



Policy Name: Code of Conduct		Date of Approval: Oct 1, 2025	Effective Date: Oct 1, 2025
Approved by: Board of Directors	Prepared by: Risk & Safety Committee	Replaces Previous Versions: New Policy	
Review Cycle: Biennial			
Responsible: Board of Directors- Risk & Safety	Accountable: Board of Directors	Consulted: Board of Directors	Informed: HNO Members

Purpose

The purpose of the Hockey Northwestern Ontario Code of Conduct (the “Code”) is to ensure a safe and positive environment within Hockey Northwestern Ontario’s programs, activities and events by making individuals aware that there is an expectation, at all times both on and off the ice, of appropriate behaviour consistent with Hockey Northwestern Ontario’s core values. Hockey Northwestern Ontario is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and in an environment free from maltreatment, bullying and harassment.

The Code is not intended to specifically outline every instance of misconduct. Misconduct that is inconsistent with the values of Hockey Northwestern Ontario or with the purpose of this Code may still constitute a breach of the Code and be subject to sanctions even though not specifically referenced in the Code. This Code applies to all Participants, Officials, and Staff as defined below. There are also specific provisions applicable to other groups, including parents/guardians and executive committee members. This Code also applies to conduct that occurs outside of Hockey Northwestern Ontario-sanctioned programming when such conduct poses a risk to the safety of anyone in the hockey environment, adversely affects, or may affect, relationships within or related to Hockey Northwestern Ontario and its work and sport environment, or is or may be detrimental to the image and reputation of the organization.

Definitions

The following terms have the following meaning in this Code:

“Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program” means any program, tournament, on-ice or off-ice activity, or event, whether business related or of a social nature, under the auspices, sponsorship, direct control or supervision of Hockey Northwestern Ontario and any other program, on-ice or off-ice activity or event designated as a Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program by Hockey Northwestern Ontario, in its absolute discretion

“Officials” means anyone, with the exception of Participants, performing an activity connected with Hockey Northwestern Ontario, regardless of title, the type of activity (administrative, sporting or other) and the duration of the activity. It includes, but is not limited to, all Directors, Officers, committee members, persons in charge of safety, and any other person responsible for technical, medical and/or administrative matters in Hockey Northwestern Ontario as well as all other persons obliged to comply with Hockey Northwestern Ontario’s By-laws, Regulations, policies and procedures, directives, guidelines, or Board of Directors’ decisions.

“Participant” means a player, coach, manager, referee, team volunteer, doctor, trainer, administrator, or any other individual who is registered or affiliated with a club, team, association, league, sports school, sports school with residence, or any similar entity registered with Hockey Northwestern Ontario which participates in or officiates games or activities of any kind sponsored or organized by Hockey Northwestern Ontario or any of its member partners.

“Staff” means any person paid by, employed by, or volunteering with, Hockey Northwestern Ontario or any of its member partners.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Hockey Northwestern Ontario Participants, Officials, and Staff have a responsibility to:

- i. Adhere to the highest standard of behaviour, and refrain at all times from any behaviour that could reflect poorly on Hockey Northwestern Ontario.
- ii. Comply, at all times, with Hockey Northwestern Ontario's By-laws, Regulations, policies, procedures and directives, guidelines and Board of Directors' decisions. These can be made available upon request.
- iii. Work in a spirit of partnership with Hockey Northwestern Ontario and all its stakeholders to align efforts to achieve the mission and vision of Hockey Northwestern Ontario.
- iv. Resolve conflicts in a professional and civil manner and in accordance with Hockey Northwestern Ontario procedures on issues that may be in dispute.
- v. Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of anyone affiliated with Hockey Northwestern Ontario by:
 - a) Demonstrating respect to individuals regardless of body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation or any other grounds protected under Human Rights legislation in Canada;
 - b) Demonstrating respect toward all people through actions and words;
 - c) Directing comments or criticism appropriately;
 - d) Consistently demonstrating the spirit of fair play, sport leadership and ethical conduct;
 - e) Consistently treating individuals fairly and reasonably;
 - f) Demonstrating respect for the principle of fair play, which includes:
 - o Respect for both the letter and spirit of the rules;
 - o Respect for referees/officials and their decisions;
 - o Respect for opponents, including modesty in victory and composure in defeat;
 - o Facilitation of access to sport; and
 - o Maintenance of self-control at all times
 - g) Refraining from the use of power or authority in an attempt to coerce another person to engage in inappropriate activities;
 - h) Promoting the sport of hockey in the most constructive and positive manner possible;
 - i) Respecting the property of others and not willfully causing damage; and
 - j) Adhering to all federal, provincial, and municipal laws.
- vi. Refrain from any behavior that constitutes sexual harassment, where sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual comments and sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature. Types of behavior that constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - Sexist jokes
 - Sexual violence
 - Display of sexually offensive material
 - Sexually degrading words used to describe a person
 - Inquiries or comments about a person's sex life
 - Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, requests, invitations or propositions
 - Inappropriate sexual touching, advances, suggestions or requests

- Unwanted physical contact including, but not limited to, touching, petting, pinching, or kissing; and
 - Physical or sexual assault
- vii. Reasonably cooperate with any investigation relating to a breach of this Code of Conduct Policy or arising out of a Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program. Failure to cooperate may be the basis for disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a prohibition from participation in any current or future Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program.

MALTREATMENT, BULLYING & HARASSMENT

- i. Hockey Northwestern Ontario takes a zero tolerance stand against all forms of maltreatment, bullying and harassment, including and in particular to domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Hockey Northwestern Ontario's commitment to combating all forms of maltreatment is further set out in its Maltreatment policy.
- ii. All parties referenced above further agree that any alleged violation of Hockey Northwestern Ontario's Maltreatment policy or this Code of Conduct will be handled in accordance with the procedures of Hockey Canada's Maltreatment Complaint Management Policy or Hockey Northwestern Ontario's own discipline and complaints procedures, whichever applies.
- iii. In addition, all parties referenced above agree to refrain from bullying and harassment in any form.
- iv. Bullying includes a continuum of hurtful behaviours that can range in severity from name-calling to criminal assault. The following are common forms of bullying:
 - a) Physical bullying, which includes inappropriate contact directed towards another person (e.g. hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, beating up), or towards another person's property (e.g. stealing, or damaging property).
 - b) Verbal bullying includes name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, humiliating or threatening another person.
 - c) Social bullying includes excluding a person from a group, gossiping or spreading rumours, setting other people up to look foolish, or damaging friendships.
 - d) Cyber bullying includes the use of social media platforms, email, cell phones, text messages and internet sites to threaten, harass, embarrass, humiliate, socially exclude or damage another person's reputation and relationships.

Harassment can be generally defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comments or behaviours against a person that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, and includes, without limitation, abuse of power, harassment based on protected grounds of discrimination under human rights legislation and sexual harassment. Harassing behaviour can involve comments, conduct or gestures which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive. It may also include behaviour which creates an uncomfortable environment, or which might reasonably be expected to cause embarrassment, insecurity, discomfort, offense or humiliation to another person or group.

DUTY TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE

- i. Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that causes injury or emotional damage to a minor. Child abuse is a pervasive social problem requiring vigilance, sensitivity and care, and Hockey Northwestern Ontario is committed to help reduce and prevent child abuse. Hockey Northwestern Ontario is aware that those working closely with minors are in a unique position to detect abusive situations. Therefore, the individuals who are subject to this Code have a heightened reporting responsibility to ensure the safety of Canada's minors, by knowing the requirements of the applicable provincial/territorial child protection legislation and following through as required.
- ii. A cross-Canada list of Child Protection Acts can be found through the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal's web site at <https://cwrp.ca/legislation>¹.

¹ Link current as of November 1, 2022

- iii. Included under the umbrella of child abuse is child exploitation. **Child exploitation** includes but is not limited to:
 - a. The actual or attempted abuse of a position of authority, differential power or trust in relation to a minor, with a view of benefiting sexually, monetarily, socially or politically from the use of a minor;
 - b. Intentionally viewing, downloading or distributing any sexualized, demeaning or violent images involving minors; or
 - c. Taking a photograph or other image of a minor or making representations of a minor in a way that can reasonably be interpreted as sexualized, demeaning or violent.
- iv. Every province and territory in Canada have mandatory reporting laws regarding the abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children. Consequently, anyone who is subject to this Code of Conduct, who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a minor is or may be suffering or may have suffered from any form of child abuse, has a legal obligation to immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the local child protection agency and/or the local police detachment. Immediate investigation of abuse should only take place under the advice of the police or the local child protection agency.
- v. Everyone who is subject to this Code of Conduct should be aware that child abuse may be the subject of a criminal investigation and/or disciplinary procedures. Failure to report actual or suspected child abuse places a minor at an ongoing risk of harm and, therefore, anyone who does not report actual abuse, or a reasonable suspicion of abuse, may be liable under provincial/territorial child protection legislation which may include conviction for failure to report. Everyone subject to this Code of Conduct making a report of suspected child abuse to a child protection agency is protected against civil action, unless that person is proven to have acted maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the suspicion.

INTEGRITY IN SPORT – GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All Hockey Northwestern Ontario Participants, Officials, and Staff have a responsibility to:

- i. Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the True Sport principles;
- ii. In case of adults, avoid consuming alcohol in non-adult oriented social situations where minors are present, and take reasonable steps to manage the responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages in adult-oriented social situations associated with any Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program;
- iii. Recognize and understand that underage drinking is strictly prohibited and, if it is found to occur, will be subject to disciplinary action;
- iv. Reject and condemn all forms of bribery and corruption;
- v. Refrain from accepting or giving gifts or other benefits that could influence an act that is related to their official activities. If in doubt, gifts shall not be offered or accepted;
- vi. Refrain from offering or accepting cash in association with any Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program other than reasonable per diems, expense reimbursement or salaries;
- vii. Subject to applicable policies, ensure information obtained while carrying out one's duties is treated as confidential if that information is provided confidentially or would be understood by the reasonable person to be of a confidential nature and continue to respect the confidentiality of any information referenced above after the person's relationship with Hockey Northwestern Ontario ceases;
- viii. Ensure transparency in all actions and decisions;
- ix. Refrain from betting in connection with hockey and not tolerate any form of match fixing or manipulation of game results, whether for financial, sporting or political gain, and ensure information in any form that is not publicly available is not used for the above purposes for oneself or another party; and
- x. When driving a vehicle for any purpose relating to a Hockey Northwestern Ontario Program:
 - a. Have a valid driver's license;
 - b. Not be under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicating drugs or substances;
 - c. Have valid car insurance; and
 - d. Refrain from holding or using a mobile device that is not connected by way of a hands-free system.

STAFF

In addition to the general responsibilities described above, Staff must;

- i. Act with honesty and integrity and conduct themselves in a manner which maintains confidence in Hockey Northwestern Ontario;
- ii. Conduct themselves openly, professionally, lawfully and in good faith in the best interests of Hockey Northwestern Ontario;
- iii. Be independent and impartial and not influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism;
- iv. Behave with decorum appropriate to both circumstance and position, and be fair, equitable, considerate, and honest in all dealings with others;
- v. Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws, policies and guidelines under which Hockey Northwestern Ontario is incorporated; and
- vi. Not engage in any workplace harassment or workplace violence.

Coaches

The coach-athlete relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal, sport, and athletic development of an athlete. Coaches must recognize the power inherent in their position and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment.

Coaches must:

- i. Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of their players;
- ii. Prepare their players systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm those players;
- iii. Avoid compromising the present and future health of their players by communicating and cooperating with sports medicine professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of the players' medical and psychological treatments;
- iv. Provide each player on their team (and their parents/guardians if the player is a minor) with the information necessary to be involved in decisions that affect the player;
- v. Act in the best interest of their players' development as a whole person;
- vi. Respect other coaches;
- vii. Report any ongoing criminal investigations, previous convictions or existing bail conditions involving themselves to a Hockey Northwestern Ontario representative;
- viii. Under no circumstances provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed medications) or performance-enhancing substances and, in the case of minors, alcohol, tobacco or other legalized drugs;
- ix. Use social media responsibly and strategically, modelling appropriate behaviour expected of representatives of Hockey Northwestern Ontario;
- x. Respect players on other teams;
- xi. Not engage in a sexual relationship with a Participant under 19 years old, or in an intimate or sexual relationship with a Participant over the age of 19 if in a position of power, trust, or authority over the Participant;
- xii. Dress professionally, neatly, and inoffensively; and
- xiii. Use inoffensive language, taking into account the audience being addressed.

Players

In addition to the general responsibilities described above, all players must;

- i. Never ridicule another player for a poor performance or practice;
- ii. Act in a sporting manner and not engage in abusive behaviour, foul language, or offensive gestures; and
- iii. Use social media responsibly.

REFEREES

In addition to the general responsibilities described above, referees must:

- i. Maintain and update their knowledge of the rules and rules changes;
- ii. Not publicly criticize other referees;
- iii. Work within the boundaries of their position's description while supporting the work of other referees;
- iv. Act as an ambassador of the sport by agreeing to enforce and abide by national and Hockey Northwestern Ontario rules and regulations;
- v. Take ownership of actions and decisions made while refereeing;
- vi. Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all Participants;
- vii. Act openly, impartially, professionally, lawfully, and in good faith;
- viii. Be fair, equitable, considerate, independent, honest, and impartial in all dealings with others;
- ix. Respect the confidentiality required by issues of a sensitive nature, which may include discipline processes, appeals, and specific information or data about Participants;
- x. Comply with their obligations under the Hockey Northwestern Ontario Screening Policy, including understanding ongoing expectations under that policy and fully cooperating in the screening process;
- xi. Honour all assignments unless unable to do so by virtue of illness or personal emergency, and in these cases inform a supervisor at the earliest possible time;
- xii. When writing reports, set out the actual facts to the best of their knowledge and recollection;
- xiii. Dress in proper attire for officiating.

BOARD, COUNCIL, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF

In addition to the general responsibilities described above, board, council, commission and committee members as well as the Hockey Northwestern Ontario's staff must:

- i. Ensure their loyalty prioritizes the interests of the organization they are serving;
- ii. Act with honesty and integrity and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the True Sport principles;
- iii. Ensure that financial affairs are conducted in a responsible and transparent manner with due regard for all fiduciary responsibilities;
- iv. Comply with any screening policies in place;
- v. Conduct themselves openly, professionally, lawfully and in good faith;
- vi. Be independent and impartial and not be influenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism;
- vii. Behave with decorum appropriate to both circumstance and position;
- viii. Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to applicable laws;
- ix. Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature;
- x. Respect the decisions of the majority and resign if unable to do so;
- xi. Commit the time to attend meetings and be diligent in preparation for, and participation in, discussions at such meetings;
- xii. Have a thorough knowledge and understanding of all governance documents.

PARENTS

In addition to the general responsibilities described above, all parents/guardians of any player must:

- i. Ensure, to the best of their ability, that their children abide by the rules of hockey, the policies of Hockey Northwestern Ontario, and the principles of good sportsmanship;
- ii. Ensure, to the best of their ability, that their children respect their teammates, coaches, officials, opponents and other participants in Hockey Northwestern Ontario sanctioned games, practices, and other association activities;
- iii. Ensure, to the best of their ability, that their children conduct themselves in a manner that minimizes the risk of injury, both physical and psychological, to themselves and others;
- iv. Ensure they and all supporters of their children refrain from criticism of coaches, referees, teammates, opponents, and other participants in Hockey Northwestern Ontario-sanctioned games and other association activities. When a parent/guardian feels as though criticism is warranted, they shall offer it in a manner that is fully respectful, through proper channels and away from the hockey rink in any event.
- v. Ensure they and all supporters of their children refrain from directing comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading, racist, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive to players, coaches, officials, opponents, and association volunteers;
- vi. Ensure they and all supporters of their children refrain from discussing the weaknesses of other team players and/or coaching staff with their children; and
- vii. Familiarize themselves with and abide by the policies and procedures of Hockey Canada, Hockey Northwestern Ontario and their respective hockey association.

DUTY OF DISCLOSURE, REPORTING AND COOPERATION

Hockey Canada has established a new, fully independent, and confidential reporting mechanism for all individuals regarding any incidents involving Hockey Canada and Hockey Northwestern Ontario sanctioned programs known as the independent third party mechanism (the "ITP").

There is an expectation that a complaint regarding violations of this Code will be submitted to the ITP. Complaints can be submitted directly to the ITP via e-mail to complaints@sportcomplaints.ca.

The ITP will then assess the complaint in accordance with Hockey Canada's Maltreatment Complaint Management Policy to determine whether the complaint will remain with the ITP or whether the matter will be returned to Hockey Northwestern Ontario for handling in accordance with its own policies and procedures. That decision is in the discretion of the ITP and is based on, amongst other factors, the severity of the complaint. The complainant will be advised of the result of this process and it is Hockey Canada and Hockey Northwestern Ontario's goal to ensure effective communication with the complainant throughout the complaint process.