CODE OF CONDUCT TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Safeguarding expectations for adults and all participants under 18

PUFC is committed to protecting children and youth from abuse, neglect, grooming, exploitation, harassment, bullying and inappropriate conduct. The safety, dignity and well-being of every child come before competition, results or the reputation of any individual or the club.

1. Scope

This Code applies to adults involved in PUFC, including Board members, coaches, team managers, volunteers, contractors, officials, parents/guardians and spectators, and sets expectations for interactions with participants under 18. It applies at practices, games, tournaments, travel, accommodation, facilities, meetings and club-related digital communications.

2. Adult responsibilities and boundaries

- Put the child's safety, dignity, well-being and development first.
- Maintain professional, respectful and age-appropriate relationships; never use authority to pressure, manipulate, threaten or exploit a child.
- Use appropriate, necessary physical contact only for coaching, safety or encouragement; respect a child's boundaries and right to decline non-essential contact.
- Use respectful language. Never shame, threaten, degrade, ridicule, isolate or punish a child through physical or emotional abuse.
- Do not give inappropriate gifts, money, special privileges or secret attention to an individual child; avoid favouritism.
- Never engage in grooming, sexualized comments, sexual contact or an intimate/sexual relationship with a child.
- Do not attend to children while impaired or provide alcohol, cannabis, illicit drugs, tobacco or vaping products to minors.
- Do not take, share or request inappropriate images or personal information from a child.

3. Rule of Two and supervision

PUFC adopts the Rule of Two. Whenever reasonably possible and as required by applicable governing-body rules, interactions between an adult and a minor should take place with two screened adults present or in an open, observable and interruptible environment. Avoid isolated one-on-one situations during coaching, meetings, travel, dressing-room supervision and online interactions. If unavoidable, keep the interaction observable and transparent, notify a parent/guardian or another screened adult as soon as reasonably possible, and document the circumstances where appropriate.

4. Communication and technology

- Use club-approved, transparent communication channels and include parents/guardians in electronic communications with minors wherever possible.

- Do not use secret, disappearing or private personal messaging with a child.
- Keep messages relevant to soccer, respectful, age-appropriate and sent at reasonable times.
- Do not request or send sexual, intimate or otherwise inappropriate photographs or messages.
- Share a child's image or personal information only in accordance with club consent, privacy practices and applicable rules.

5. Dressing rooms and changing areas

- Respect privacy and dignity; announce yourself before entering where appropriate.
- Adults must not change clothing in front of children.
- Photography, video or audio recording in dressing rooms or changing areas is prohibited.
- Avoid being alone with a child in a dressing room; follow the Rule of Two.
- Consider separate or private changing arrangements based on age, privacy and individual needs.
- Bullying, hazing, initiation activities and inappropriate behaviour in change facilities are prohibited.

6. Transportation, travel and overnight events

- Follow the PUFC Youth Team Travel Policy and trip-specific supervision plan.
- Use approved drivers and transportation arrangements; avoid transporting a child alone. Any exception must follow applicable policy and be transparent to the parent/guardian.
- Do not share a hotel room or sleeping space with a child who is not your own child, except where an approved arrangement is permitted and safeguards are in place.
- Maintain appropriate supervision, rooming arrangements, check-ins and parent/guardian communication.
- Never leave a child unsupervised or place a child in an unsafe or unauthorized situation.

7. Prohibited conduct

Physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse; neglect; grooming; exploitation; bullying; cyberbullying; harassment; discrimination; intimidation; threats; hazing; inappropriate physical contact; sexualized communication; secrecy; retaliation; and misuse of authority are prohibited.

8. Reporting concerns and disclosures

- Listen calmly if a child tells you something concerning. Take the child seriously, reassure them and do not promise secrecy.
- Do not investigate, ask leading questions, confront the alleged person or pressure the child for details. Record the child's words as accurately as possible, with the date, time and context.
- Take immediate steps to protect the child and contact emergency services if there is immediate danger.
- Report promptly to the PUFC Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or alternate under the Incident Reporting & Response Policy.
- Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child under 16 may need protection, the person with the concern must make a direct report to the appropriate children's aid society. This personal duty cannot be delegated to PUFC or the DSO. A report may also be made for a youth aged 16 or 17. Contact police where immediate danger or suspected criminal conduct requires it; call 911 in an emergency.

9. Screening, training and cooperation

Adults must complete screening, reference checks, declarations and safeguarding education required for their role before undertaking duties involving children. Follow PUFC and governing-body screening intervals and training requirements. Cooperate honestly with safeguarding processes and lawful directions. Do not interfere with external investigations.

10. Breaches and acknowledgement

A breach may result in interim protective measures, restrictions from contact or activities, removal from duties, suspension, dismissal from volunteer responsibilities or referral to child-protection, police or governing-body authorities. No retaliation is permitted against a person who raises a concern in good faith.

I have read and understand this Code. I agree to follow it and understand that concerns must be reported promptly. This Code does not replace legal reporting duties.

Name: _____ Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/guardian (if applicable): _____ Date: _____

Related policies and source note

Read with PUFC's Safe Sport & Child Protection Policy, Incident Reporting & Response Policy, Rule of Two checklist, Youth Athlete Code, Youth Travel Policy and electronic communication requirements. Prepared from PUFC's supplied Child Protection and Safe Sport Policy, comprehensive safeguarding content and Safe Sport Implementation Manual. Verify current Ontario Soccer, Canada Soccer, District Association, Ontario child-protection and insurer requirements before Board approval.

Document control

Document ID	PUFC-CCPC-002
Owner	PUFC Board of Directors
Status	Draft for Board approval
Review	At least annually and when requirements change

Acknowledgement and approval

I have read and agree to follow this Code during PUFC activities.

Name: _____ Role / Team: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/guardian (if applicable): _____ Date: _____

Board approval date: _____ Motion / resolution #: _____