



# Athlete Protection Policy

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August 20, 2020	August 20, 2020	January 2024

## Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in these Guidelines:
  - a) *"Person in Authority"* – An individual who holds a position of authority within Racquetball Ontario including, but not limited to, coaches, managers, support personnel, chaperones, and Directors.
  - b) *"Athlete"* – An individual who is an Athlete participant in the Organization who is subject to the UCCMS and the policies of the Organization.
  - c) *"Vulnerable Participants"* – Includes minors and vulnerable adults (people who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority).

## Purpose

2. This athlete protection policy describes how Persons in Authority can maintain a safe sport environment for athletes.

## Interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes – the ‘Rule of Two’

3. Racquetball Ontario requires that the ‘Rule of Two’ be followed for all Persons in Authority who interact with athletes, to the maximum extent feasible. The ‘Rule of Two’ is a directive that says that an Athlete must never be alone one-on-one with an unrelated Person in Authority.
4. Racquetball Ontario recognizes that fully implementing the ‘Rule of Two’ may not always be possible in some instances. Consequently, at a minimum, interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes must respect the following:
  - a) To the maximum extent possible, the training environment should be visible and accessible so that all interactions between Persons in Authority and Athletes are observable.
  - b) Private and one-on-one situations that are not observable by another adult or Athlete should be avoided to the maximum extent possible.
  - c) A Vulnerable Participant may not be alone under the supervision of a Person in Authority unless prior written permission (citing this policy and provision) is obtained from the Vulnerable Participant’s parent or guardian.

- d) Persons in Authority may not invite or host Vulnerable Participants in their home without the written permission (citing this policy and provision) from parents or guardians.

## **Practices and Competitions**

5. For practices and competitions, the Organization recommends:

- a) A Person in Authority should never be alone with a Vulnerable Participant prior to or following a competition or practice.
- b) If the Vulnerable Participant is the first Athlete to arrive, the Athlete's parent should remain until another Athlete or Person in Authority arrives.
- c) If a Vulnerable Participant would potentially be alone with a Person in Authority following a competition or practice, the Person in Authority should ask another Person in Authority (or a parent or guardian of another Athlete) to stay until all of the Athletes have been picked up. If an adult is unavailable, another Athlete, who is preferably not a Vulnerable Participant, should be present in order to avoid the Person in Authority being alone with a Vulnerable Participant.
- d) Persons in Authority giving instructions, demonstrating skills, or facilitating drills or lessons to an individual Athlete should always do so within earshot and eyesight of another Person in Authority.
- e) Persons in Authority and Athletes should take steps to achieve transparency and accountability in their interactions. For example, a Person in Authority and an Athlete who know they will be away from other Participants for a lengthy period of time must inform another Person in Authority where they are going and when they are expected to return. Persons in Authority should always be reachable by phone or text message.

## **Communications**

6. Racquetball Ontario will strongly recommend the following communication guidelines for all Persons in Authority who interact with athletes:

- a) Persons in Authority may only send 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). Any such texts, messages or emails shall be professional in tone
- b) Parents and guardians may request that their child not be contacted by Persons in Authority using any form of electronic communication and/or may request that certain information about their child may not be distributed in any form of electronic communications;
- c) Electronic communication between Persons in Authority and athletes that is personal in nature should be avoided. If such personal communication is unavoidable, it must be recorded and available for review by another Person in Authority and/or by the Athlete's

parent/guardian (when the Athlete is a Vulnerable Participant)

- d) All communication between Persons in Authority and athletes must be between the hours of 6:00am and midnight unless extenuating circumstances justify otherwise.
- e) Communication concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding its prohibition) is not permitted;
- f) No sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually oriented conversation shall be communicated in any medium;
- g) Persons in Authority are not permitted to ask athletes to keep a personal secret for them;

## **Travel**

7. For travel involving Persons in Authority and athletes, Racquetball Ontario recommends:

- a) To the maximum extent possible, no Person in Authority may drive a vehicle alone with an Athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian;
- b) Teams or groups of Athletes shall always have at least two Persons in Authority with them
- c) For mixed gender teams or groups of Athletes, there should be one Person in Authority from each male and female.
- d) If two Persons in Authority cannot be present, reasonable efforts should be made to supplement supervision with screened parents or other volunteers.
- e) A Person in Authority may not share a room or be alone in a hotel room with an athlete unless the Person in Authority is the athlete's parent or guardian;
- f) Room or bed checks during overnight stays must be done by two Persons in Authority;
- g) For overnight travel when junior athletes share a hotel room, where ever possible roommates will be age-appropriate (e.g., within two (2) years of age) and of the same gender identity and to seek parental approval of plans.

## **Locker Room / Changing Area / Meeting Room**

8. Racquetball Ontario recommends 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 area where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, meeting room, restroom, or changing area. A second Person in Authority should be present for any necessary interaction in any such area;
- 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, for reasons including but not limited to emergencies.

## **Photography / Video**

9. Racquetball Ontario recommends the following photography / video guidelines:
  - a) Photographs and video should only be taken in public view. Content must observe generally accepted standards of decency, and be both appropriate for and in the best interest of the athlete;
  - b) The use of recording devices in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited;
  - c) Examples of photos that should be deleted include:
    - i. Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing;
    - ii. Suggestive or provocative poses;
    - iii. Embarrassing images.

## **Physical Contact**

10. 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. For physical contact Racquetball Ontario recommends:
  - a) A Person in Authority must always request permission to make physical contact from the athlete in advance and clearly explain where and why the physical contact will occur. The Person in Authority must make clear that they are *requesting* to touch the athlete and not *requiring* the physical contact;
  - b) Infrequent, incidental physical contact, during a training session, is not considered a violation of this policy.
  - c) Non-essential physical contact may not be initiated by the Person of Authority. It is recognized that some Athletes may initiate non-essential physical contact such as hugging or other physical contact with a Person in Authority for various reasons (e.g., such as celebrating or crying after a poor performance). This physical contact should always occur in an open and observable environment.

## **Enforcement**

11. Any alleged violations of this *Athlete Protection Policy* shall be addressed pursuant to the *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.