Active Implementation of Canada Soccer Guide to Safety

Commitment Letter

Heavens Eleven Football Club Inc., headed by Michael Buabeng, hereby confirm that we will comply with actively implementing the Canada Soccer's Guide to Safety by 2023 across the entire organization.

Safety is at the top of our priorities. We ensure that how we manage teams, interact with children, and design our curriculum are programmed in a way that would challenge the kids but at the same time, make sure they do not injure themselves. We do our best to create an environment for our young players to feel comfortable in and enjoy the sport.

Inclusion is also one of our priorities. Regarding our facilities, we make it a point that they are well-maintained and that they are accessible for everyone, including those with disabilities.

The Canada Soccer Guide to Safety is one of the major resources we share with our staff upon their recruitment orientation, and it has also been mentioned multiple times in our meetings to ensure we keep complying with Canada Soccer's standard. Moreover, it is shared with parents upon registration for guidance.

Sincerely yours
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Current Efforts to Ensure Safety of All Participants

Pursuant to Canada Soccer's Guide to Safety, Heavens Eleven FC has adopted the following policies to ensure all participants have a safe experience within our care:

1. Accessible
2. Inclusive
3. Welcoming Environment

According to research caring adult is the most important factor to ensuring a quality experience for children for some young players, the soccer field may be one of the few safe places and, after the parent or guardian; a coach is one of the most influential people in a child's life. As such, coaches are in a unique position to be role models and mentors for young participants. All coaches and individuals who work with children have a "duty of care" to the children with whom they work. A duty of care is a legal obligation, which is imposed on an individual requiring adherence to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others. Coaches are required by law to always act in the best interest of the individuals they coach and not act or fail to act in a way that results in harm. This obligation also always includes a responsibility to role model appropriate boundaries and professional contact.

Although child serving organizations have an obligation to ensure the safety of the children in their care, including appropriate screening and monitoring of all coaches, most coaches are positive influences on and trust adults in the lives of the young players they coach. As coaches work with children on a regular basis and can establish a positive and healthy adult–child relationship with their players, a coach may be the person a child chooses to talk to about something happening in their life. In fact, studies have shown that children are more likely to disclose maltreatment to their coach than even their teacher. In addition, a coach may be in position to be able to detect signs of maltreatment of children in their care.

Coaches must be able to recognize signs of maltreatment and know what to do when you feel that maltreatment has taken place. It is important that coaches know how to respond to a child in danger, and how to share information appropriately with those who can help. It is important to remember that even though a child could be displaying some or all the signs of maltreatment, this does not necessarily mean that maltreatment is occurring. As a coach, if you see signs in a child that are worrying, it is not your responsibility to decide if maltreatment is occurring, but it is our responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it. Under Canadian child welfare laws, if you know or suspect child maltreatment, you have a legal obligation to report it. This is known as the "duty to report." Every person in Canada has the duty to report known or suspected child maltreatment by law.
For additional information on reporting, please refer to "Reporting".

International Safeguards for Children in Sport

Children have a right to participate in sport in a safe and enjoyable environment. Their rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We now know enough from research and evidence to be clear that sport does not always take place with a focus on children's rights at its center or sometimes fails to fully consider the risks to children, leading to organizational cultures that don't allow for the discussion of harm and abuse (Brackenridge, Kay & Rhind, 2012).

There are also some risks to children and young people, which are unique to sport such as the increased risks of all forms of abuse to elite young athletes. Many sport for development programs are provided to extremely vulnerable children who may be affected by violence and abuse in their daily lives and for whom sport should be a haven. We should all seek to ensure that sports provision for these young people takes place in safe environments.

Draft sets of Standards (now called Safeguards) were developed by a partnership of organizations working together for the Beyond Sport Summit in London, 2012. These were.

further developed through an extensive piloting phase over the next two years. The finalized version of the Safeguards was launched at Beyond Sport in October 2014. They lay the foundations for an integrated approach to ensuring children's safety and protection in all sports contexts internationally.

The International Safeguards for Children in Sport aims to outline the things that should be put in place by any organization providing sports activities to children and young people. The Safeguards should be viewed as guides, which facilitate an organization's journey towards safeguarding children rather than an end in them. These Safeguards represent collective good practice at a point in time and will be subject to periodic review to ensure they reflect developments within safeguarding practice.

The Safeguards aim to:

- Help create a safe sporting environment for children wherever they participate and at whatever level.
- Provide a benchmark to assist sports providers and funders to make informed decisions.
- Promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children.
- Provide clarity on safeguarding children to all involved in sport; and,
- They are based on the following principles:
- All children have the right to participate, enjoy, and develop through sport, in a safe and inclusive environment, free from all forms of maltreatment, bullying, abuse, harassment, violence, discrimination, neglect and exploitation.

Children have the right to have their voices heard and listened to. They need to know whom they can turn to when they are concerned about their participation in sport.
Everyone, organizations and individuals, service providers and funders, has a responsibility to support the care and protection of young people.
Organizations providing sports activities to children and young people have a legal and moral duty of care for them.

There are certain factors that leave some children more vulnerable to abuse, and steps need to be taken to address this.

Children have a right to be involved in shaping safeguarding policy, and practice
Organizations should always act in the best interests of the child.
Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and not be discriminated against based on gender, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and beliefs, religious or political affiliation.

The processes and activities for the creation, development and implementation of safeguarding measures should be inclusive.
As organizations review the Safeguards, they should consider the five–step approach, outlined below to facilitate their reflection on the current system and inform their efforts towards ensuring the safety of children.

1. **Preparing for the journey — Raise awareness of the need to safeguard children.**
2. **Preparing to implement — Reflecting on where you are now and prioritizing your next steps.**
3. **Developing your Safeguard**
4. **Implementing your Safeguard**
5. **Embedding your Safeguard**

For more information on developing safeguarding in your organization please visit:
http://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/safeguarding_toolkit/

Safeguard 1: Developing your policy.

What — Any organization providing or with responsibility for sports activities for children and young people under the age of eighteen should have a safeguarding policy. This is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children involved in sport from harm and provides the framework within which procedures are developed.

Why — A safeguarding policy makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children and young people. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty of care seriously. It also takes account of specific factors that may leave some children more vulnerable.

Criteria for Success:

We have a safeguarding policy, which is clearly written and easy to understand.
The policy clearly describes your understanding and definitions of all forms of maltreatment
The policy covers your organization's commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of your work.
The policy is clear that all children have equal rights to protection.
Staff at the highest level of your organization officially endorses this policy.
Staff at the highest level of the organization have the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the policy.
All staff; volunteers, carers or other representatives, have signed up to the policy.
Your organization has consulted with children, parents/careers, and staff as part of the initial development and/or on–going review of your policy.

Safeguard 2: Developing a system to respond to safeguarding concerns.

What — Procedures describe the operational processes required to implement organizational policy and provide
clear step–by–step guidance on what to do in different circumstances. They clarify roles and responsibilities, and lines of communication. Effective systems are required which help to process any complaints or concerns and support any victims of violence. You should build on existing systems and understand your role with regard to relevant national systems and legislation.

Why — For safeguarding to be effective, procedures must be credible for children. Procedures help to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child's safety or well–being. They also help you to comply with and implement legislation and guidance. Child maltreatment

is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Organizations have a duty to ensure that advice and support is in place to help people to play their part in safeguarding children.

Criteria for Success:

There are clear procedures in place that provide step– by–step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or well–being, both within and external to the organization
Our organization has arrangements in place to provide support to children, volunteers, and staff during and following an incident, allegation, or complaint.
There is an identified member of staff in your organization responsible for leading on safeguarding.
Our organization provides children and young people with information about their rights and about whom they can turn to if they are worried, in a process which empowers them.

Our organization has made information available to children and their parents/caregivers, about what is likely to happen following a disclosure, in a format and language that can be easily understood by everyone.
Our organization has a process of dealing with complaints in a fair and transparent way that includes an appeals process.
All incidents, allegations and complaints are recorded, monitored, and stored securely.
Our organization has consulted with children, parents/caregivers, and staff as part of the initial development and/or on-going review of your response system

Safeguard 3: Advice and support

What — Arrangements made to provide essential information and support to those responsible for safeguarding children. Children and young people are advised on where to access help and support.

Why — You have a duty to ensure advice and support is in place to help people to play their part in safeguarding children such that they know whom they can turn to for help.

Criteria for Success

Contacts are established at a national and/or local level with relevant child protection agencies, NGOs and community groups providing support on child protection.

Our organization ensures that staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have engagement with specialist advice, support, and information.

Children are provided with advice and support on keeping themselves and one another safe

Our system acknowledges that children with additional vulnerabilities (for example, a disability) may.

Safeguard 5: Guidelines on behavior

What — Codes of conduct to describe what an acceptable standard of behavior is and promote current best practice.

Why — Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive, and encouraging atmosphere. Standards of behavior set a benchmark on what is acceptable for all.

Criteria for Success

Our organization has written guidelines for behavior (codes of conduct) which contain statements about treating people with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness.

Our organization has guidance and expectations around activities that include time spent away from home, including placing children in the care of others and overnight stays.

Where organizations participate in placing children in the care of others, frequent meetings are held with the child to discuss their experiences.

Our organization has guidance around working with children who have a disability.

Our organization has guidance around the appropriate use of information technology and social media to make sure that children are not put in danger and made vulnerable to exploitation.

Our organization has guidance on positive ways.
of managing the behavior of children that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment, and are age and gender appropriate our organization has guidance on expected.
and acceptable behavior of children towards others, particularly other children (for example, a learning agreement) our organization has guidance on expected and acceptable behavior of adults towards children.
There are clear consequences for not following the guidelines on behavior that are linked to organizational disciplinary procedures.

The highest level of the organization has the responsibility to ensure that the guidelines are followed our organization has consulted children, parents/ careers, and staff as part of the initial development and/ or on–going review of your organization's guidelines.