

Code of Conduct to Protect Children

Thorold Soccer Club

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure all children participating in Thorold Soccer Club programs are safe, protected, respected, and supported. All coaches, volunteers, staff, match officials, and parents must follow this Code to maintain a positive and secure environment for every young athlete.

2. Guiding Principles

Thorold Soccer Club is committed to:

- Providing a safe and inclusive environment for all players
 - Preventing abuse, neglect, bullying, or harassment
 - Following the Rule of Two (no adult alone with a child outside an observable environment)
 - Encouraging healthy relationships built on trust, respect, and clear boundaries
 - Responding swiftly and appropriately to concerns or disclosures of harm
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3. Expectations for Coaches, Staff & Volunteers

3.1 Appropriate Behaviour

Adults must:

- Prioritize the safety and well-being of every child
- Treat all players with respect, fairness, and patience
- Communicate in a calm, positive, age-appropriate manner

- Use encouragement and constructive feedback
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- Keep interactions observable and interruptible (Rule of Two)

3.2 Prohibited Behaviour

Adults may **NOT**:

- Use physical punishment, aggressive behaviour, or intimidation
 - Touch a child in an inappropriate or sexual manner
 - Engage in one-on-one communication that is private or secretive
 - Meet a child alone in person or in a vehicle
 - Use discriminatory, degrading, or inappropriate language
 - Use personal social media or private messaging to contact a child
 - Take or share photos/videos of children without club and parental permission
 - Give gifts to individual children unless approved by the club
 - Consume or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs around players
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4. Communication Standards

- Communication with players must be **soccer-related**, professional, and transparent.
 - Email and group messaging must include **another adult** (coach, manager, or parent group).
 - No private texting, messaging apps, or social media DMs with children.
 - Online meetings or video calls must follow the **Rule of Two**.
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5. Physical Contact Guidelines

Physical contact should only occur when:

- Necessary for safety
- Required for instruction and conducted in a professional manner
- Non-intimate and brief
- In response to injury, with permission or in an emergency
- Developmentally appropriate (e.g., high-fives for encouragement)

Unnecessary, prolonged, or intrusive contact is strictly prohibited.

6. Transportation

- Coaches, staff, and volunteers **must not** transport a child alone.
- If travel is needed, transportation must follow the **Rule of Two** or maintain parental responsibility.
- Emergency situations must be documented and reported.

7. Locker Rooms, Washrooms & Change Areas

- Adults must not enter change rooms unless necessary for safety or supervision, and never alone.
- Young children who need assistance may be supported by a **parent or guardian** only.
- Coaches should conduct check-ins from the doorway—never from within.

8. Bullying, Harassment & Abuse Prevention

Thorold Soccer Club will not tolerate:

- Bullying (verbal, physical, social, cyber)
- Harassment or discrimination of any kind
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual misconduct
- Neglect of a child's physical or emotional needs

Players, parents, and volunteers are encouraged to report concerns promptly.

9. Reporting Concerns or Incidents

Anyone who witnesses or suspects abuse, unsafe behaviour, or a violation of this Code must report it immediately through one of the following:

- Club executive member - Gene Citrigno or Ann Vocella
- Local child protection services (if child's safety is in immediate danger)
- Law enforcement (for urgent or serious cases)

Thorold Soccer Club will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Respond promptly
- Document incidents
- Protect the identity and safety of the child involved

There will be **no retaliation** for reporting a concern in good faith.

10. Responsibilities of Parents & Guardians

Parents must:

- Support and model respectful behaviour
 - Encourage players to follow safety rules
 - Report concerns promptly
 - Understand and uphold the Rule of Two
 - Refrain from confrontational behaviour toward players, coaches, officials, or parents
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11. Player Responsibilities

Players are expected to:

- Treat others with respect and kindness
 - Follow safety rules from coaches and volunteers
 - Avoid bullying or teasing teammates
 - Speak up if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or mistreated
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12. Compliance

All staff, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, and players must agree to follow this Code. Violations may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings
 - Removal from a program or team
 - Suspension of volunteer or coaching duties
 - Reporting to appropriate authorities
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13. Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if required by law, best practices, or organizational changes.