



**WHEELCHAIR
RUGBY CANADA**

WHEELCHAIR RUGBY CANADA (WRC) ATHLETE PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Updated: February 10, 2023

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Athlete Protection Guidelines

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in these Guidelines:
 - a) “*Person in Authority*” – An Individual who holds a position of authority within WRC including, but not limited to, coaches, managers, support personnel, chaperones, and Directors

Purpose

2. These athlete protection guidelines describe how Persons in Authority can maintain a safe sport environment for athletes.

Rule of Two

3. WRC will strongly recommend the ‘Rule of Two’ for all Persons in Authority who interact with athletes. The Coaching Association of Canada defines the ‘Rule of Two’ as:
 - a) The ‘Rule of Two’ means that the coach is never alone or out of sight with a minor athlete. Two NCCP trained or certified coaches should always be present with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation such as in a locker room or meeting room. All one-on-one interactions between a coach and an athlete under the age of majority must take place within earshot and in view of the second coach except for medical emergencies. One of the coaches should be of the same gender as the athlete, if possible. Should there be a circumstance where a second screened and NCCP trained or certified coach is not available, screened support staff, employees or directors can be recruited to act as a substitute.
4. To ensure adherence to the ‘Rule of Two’, WRC will ensure:
 - a) Teams or groups of athletes, under the age of majority, will always have at least two Persons in Authority with them
 - b) For teams consisting of athletes of just one gender identity, a Person in Authority of the same gender identity should be available to participate or attend and for teams consisting of athletes of more than one gender identity (e.g., co-ed teams), a Person in Authority of each gender identify should be available, if possible, to participate or attend.

Communications

5. WRC will strongly recommend the following communication guidelines for all coaches and

other adults in a position of authority who interact with athletes:

- a) Group messages, group emails or team pages are to be used as the regular method of communication between Persons in Authority and athletes
- b) Persons in Authority may only send personal texts, direct messages on social media or emails to individual athletes when necessary and only for the purpose of communicating information related to team issues and activities (e.g., non-personal information)
- c) Parents and guardians have the right to request that their child not be contacted by Persons in Authority using any form of electronic communication and/or to request that certain information about their child may not be distributed in any form of electronic communications
- d) The content of all electronic communication between Persons in Authority and athletes must be professional in tone and for the purpose of communicating information related to team issues or activities
- e) Non-essential communication between Persons in Authority and athletes must be between the hours of 6:00am and midnight unless extenuating circumstances exist
- f) No nontherapeutic or drug free sport communication concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is permitted
- g) No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation is permitted
- h) Persons in Authority are not permitted to ask athletes to keep a secret for them
- i) A Person in Authority should not become overly-involved in an athlete's personal life

Travel

6. WRC will strongly recommend the following travel guidelines for all coaches and other adults in a position of authority who travel with athletes:
 - a) A Person in Authority may not be alone in a car with an athlete under the age of majority unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian
 - b) A Person in Authority may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with an athlete under the age of majority unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian
 - c) Room or bed checks, when traveling with athletes under the age of majority, during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority
 - d) For overnight travel when athletes share a hotel room, roommates will be age-appropriate and of the same gender identity

Locker Room / Changing Area / Meeting Room

7. WRC will strongly recommend the following guidelines for the locker room, changing area, and meeting rooms:
- a) Interactions between a Person in Authority and an individual athlete should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, meeting room, hotel room, restroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for any necessary interaction in any such room.
 - b) If Persons in Authority are not present in the locker room or changing area, or if they are not permitted to be present, they should still be available outside the locker room or changing area and be able to enter the room or area if required

Photography / Video

8. WRC will strongly recommend the following photography / video guidelines:
- a) Parents/guardians should sign a photo release form (i.e., as part of the registration process) that describes how the image of an athlete under the age of majority may be used by WRC
 - b) Photographs and video may only be taken in public view, must observe generally accepted standards of decency, and be both appropriate for and in the best interest of the athlete.
 - c) The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.
 - d) Examples of photos that should be edited or deleted include:
 - i. Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing
 - ii. Suggestive or provocative poses
 - iii. Embarrassing images
 - e) Without parent or legal guardian's consent, in the case of a Minor athlete, or an adult athlete's consent (a) athletes may not be photographed or filmed; and (b) no images of athletes may be posted publicly or privately. If consent is given, it may be revoked at any time

Physical Contact

9. WRC understands that some physical contact between Persons in Authority and athletes may be necessary for various reasons including, but not limited to, teaching a skill or tending to an injury. WRC will strongly recommend the following touch guidelines:
- a) Unless it is not possible because of serious injury or other circumstance, a Person in Authority should always clarify with an athlete where and why any touch will occur. The Person in Authority must make clear that he or she is *requesting* to touch the athlete

and not *requiring* the physical contact

- b) Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment on the part of the athlete during a training session, is permitted
- c) Making amends, such as an apology or explanation, is encouraged to further help educate athletes on the difference between appropriate and inappropriate contact
- d) Cuddling, physical horseplay, and excessive physical contact initiated by the Person in Authority are not permitted. WRC is aware that some younger athletes may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a Person in Authority for various reasons (e.g., such as crying after a poor performance) but this physical contact should always be limited.

Sport-Specific Guidelines

10. WRC strongly recommend the following sport-specific guidelines:

- a) In the case where an athlete with a disability has requested assistance with transfers or righting a fallen player, that assistance is permitted.
- b) In the case where an athlete requires emergency assistance, specifically in an area considered private in nature, (a fall, transfer etc.) that assistance will be provided and an incident report prepared and signed by the athlete and the person assisting the athlete.

Enforcement

11. Any violation of this Policy that may be considered “Prohibited Behaviour” or “Maltreatment” (as defined in the UCCMS) when the Respondent is an Organizational Participant who has been designated by WRC as a UCCMS Participant (as defined in the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*), will be handled pursuant to the policies and procedures of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (“OSIC”), subject to the rights of WRC as set out in the *Discipline and Complaints Policy* and any applicable workplace policies.

Policy History	
Approved	February 10, 2023
Next Renewal Date	February 2024