



PICKLEBALL CANADA POLICY – ABUSE PREVENTION

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Pickleball Canada (PCO) takes all reasonable steps to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for everyone engaged in PCO events and activities. PCO responds promptly to any suspected abuse or neglect of children, youth and vulnerable adults.

2. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND

Pickleball Canada has zero tolerance for any type of abuse. PCO will provide information to its members about abuse prevention as well as how to report suspected abuse.

3. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all individuals participating in Pickleball Canada sanctioned programs, activities and events. The policy also addresses measures taken by PCO prior to hiring paid staff and volunteers.

4. COMING INTO FORCE

May 27, 2020

5. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- “Child or youth”: a person under the age of majority¹ as defined by the province or territory of jurisdiction.
- “Vulnerable Adult”: a person who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority
- “Abuse” – Child/Youth Abuse or Vulnerable Adult Abuse as described in this policy.

6. TYPES OF ABUSE

The following forms of abuse of a child/youth or vulnerable adult are addressed under this policy:

¹ Currently, the age of majority is **18** in 6 provinces: Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan.

The age of majority is **19** in 4 provinces and 3 territories: British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, North West Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut and Yukon.

- “Emotional Abuse”: A mental or emotional injury to a person that results in serious observable impairment in the individual’s growth, development or psychological functioning.
- “Neglect”: Failure to provide adequate care for an individual resulting in physical or emotional harm to the person.
- “Physical Abuse”: Intentional injury to a person that results in physical harm to an individual.
- “Sexual Abuse”: using a child/youth or vulnerable adult for sexual purposes. Examples of sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.

7. PREVENTING ABUSE

Pickleball Canada will enact measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training and practice.

7 (a) Screening

Pickleball Canada requires a written application when hiring all employees and when approving a volunteer who will be working with a child/youth or vulnerable adult in a scenario where the parent or guardian is not present.

The required screenings, including reference checks for employees and for volunteers (who will be working with children/youth and/or vulnerable adults in a scenario where the parent or guardian of the vulnerable person is not present) and any additional background information if determined on a case by case basis will depend on the positions and its level of involvement with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Positions involving regular interaction with children/youth and/or vulnerable adults

Candidates for positions that involve regular interaction with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults will be screened and selected using the following:

- i. Standard employment application that includes a signed authorization to perform necessary background checks, such as a vulnerable sector check
- ii. Criminal background checks in all provinces/territories where the candidate has lived
- iii. Sexual offender registry checks in any and all provinces/territories where the candidate has lived
- iv. Driving records and any applicable certification if the position requires the transportation of children/youth or vulnerable adults
- v. In-person interview of the candidate

As part of the final approval for hiring, vulnerable sector checks will be conducted for employees and then again every five years for those who regularly work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults. The same requirement is in place for volunteers that are working with children/youth or vulnerable adults in a scenario where the parent or guardian is not present.

An individual’s failure to participate in the screening process or pass the screening requirements will result in the individual’s ineligibility for the position sought.

All information collected about candidates will be reviewed and used to determine if they are appropriate for the respective position. If hired, all information collected during the hiring process will be included in the employee's or volunteer's permanent file, which will be maintained over the course of his or her employment and/or volunteer commitment with Pickleball Canada.

Personnel screenings are required regardless of current employment/volunteer status with Pickleball Canada. Employees and volunteers seeking to transfer into a position that involves working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults must undergo the same review process as new hires.

7 (b) Orientation and Training

Pickleball Canada will deliver mandatory abuse prevention orientation and training:

- to new employees upon hiring of new staff and annually thereafter;
- to new volunteers who will have access to children/youth or vulnerable adults (where the parent or guardian of the child/youth or vulnerable person will not be present); and annually thereafter

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.

Training may include, but is not limited to: certification courses, online learning, mentoring, workshop sessions, webinars, on-site demonstrations, and peer feedback.

At the conclusion of the orientation and training, individuals will be required to acknowledge, in written form, that they have received and completed the training.

7 (c) Practice

General Practice regarding children/youth and vulnerable adults

- Employees and/or volunteers are not allowed to implement new activities or programs for children, youth and vulnerable adults with the consent of Pickleball Canada.
- Written permission must be obtained from a parent or guardian before any employee and/or volunteer transports children, youth or vulnerable adults while conducting Pickleball Canada activities.
- Children under the age of 12 participating in Pickleball Canada activities will only be released to a parent, legal guardian or person designated by a parent or legal guardian.

Practice involving interaction with children/youth and vulnerable adults

Pickleball Canada employees and volunteers strive to provide a safe, respectful and healthy environment for all individuals involved in PCO activities. Special consideration must be given when interacting with children/youth and vulnerable adults.

The following practices are meant to guide Pickleball Canada's employees/volunteers during their interactions with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults. These include but are not limited to:

- i) Treating all children, youth and vulnerable adults with respect. Treatment must be fair and equal and not based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or economic or social status. All efforts must be made to avoid favouritism or the appearance of favouritism.
- ii) Refraining from harsh or inappropriate language, degrading punishment, physical punishment or any type of restraining device in the name of behaviour management
- iii) Restricting physical interactions to non-threatening or non-sexual touching (e.g., high-fives, pats on the back or shoulder, handshakes, specific skill instruction, etc)
- iv) Ensuring employees/volunteers do not undress, shower or bathe with or in the presence of children, youth and/or vulnerable adults
- v) Prohibiting discussion about their own sexual history, preference or fantasies nor their use of illicit or pornographic materials
- vi) Prohibiting the possession of sexually oriented materials when involved in Pickleball Canada activities
- vii) While involved in Pickleball Canada activities, refrain from consumption or distribution of alcohol or drugs
- viii) Ensuring that children/youth and/or vulnerable adults are always supervised by more than one adult. When one on one discussion or counselling is warranted, these interactions will take place in an area that allows for private conversation while remaining in view of others.
- ix) Where a child/youth or vulnerable person needs to be segregated from the group for disciplinary actions (e.g. a child is misbehaving and has been given a "time-out"), the child/youth or vulnerable person will be located in an area where they are still always supervised.
- xi) Having more than one person responsible for team selection (thereby limiting the consolidation of power to one individual);
- xii) Including parents/guardians in communication (e.g., electronic, telephonic) with children/youth and/or vulnerable adults. Parents/guardians should also be advised that some non-personal information may take place electronically (e.g., by texting) and that this type of communication is now considered to be commonplace, especially with older individuals (e.g., teenagers). Individuals are aware that such communication is subject to Pickleball Canada's Code of Conduct policy.

8. Reporting incidents and allegations of abuse

8 (a) Reporting suspected abuse/neglect by a child or youth's parent/guardian

Everyone has a responsibility to keep children safe and report suspected abuse of a child/youth. If a person suspects that a child/youth has been or is likely to be abused or neglected by the child or youth's parent or guardian, that person also has a legal duty to report this to [child welfare authorities](#). Failing to report is an offence in most jurisdictions.

You do not need proof that the abuse or neglect has happened, only a reason to believe. Reports can be made confidentially. If a person believes that a child or youth is in immediate danger, contact the police.

8 (b) Reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult

A number of jurisdictions require individuals to report suspected abuse or neglect to authorities. It is important to understand and comply with the reporting requirements in your jurisdiction.

8 (c) Reporting inappropriate behaviour of a Pickleball Canada employee or volunteer towards of a child/youth or vulnerable adult

Employees and/or volunteers are to report all incidents of inappropriate behaviour or abuse to a senior person within the organization.

Upon receiving a report of abuse or neglect or inappropriate behaviour, the senior person within the organization is responsible for reviewing the information and then promptly reporting to:

- a senior board member and
- the necessary authorities such as local police, Children's Aid Society, etc.

The senior person also determines when to notify the child/youth's parent or guardian (unless the child's parent or guardian is the alleged abuser) and the organization's insurance company.

All employees and/or volunteers identified in such incidents or allegations of inappropriate behaviour and/or abuse will be immediately redeployed away from all children/youth and vulnerable adults pending the outcome of the investigation conducted by the appropriate authorities.

*Note that clicking on the links below will take you to another site.

See [Appendix I](#) for a summary of the steps in reporting incidents and allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

See [Appendix II](#) for a summary of the steps in reporting incidents and allegations of abuse

The information in Appendix I and II is general information only provided by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. For detailed information related to your province refer to local legislation or contact your local child welfare agency.

PCO is not affiliated with or endorsed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and PCO does not own or control the Canadian Centre for Child Protection's website or materials linked above.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

PCO will communicate this policy to its Board, employees, relevant volunteers and its general membership.

10. RESULTS

PCO Board members, employees, volunteers and members are aware of their responsibilities to prevent abuse and know how to report abuse should it occur.

Children, youth and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse while participating in Pickleball Canada programs, activities and events.