SAFE SPORT & PARTICIPANT PROTECTION POLICY

1. Purpose

Chilliwack Minor Fastpitch Association (CMFA) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment where all participants can enjoy softball, develop their skills, build confidence, and experience the positive benefits of sport.

CMFA recognizes that every participant has the right to participate in an environment free from abuse, harassment, bullying, discrimination, neglect, and other forms of maltreatment.

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations, preventative measures, reporting procedures, and accountability standards that protect participants and promote a positive sport experience.

CMFA is committed to fostering a culture where participant safety and well-being take priority over competition, performance, or organizational interests.

2. Scope and Application

This policy applies to all individuals participating in or associated with CMFA activities, including:

- Registered athletes and participants
- Coaches, assistant coaches, instructors, and team managers
- Board members, division coordinators, and committee members
- Volunteers, umpires, and officials
- Parents, guardians, and spectators
- Contractors, guest instructors, and other individuals acting on behalf of CMFA

This policy applies to all CMFA-sanctioned programs, events, and activities, including Learn to Play, House League, Impact Rep, skills clinics, practices, games, tournaments, team travel, fundraising activities, and association-related communications.

The policy applies to both in-person and online interactions where conduct may affect participant safety or the CMFA sport environment.

3. Guiding Principles

CMFA's approach to Safe Sport and participant protection is guided by the following principles:

Safety First: The physical and emotional well-being of participants is the association's highest priority.

Respect and Dignity: All individuals must be treated fairly and respectfully, regardless of age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, ability, or socioeconomic circumstances.

Inclusion and Accessibility: CMFA will work to remove barriers to participation and provide an environment where individuals feel welcome, valued, and supported.

Positive Development: Coaches and volunteers are expected to encourage skill development, teamwork, confidence, sportsmanship, and enjoyment of the game.

Accountability: Everyone associated with CMFA shares responsibility for maintaining a safe environment and addressing inappropriate conduct.

Transparency and Fairness: Concerns will be addressed promptly, appropriately, confidentially to the extent possible, and without retaliation.

4. Prohibited Conduct

CMFA prohibits all forms of maltreatment, including but not limited to:

4.1 Physical Maltreatment

- Hitting, pushing, shaking, or otherwise physically harming a participant.
- Using excessive or inappropriate physical punishment.
- Requiring unsafe training activities or intentionally exposing participants to unreasonable physical risks.

4.2 Psychological and Emotional Maltreatment

- Threats, intimidation, humiliation, or degrading treatment.
- Repeated yelling, ridicule, or personal insults.
- Deliberately isolating, excluding, or undermining a participant.

- Using fear or humiliation as a coaching or disciplinary technique.

4.3 Sexual Maltreatment

- Sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, or inappropriate sexual contact.
- Sexualized comments, jokes, messages, or conduct directed toward participants.
- Grooming behaviours or exploitation of a position of trust.
- Any sexual relationship or conduct prohibited by applicable law or sport safeguarding standards.

4.4 Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

- Repeated aggressive, intimidating, or harmful behaviour.
- Cyberbullying or harassment through social media, messaging platforms, or other electronic communications.
- Discriminatory remarks, exclusion, or unfair treatment based on personal characteristics.
- Retaliation against anyone who raises a concern or participates in a complaint process.

4.5 Neglect and Unsafe Practices

- Failure to provide reasonable supervision.
- Ignoring injuries, medical concerns, or participant safety needs.
- Requiring participation when it is unsafe to do so.
- Failing to take reasonable action when a participant's safety is at risk.

4.6 Other Misconduct

- Hazing or initiation activities.
- Supplying alcohol, cannabis, or other intoxicating substances to minors.
- Participating in CMFA activities while impaired when responsible for participants.
- Misusing authority, trust, or influence over an athlete.
- Knowingly making malicious or deliberately false allegations. A complaint made in good faith is not misconduct merely because it cannot be substantiated.

5. Screening and Volunteer Requirements

CMFA recognizes that appropriate screening is an important component of participant protection.

Individuals appointed to positions involving supervision, instruction, authority over, or direct interaction with minors must complete screening appropriate to their role.

Screening requirements may include:

- A criminal record check, including vulnerable sector screening where applicable.
- Completion of required Safe Sport or Respect in Sport education.
- Completion of applicable coaching certification requirements.
- Review and acknowledgement of CMFA policies and codes of conduct.
- Disclosure of relevant circumstances that may affect an individual's suitability to work with youth.

CMFA will establish screening requirements consistent with applicable legislation and the requirements of Softball BC and Softball Canada.

Individuals must not assume unsupervised responsibilities with minors until CMFA has confirmed that applicable screening requirements have been satisfied.

Screening records will be handled confidentially and accessed only by individuals authorized to administer the screening process.

6. Rule of Two and Appropriate Boundaries

CMFA supports the **Rule of Two**, a safeguarding principle intended to ensure interactions between adult leaders and minor athletes are open, observable, and accountable.

Whenever reasonably possible, interactions involving an adult coach, instructor, or volunteer and a minor participant should involve two screened and authorized adults.

Where two adults are not available, activities must be arranged to maintain visibility and avoid isolated one-on-one interactions.

The following standards apply:

- One-on-one meetings should occur in open, observable locations.
- Coaches and volunteers must avoid being alone with a minor athlete in secluded areas.
- Physical contact must be appropriate, necessary, respectful, and related to instruction, safety, or legitimate participant needs.
- Participants must be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to decline nonessential physical contact.
- Coaches must not establish inappropriate personal, romantic, or sexual relationships with participants.
- Private or secretive relationships between adult leaders and minor athletes are prohibited.

Exceptions involving emergencies or immediate participant safety must be documented and communicated to the appropriate parent, guardian, or association representative as soon as practical.

7. Electronic Communications and Social Media

Electronic communication between adults and minor participants must be professional, transparent, and directly related to CMFA activities.

CMFA requires that:

- Team communications use approved or appropriate team communication platforms whenever possible.
- Parents or guardians are included in direct electronic communications with minor athletes.
- Coaches and volunteers avoid private, disappearing, or secretive messaging with minors.
- Messages remain appropriate, respectful, and relevant to team or association activities.
- Photos, videos, and personal information are shared only in accordance with applicable consent and privacy requirements.
- Participants are not subjected to online bullying, harassment, or inappropriate contact.

Any inappropriate electronic communication must be reported in accordance with this policy.

8. Supervision, Facilities, and Travel

CMFA will take reasonable steps to ensure that practices, games, clinics, tournaments, and other activities are conducted in safe and appropriately supervised environments.

Supervision

- Coaches and volunteers must maintain appropriate supervision based on participant age, activity, and circumstances.
- Participants must not be left unattended in situations where their safety could reasonably be compromised.
- Parents and guardians must be informed of applicable arrival, departure, and pickup expectations.

Changing Areas and Washrooms

- Participants are entitled to privacy and dignity when changing or using washroom facilities.
- Adults must not enter participant changing areas unnecessarily.
- Photography and video recording are prohibited in changing and washroom areas.
- Any required adult assistance must respect participant privacy and appropriate safeguarding practices.

Transportation and Travel

- Parents and guardians are primarily responsible for arranging transportation unless otherwise established for a specific activity.
- Adults should not transport an unrelated minor participant alone without appropriate parent or guardian authorization and safeguarding arrangements.
- Overnight travel, accommodation, and team supervision arrangements must comply with applicable safeguarding requirements.
- Adults must not share sleeping accommodations with unrelated minor athletes except where expressly permitted under applicable safeguarding rules and approved arrangements.

9. Injury Prevention and Participant Well-Being

CMFA is committed to promoting safe participation and age-appropriate athlete development.

Coaches and volunteers must:

- Follow applicable softball safety rules and equipment requirements.
- Ensure participants use appropriate protective equipment.
- Promote safe warmups, skill development, and training practices.
- Respond appropriately to injuries, illness, and suspected concussions.
- Respect participant physical limitations and reasonable accommodation needs.
- Avoid pressuring athletes to continue participating when injured or unwell.
- Maintain access to emergency contact information through authorized team procedures.

Suspected concussions must be managed according to applicable concussion protocols. An athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from participation and must not return until the applicable return-to-sport requirements have been met.

10. Reporting Concerns and Incidents

All participants, parents, coaches, volunteers, and board members are encouraged to report concerns relating to participant safety, misconduct, or violations of this policy.

Reports may include:

- Suspected abuse or maltreatment.
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- Inappropriate conduct by coaches, volunteers, parents, or participants.
- Unsafe supervision or boundary violations.
- Retaliation or intimidation associated with reporting a concern.

Reporting Process

1. **Immediate Danger:** Where someone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services at 911.

2. **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect:** Report directly to the appropriate child protection authority or police as required by law. Internal CMFA reporting does not replace legal reporting obligations.
3. **Association-Level Concerns:** Report to CMFA's designated Safe Sport contact or another appropriate executive representative.
4. **Conflict of Interest:** If the concern involves the designated contact or a board member, report to an uninvolved executive representative or an appropriate external safeguarding or sport authority.
5. **External Reporting:** Concerns may be referred or reported directly to Softball BC, Softball Canada, or the applicable independent complaint mechanism, according to their jurisdiction and procedures.

Reports should include relevant facts, dates, individuals involved, and any supporting information available. A participant does not need to prove misconduct before raising a concern.

CMFA will not require individuals to confront an alleged offender before reporting a safety concern.

11. Response to Complaints and Incidents

CMFA will respond to reported concerns promptly, respectfully, and in a manner appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the allegation.

The association will:

- Prioritize the immediate safety and well-being of affected participants.
- Determine whether the concern requires emergency services, child protection authorities, police, or referral to an external sport authority.
- Take reasonable interim protective measures where necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible.
- Avoid conflicts of interest in complaint handling.
- Provide appropriate information about next steps to affected individuals.

- Cooperate with lawful investigations and applicable governing body procedures.

CMFA will not conduct an internal investigation into suspected criminal conduct or child abuse in place of the appropriate authorities.

Where appropriate, disciplinary action may include education, warnings, restrictions on participation, suspension, removal from a position, or termination of association membership, subject to applicable policies, procedural fairness, and governing body authority.

12. Protection from Retaliation

CMFA strictly prohibits retaliation against individuals who:

- Raise a concern in good faith.
- Report suspected misconduct.
- Participate in an investigation or complaint process.
- Support another individual in reporting a concern.

Retaliation may result in disciplinary action independent of the original complaint.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for approving this policy, supporting its implementation, ensuring appropriate resources are available, and reviewing its effectiveness annually.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for ensuring that participant protection expectations are incorporated into association operations, volunteer onboarding, and program delivery.

Designated Safe Sport Contact

CMFA will designate an appropriate individual or individuals to receive association-level concerns, explain reporting options, coordinate appropriate referrals, and maintain secure records.

The designated contact must not independently investigate matters that require referral to child protection authorities, police, or an external complaint mechanism.

Coaches, Team Managers, and Volunteers
All coaches, team managers, and volunteers are responsible for understanding and following this policy, modelling appropriate conduct, maintaining safe boundaries, and reporting concerns.

Parents and Guardians
Parents and guardians are expected to support a respectful sport environment, follow association expectations, communicate relevant safety concerns, and encourage positive participation.

Athletes and Participants
Athletes and participants are expected to treat others respectfully, follow reasonable safety instructions, and seek support when they experience or witness inappropriate conduct.

14. Education and Awareness
CMFA will promote Safe Sport awareness through appropriate education, communication, and onboarding processes.

The association will:

- Communicate this policy to coaches, volunteers, participants, and families.
- Make the policy available through the CMFA website or other accessible association channels.
- Identify mandatory Safe Sport training requirements for applicable roles.
- Include participant protection expectations in coach and volunteer onboarding.
- Provide information about reporting concerns and accessing external support.
- Encourage ongoing education in positive coaching, inclusion, and athlete well-being.

15. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Information relating to complaints, screening, and participant protection will be managed carefully and in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and organizational requirements.

CMFA will:

- Limit access to sensitive records to authorized individuals with a legitimate need to know.
- Store records securely.
- Avoid unnecessary disclosure of personal information.
- Maintain appropriate documentation of reports, referrals, and decisions.
- Establish retention and disposal practices consistent with applicable legal and organizational obligations.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where disclosure is necessary to protect a participant, comply with the law, provide procedural fairness, or cooperate with an authorized investigation.

16. Policy Compliance and Review

Compliance with this policy is a condition of participation in CMFA activities and of serving in any coaching, volunteer, leadership, or other association role.

Violations may result in disciplinary or administrative action consistent with applicable CMFA, Softball BC, and Softball Canada policies.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Board of Directors and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, sport governing body requirements, and best practices.

17. Alignment with Governing Bodies

CMFA recognizes and supports the Safe Sport principles, policies, and applicable requirements established by Softball BC and Softball Canada, including the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS), where applicable.

This policy is intended to complement, rather than replace, applicable provincial and national sport policies, legal obligations, or independent complaint and disciplinary processes.

Where another applicable requirement establishes a higher standard of participant protection, CMFA will follow that standard to the extent permitted by law.

Policy Owner: CMFA Executive Committee
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