



# GREATER SUDBURY SOCCER CLUB

## Accessibility & Inclusion Guide

### Building Accessible, Inclusive, and Welcoming Soccer Environments

---

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Our Commitment
3. Community Engagement
4. Accessibility, Inclusion & Diversity
5. Engaging Underrepresented Groups
6. Athletes with Disabilities
7. Indigenous Inclusion & Reconciliation
8. Newcomers & Multicultural Communities
9. Women & Girls in Soccer
10. LGBTQI2S+ Inclusion
11. Mental Health & Well-Being
12. Religion & Cultural Accommodation
13. Financial Accessibility
14. Volunteer & Coach Education
15. Creating Safe and Welcoming Environments
16. Accountability & Continuous Improvement
17. Additional Resources
18. Contact Information

---

# 1. Introduction

The Greater Sudbury Soccer Club (GSSC) believes that soccer is for everyone.

We are committed to creating a soccer environment that is welcoming, inclusive, accessible, safe, and respectful for all participants regardless of age, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or background.

As one of Northern Ontario's leading soccer organizations, GSSC recognizes that sport has the power to build belonging, strengthen communities, and positively impact lives both on and off the field.

Our goal is to ensure every player, coach, official, volunteer, parent, and supporter feels:

- welcomed,
- respected,
- valued,
- safe, and
- empowered to participate fully.

This guide provides principles, expectations, and resources to help our club continue building an inclusive soccer culture across all programs and levels of play.

---

## 2. Our Commitment

GSSC is committed to:

- Removing barriers to participation
- Promoting equity and accessibility
- Creating positive soccer experiences
- Supporting diversity in leadership
- Encouraging respectful communication
- Providing safe sport environments
- Supporting lifelong participation in soccer

We believe inclusion is not a one-time initiative, but an ongoing process requiring education, awareness, accountability, and action.

---

## 3. Community Engagement

GSSC believes soccer organizations should play an active role in strengthening their communities.

Our club strives to:

- Partner with schools and community organizations

- Support underserved and underrepresented groups
- Promote volunteerism and leadership opportunities
- Foster connections through sport
- Encourage participation across all backgrounds and abilities

By creating inclusive opportunities, we help ensure soccer remains accessible to families throughout Greater Sudbury and surrounding communities.

---

## 4. Accessibility, Inclusion & Diversity

### Welcoming Environment

A welcoming environment ensures every participant feels encouraged, respected, and valued.

### Inclusive Environment

An inclusive environment allows individuals to participate in ways meaningful to them while ensuring they feel a true sense of belonging.

### Equity

Equity means recognizing that different individuals may require different supports and opportunities in order to participate fully.

### Diversity

Diversity includes all backgrounds, identities, experiences, and perspectives represented within our soccer community.

GSSC embraces diversity and recognizes it strengthens our club culture and enriches the soccer experience for everyone.

---

## 5. Engaging Underrepresented Groups

GSSC is committed to reducing barriers that may prevent participation in soccer.

We aim to support:

- Indigenous communities
- New Canadians and newcomers
- Athletes with disabilities
- Women and girls
- LGBTQI2S+ participants
- Financially disadvantaged families
- Racialized communities
- Religious and cultural groups

Our programs and policies will continue evolving to better reflect the diverse communities we serve.

---

## 6. Athletes with Disabilities

GSSC believes all athletes deserve opportunities to participate in soccer.

We are committed to:

- Promoting accessible programming
- Supporting adaptive participation when possible
- Educating coaches on inclusive practices
- Encouraging respectful communication
- Working collaboratively with families to support individual needs

The club supports the philosophy that soccer should be available to all participants regardless of ability level.

---

## 7. Indigenous Inclusion & Reconciliation

GSSC acknowledges the importance of reconciliation and the role sport can play in building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities.

We are committed to:

- Promoting cultural awareness and understanding
- Supporting Indigenous participation in soccer
- Reducing barriers to participation
- Creating respectful and inclusive environments
- Encouraging ongoing education regarding Truth and Reconciliation

The club recognizes the importance of listening, learning, and building meaningful partnerships within Indigenous communities.

---

## 8. Newcomers & Multicultural Communities

Soccer is a universal language that helps build connection and belonging.

GSSC welcomes newcomers to Canada and families from all cultural backgrounds.

We aim to:

- Create welcoming first experiences
- Reduce participation barriers
- Support multilingual communication where possible

- Encourage volunteer and leadership involvement
  - Foster community connections through soccer
- 

## 9. Women & Girls in Soccer

GSSC is committed to supporting girls and women in all areas of soccer participation and leadership.

This includes:

- Female player development
- Women in coaching
- Women in officiating
- Women in leadership positions
- Safe and supportive environments for girls and women

We recognize the importance of creating positive experiences that encourage lifelong participation in sport.

---

## 10. LGBTQI2S+ Inclusion

GSSC is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, and exclusion.

All participants deserve to feel safe and respected regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The club supports:

- Inclusive language and communication
- Respectful team environments
- Privacy and dignity for all participants
- Education around inclusion and respect
- Policies that support participation for all athletes

Discriminatory behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated.

---

## 11. Mental Health & Well-Being

Mental health is an important part of athlete and community well-being.

GSSC encourages:

- Positive coaching practices
- Respectful communication
- Supportive team environments

- Awareness of mental health challenges
- Healthy balance between sport, school, family, and life

We believe soccer environments should contribute positively to the mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being of participants.

---

## 12. Religion & Cultural Accommodation

GSSC respects the religious and cultural diversity of our members.

Where reasonably possible, the club will work to accommodate:

- Religious observances
- Prayer requirements
- Cultural dress requirements
- Dietary considerations
- Gender-sensitive considerations

We believe respectful dialogue and collaboration are essential to creating inclusive environments.

---

## 13. Financial Accessibility

GSSC recognizes that financial barriers can prevent participation in sport.

The club supports efforts to:

- Provide information on financial assistance programs
- Promote KidSport and Jumpstart funding opportunities
- Explore flexible payment solutions where possible
- Reduce barriers to participation

We believe every child should have the opportunity to experience soccer regardless of financial circumstances.

---

## 14. Volunteer & Coach Education

Education plays a critical role in building inclusive environments.

GSSC encourages coaches, volunteers, and staff to pursue education related to:

- Diversity and inclusion
- Safe sport
- Accessibility
- Mental health awareness

- Respect in sport
- Coaching athletes with disabilities
- Cultural awareness and reconciliation

The club will continue promoting training opportunities that strengthen inclusion across all levels of the organization.

---

## 15. Creating Safe and Welcoming Environments

All GSSC participants are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Use inclusive language
- Avoid discriminatory behaviour
- Promote sportsmanship and fair play
- Support teammates and opponents
- Report inappropriate behaviour

GSSC does not tolerate:

- Racism
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Sexism
- Discrimination of any kind

Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a positive soccer environment.

---

## 16. Accountability & Continuous Improvement

GSSC recognizes that accessibility and inclusion require ongoing effort.

The club commits to:

- Reviewing policies and practices regularly
- Listening to participant feedback
- Identifying barriers to participation
- Improving accessibility and inclusion initiatives
- Continuing education and awareness efforts

Inclusion is a shared responsibility throughout our organization.

---

## 17. Additional Resources

GSSC encourages members to explore resources available through:

- Canada Soccer
  - Ontario Soccer
  - Coaching Association of Canada
  - Canadian Women & Sport
  - Canadian Paralympic Committee
  - Respect in Sport
  - Mental Health Commission of Canada
  - KidSport
  - Jumpstart
- 

## 18. Contact Information

### Greater Sudbury Soccer Club (GSSC)

Website: [www.gssc.ca](http://www.gssc.ca)

Email: [info@gssc.ca](mailto:info@gssc.ca)

Together, we can continue building a soccer community where everyone belongs.

---

*Adapted from the Canada Soccer Guide to Accessibility & Inclusion.*