

## **Code to Protect Children**

Chesley Minor Soccer is committed to ensuring that all children are protected and safe. A Code of Conduct to Protect Children is an essential part of fostering safe environments for children. The safety, rights, and well-being of children participating in our programs are a top priority in our daily operations. The purpose of the Code of Conduct to Protect Children is to guide our volunteers in forming healthy relationships with the children involved in our activities or programs and to model appropriate boundaries.

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### **TREATING CHILDREN WITH DIGNITY AND MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES**

All volunteers must:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Establish, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries with all children and families involved in Chesley Minor Soccer's activities or programs.

It's crucial to monitor your own behavior towards children and be attentive to the behavior of fellow volunteers to ensure all interactions are appropriate, respectful, and perceived as such by others.

All interactions and activities with children must:

- Be known to, and approved by, the Chesley Minor Soccer Executive and/or the child's parents;
- Be tied to your volunteer duties;
- Be designed to meet the child's needs, not your own.

Always consider how a child reacts to any activity, conversation, behavior, or interaction. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of your behavior or others', you should discuss it with the Head Coach.

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### **Examples of Unacceptable Behavior Toward a Child:**

- Criticizing
  - Embarrassing
  - Shaming
  - Blaming
  - Humiliating
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### **GENERAL RULES OF BEHAVIOR**

Employees and volunteers of Chesley Minor Soccer must not:

- Engage in any physical contact with a child that could make the child or an observer feel uncomfortable or could be seen as violating reasonable boundaries.
- Engage in communication with a child (within or outside of volunteer duties) that may make the child uncomfortable or could be seen as violating reasonable boundaries.

- Engage in any behavior that goes against (or appears to go against) Chesley Minor Soccer's policies or the Code of Conduct to Protect Children, whether they are on duty or not.
  - Conduct their own investigation into allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior. It is a volunteer's responsibility to report concerns to a designated person or child welfare agency, not to investigate the situation.
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## WHAT CONSTITUTES INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Inappropriate behavior includes:

1. **Inappropriate Communication:** Communication with a child or their family outside of volunteer duties, regardless of who initiated the exchange. For example:
  - Personal phone calls
  - Electronic communications (email, text message, social media, etc.)
  - Personal letters
  - Excessive communication (online or offline)
2. **Inappropriate Contact:** Spending unauthorized time with a child or the child's family outside of designated volunteer activities. Any such contact must be reported to your designated person within the organization before it occurs.
3. **Favoritism:** Giving special attention or privileges to a child or group of children that are excessive, unwarranted, or inappropriate.
4. **Taking Personal Photos/Videos:** Using a personal phone, camera, or video equipment to take photos or videos of a child, or allowing someone else to do so. Any photos taken as part of your duties must remain with Chesley Minor Soccer and not be used personally.
5. **Telling Inappropriate Jokes or Comments:** Making sexual jokes or comments, or anything suggestive or explicit to a child.
6. **Showing Sexual Material:** Displaying or sharing sexual material in any form with a child.
7. **Intimidating or Threatening Behavior:** Using intimidating or threatening behavior toward a child.
8. **Making Fun of a Child:** Bullying or ridiculing a child.

Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated, especially as it relates to the well-being of the children in our programs. Whether or not a specific behavior is deemed inappropriate will be determined by the organization, considering the context and any previous actions.

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## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All employees and volunteers must report any suspected child sexual abuse, inappropriate behavior, or incidents they become aware of, whether personally witnessed or not.

**Where to report:**

1. Allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behavior (e.g., child sexual abuse) that an employee/volunteer witnesses firsthand must be reported immediately to police and/or child welfare.
2. Any allegations or suspicions of potentially illegal behavior that an employee/volunteer becomes aware of must also be reported promptly to police and/or child welfare for them to determine if further investigation is necessary.
3. Allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behavior must be reported to your supervisor.

Keep in mind that you may learn about potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior through a child, a third party, or by witnessing it firsthand. Examples include:

- Allegations of potentially illegal behavior by an employee or volunteer of the organization.
- Allegations of illegal behavior by a third party (parent, teacher, coach, etc.).

If you are unsure whether something you witnessed or heard about involves potentially illegal or inappropriate behavior, discuss the situation with the designated person within your organization.

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## **FOLLOW UP ON REPORTING**

Once an allegation or suspicion of potentially illegal behavior is reported, police and/or a child welfare agency will be notified. Chesley Minor Soccer will follow up as appropriate.

For allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behavior, Chesley Minor Soccer will investigate the matter to gather information and determine if formal or other disciplinary action is necessary.

If multiple behaviors are reported, if inappropriate behavior recurs, or if the behavior is of serious concern, the organization may refer the matter to a child welfare agency or the police.