will determine whether the behaviour is ok and give you ideas about what to do next

# What should I do if I experience or witness someone engaging in inappropriate behaviour or breaking the Code of Conduct?

An important part of eliminating abuse and inappropriate behaviour in volleyball is reporting concerning behaviour or incidents when they occur.

## Is the individual in immediate danger or are they injured?

### If yes, call the emergency services or police or notify a responsible adult.

The welfare and safety of the individual is the main priority. It is not up to you to decide whether or not someone has been abused but it is your job to report your concern and ensure their immediate safety.

### If no, report the concern

**1. Raise the concern with the program organiser or volleyball organisation** – Talk to your program organiser or to the main administrator for the volleyball club/organisation. Depending on the severity, they may be able to address and handle the situation internally. If you feel more comfortable, share the information with a trusted adult and ask them for their help in telling the program organiser or club.

### 2. Report the concern directly to Abuse Free Sport

Contact 1-888-837-7678 or [info@abuse-free-sport.ca](mailto:info@abuse-free-sport.ca) or <http://abuse-free-sport.ca>  
Volleyball BC uses [Abuse-Free Sport](#) as an independent third-party to handle complaints that concern abuse and maltreatment. You can speak to someone confidentially and report any incidents directly to the helpline and they will provide you with advice and handle the complaint. If it is appropriate, they will also conduct an investigation into the complaint.  
NOTE: The Abuse Free Sport Program is available to anyone who is a registered full member of Volleyball BC and Volleyball Canada (such as youth club players, club coaches, club administrators and referees). Participants in VBC recreation or beach programs can file safe sport complaints directly with VBC as outlined below.

### 3. Report the concern to Volleyball BC

Contact [reporting@volleyballbc.org](mailto:reporting@volleyballbc.org) or by completing the [online incident form](#). We have a [Discipline and Complaints](#) process to address issues or behaviours that break our Code of Conduct. If a complaint is related to abuse, maltreatment, or suspected abuse, VBC will refer the complaint to the Abuse-Free Sport program or an independent case manager.

## Remember

**Preventing abuse or maltreatment is the responsibility of everyone.**

**Reporting any suspected or actual abuse is a legal and ethical responsibility especially if a minor is involved.**

**You are responsible for reporting your concern NOT for proving whether the behaviour is abuse or not.**





## What if the behaviour involves my team mate?

Sometimes inappropriate behaviour occurs between two people on the same team or in the same group. This may include bullying, harassment, sharing of images without consent, or any other type of maltreatment. It can be especially hard to come forward and report behaviours if they are among your teammates because:

- You may not want to get into trouble.
- You may feel ashamed.
- You may fear retaliation or making things worse if someone finds out.
- You may have also engaged in inappropriate or concerning behaviours and be concerned about getting into trouble.



Check out our tips below if you are in this situation...

### TIPS FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS THAT HAPPEN TO YOU

Family members can offer you guidance, support and be an important advocate when you are going through a difficult time. While it may be difficult to tell your parents or another safe adult about what is happening, it is important to do this. Remember, it's your parent's job to help keep you safe so while they may be upset, they should also be concerned about what has happened and help you figure out how to deal with it.

In some situations, there may be reasons why talking to a parent/guardian may not be an option. In those situations, speak with another safe adult like a coach or relative about what's happening.

Here are some suggestions about how to let your parents/a safe adult know what's happening:

- **Write a note or an email** to your parent/a safe adult explaining what's happening and asking for their help.
- **Have a friend or a safe adult present with you** while you speak with your parents about what happened.
- **Have a safe adult (coach) speak with your parents on your behalf.** This can give your parents time to process the information without you being in front of them.
- **It may also be helpful to practice** what you are going to say before approaching your parents/a safe adult. You can make notes about what you want to say and discuss with a friend. This may help you figure out how to approach your parents/a safe adult and their possible reaction.

If you aren't able to identify a safe adult to talk to, contact a crisis line like Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) or find a counsellor who may be able to help you make decisions about what to do next.

### BEING A BYSTANDER AND SUPPORTING YOUR TEAMMATES

A **bystander** is a person who observes an action, event or behaviour like bullying or harassment. Being a bystander can be tough. Bystanders can often experience feelings like helplessness, fear and worry and may even feel unsure if they should interfere, particularly if there are other people around. Taking action as a bystander (if it's safe to do so) can be a way to try to stop the behaviour, show solidarity with the person who's experiencing bullying, encourage others to disapprove of the situation and prevent future incidents.

- **Reach out:** Making an effort to be there for the person who's experiencing bullying can go a long way. You can approach them and ask if they're OK, remind them that the situation is not their fault and offer to try and get help together. This could involve moving away from the person who's bullying in the moment or contacting a safe adult.
- **Don't take it personally:** don't get upset if the person isn't ready to talk about it. Knowing that you care may be enough for now.
- **Be a team:** offer to help your team-mate to speak to a safe adult (a parent/caregiver, your coach.) when they're ready. Don't push the person. You can also give your friend Kids Help Phone's number and offer to call a counsellor together.
- **Take care of yourself:** being a good friend can be challenging and you may need support. Try to think of a safe adult you can speak to about your feelings such as a coach or parent/caregiver.
- **Go to a safe adult:** if you're concerned about someone's safety and well-being, it's important to involve a safe adult such as the coach, your teacher, or parents. If someone is in immediate danger, you can contact the emergency services in your area for help.

## Support Services

- **Crisis Centre BC** - 24/7 support in over 140 languages using a language service. Call 310-6789 or 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE), or one of the regional support lines listed on their website.
- **Kids Help Phone** - 24/7 free support for children and youth across Canada by phone (1-800-668-6868), online chat, text (text CONNECT to 686868), or Facebook Messenger (account name Kids Help Phone). If you identify as Indigenous, you can ask to be connected with a First Nations, Inuk or Métis crisis responder (if one's available) by messaging FIRST NATIONS, INUIT, or METIS to 686868 or through Facebook Messenger.
- **B.C. Helpline for Children** - a confidential toll-free phone line for children and youth wanting to talk to someone - is 310-1234 (no area code required)
- **The Foundry** - Health and wellness resources, services, and supports for people aged 12 to 24, online and through integrated service centres in communities around B.C.
- **VictimLinkBC** - a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone and online service available across B.C. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week which provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.
- **KUU-US Crisis Response Service** - 1-800-588-8717 for crisis support for Indigenous people.
- **Trans Lifeline Canada** - Peer support, run by and for trans people, offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis. 1-877-330-6366
- **Qmunity** - B.C.'s queer, trans, and two-spirit resource centre
- **viaSport BC** - [Additional resources](#) on how to have difficult conversations, how to handle peer-to-peer conflicts, and how to intervene safely as a bystander and bystander training.



## LEADING IN SAFE SPORT PRACTICES & FOSTERING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

For more information visit [www.volleyballbc.org/safe-sport](http://www.volleyballbc.org/safe-sport)