

Newfoundland and Labrador Fencing Association Abuse Policy

2001-POL-01-V2

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Purpose

1. The Newfoundland and Labrador Fencing Association (NLFA), hereinafter, the Organization” and its Members are committed to a sport environment free from abuse. The purpose of this Policy is to stress the importance of that commitment by educating Individuals about abuse, outlining how the Organization and its Members will work to prevent abuse, and how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by the Organization and its Members.

Zero Tolerance Statement

2. The Organization and its Members have zero tolerance for any type of abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse to the President Organization to be immediately addressed under the terms of the applicable policy.

Education – What is Abuse

3. Individuals can be abused in different forms.
4. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to children, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. The abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time.
5. Abuse of children or youth in sport can include emotional maltreatment, neglect, and physical maltreatment.
6. Importantly, emotional and physical maltreatment does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods (per the NCCP) of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.
7. Potential warning signs of abuse of children or youth can include:
 - a) Recurrent unexplained injuries
 - b) Alert behaviour; child seems to always be expecting something bad to happen

- c) Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather
- d) Child startles easily, shies away from touch or shows other skittish behaviour
- e) Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
- f) Withdrawn from peers and adults
- g) Behavior fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative or extremely demanding)
- h) Acting either inappropriately beyond their age (like an adult; taking care of other children) or inappropriately younger than their age (like an infant; throwing tantrums)
- i) Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
- j) New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
- k) Self-harm (e.g., cutting, burning or other harmful activities)
- l) Not wanting to be alone with a particular child or young person

Vulnerable Adult Abuse

- 8. Although individuals may be abused at virtually any life stage – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, or old age – the nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on an individual’s situation, disability, or circumstance.
- 9. Abuse of vulnerable adults is often described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time.
- 10. Potential warning signs of abuse of vulnerable adults can include:
 - a) Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
 - b) Unexplained physical injuries
 - c) Dehydration, malnutrition, or lack of food
 - d) Poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
 - e) Over-sedation

Preventing Abuse

- 11. The Organization and its Members will enact measures aimed at preventing all types of abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training, practice, and monitoring.

Screening

- 12. Individuals who coach, volunteer, officiate, deliver developmental programs, accompany a team to an event or competition, or otherwise engage with Vulnerable Individuals involved with the Organization and its Members will be screened according to the organization’s screening procedure which may include the following, singularly or in combination:
 - a) Completing an Application Form for the position sought (which includes alerting Individuals that they must agree to adhere with the organization’s policies and procedures (including this *Abuse Policy*))
 - b) Completing a Screening Declaration Form
 - c) Providing letters of reference
 - d) Providing a Criminal Record Check (“CRC”) and/or Vulnerable Sector Check (“VSC”)
 - e) Providing a driver’s abstract

- f) Other screening procedures, as required
13. An Individual's failure to participate in the screening process or pass the screening requirements as determined by a Screening Committee, will result in the Individual's ineligibility for the position sought.

Orientation and Training

14. The Organization and its Members may deliver orientation and training to those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The orientation and training, and their frequency, will be based on the level of risk.
15. Orientation may include, but is not limited to: introductory presentations, facility tours, equipment demonstrations, parent/athlete meetings, meetings with colleagues and supervisors, orientation manuals, orientation sessions, and increased supervision during initial tasks or period of engagement.
16. Training may include, but is not limited to: certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.
17. At the conclusion of the orientation and training, Individuals may be required to acknowledge, in written form, that they have received and completed the training.

Practice

18. When Persons in Authority interact with Vulnerable Individuals, they may be required to enact certain practical approaches to these interactions. These include, but are not limited to:
- a) Limiting physical interactions to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc.)
 - b) Ensuring that Vulnerable Individuals are always supervised by more than one person
 - c) Ensuring that more than one person is involved with team selection (thereby limiting the consolidation of power onto one Individual)
 - d) Including parents/guardians in all communication (e.g., electronic, telephonic) with Vulnerable Individuals
 - e) Ensuring that parents/guardians are aware that some non-personal communication between Persons in Authority and Vulnerable Individuals (e.g., coaches and athletes) may take place electronically (e.g., by texting) and that this type of communication is now considered to be commonplace, especially with older Vulnerable Individuals (e.g., teenagers)
 - f) When traveling with Vulnerable Individuals, the Person in Authority will not transport Vulnerable Individuals without another adult present and will not stay in the same overnight accommodation location without another adult present.

Monitoring

19. The Organization and its Members will regularly monitor those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk.

20. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to: regular status reports, logs, supervisor meetings, supervisor on-site check-ins, feedback provided directly to the organization (from peers and parents/athletes), and regular evaluations.

Reporting Abuse

21. Reports of abuse that are shared confidentially with an Individual by a Vulnerable Individual may require the Individual to report the incident to parents/guardians, the Organization, or police. Individuals must respond to such reports in a non-judgemental, supportive and comforting manner but must also explain that the report may need to be escalated to the proper authority or to the Vulnerable Individual's parent/guardian.
22. Complaints or reports that describe an element of **abuse** will be addressed by the process(es) described in the *Discipline and Complaints Policy* and the *Investigations Policy*.

Policy History	
Document No.	2021-POL-01
Version	V2
Approved	
Revision Approval Dates	
Next Review Date	