NEW BRUNSWICK TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION
ABUSE POLICY

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

a) "Abuse" – Child/Youth Abuse or Vulnerable Adult Abuse as described in this Policy;

b) "Individuals" – All categories of membership defined in the New Brunswick Table Tennis Association (NBTTA) Bylaws, as well as all individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, volunteers, managers, administrators, parents and spectators, committee members, and Directors and Officers of the NBTTA; and

c) "Vulnerable Individuals" – Includes Children / Youth (minors) and Vulnerable Adults (people who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, are in a position of dependence on others or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by people in positions of trust or authority).

Purpose

2. The NBTTA is 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 NBTTA will work to prevent abuse, and how abuse or suspected abuse can be reported to and addressed by the NBTTA.

Zero Tolerance Statement

3. The NBTTA has zero tolerance for any type of abuse. Individuals are required to report instances of abuse or suspected abuse to the NBTTA to be immediately addressed under the terms of the applicable policy.

Education – What is Abuse? https://abuse-free-sport.ca/

4. Vulnerable Individuals can be abused in different forms. The following description of Child / Youth Abuse has been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical's Guidelines for *Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults [1] as follows*:

5. **“Child abuse”** refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they depend on or trust. There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form:

a) **Physical abuse** involves single or repeated instances of deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.

b) **Sexual abuse** and exploitation involve using a child for sexual purposes. Examples of child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.

c) **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well-being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a dependent child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care, or protection from harm.

d) **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child’s sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes exposing the child to violence.

6. 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.

7. Abuse of children or youth in sport can include emotional maltreatment, neglect, and physical Maltreatment.

a) Emotional Maltreatment – A coach’s failure to provide a developmentally-appropriate and supportive environment. Emotional abuse is at the foundation of all other forms of maltreatment (sexual, physical and neglect). In sports, this conduct has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete when it is persistent, pervasive or patterned acts (i.e., yelling at an athlete once does not constitute maltreatment). Examples of emotional maltreatment include:

i. Refusal to recognize an athlete’s worth or the legitimacy of an athlete’s needs (including complaints of injury/pain, thirst or feeling unwell);

ii. Creating a culture of fear, or threatening, bullying or frightening an athlete;

iii. Frequent name-calling or sarcasm that continually “beats down” an athlete’s self-esteem;

iv. Embarrassing or humiliating an athlete in front of peers;

v. Excluding or isolating an athlete from the group;

vi. Withholding attention;

vii. Encouraging an athlete to engage in destructive and antisocial behaviour, reinforcing deviance, or impairing an athlete's ability to behave in socially appropriate ways;
viii. Over-pressuring; whereby the coach imposes extreme pressure upon the athlete to behave and achieve in ways that are far beyond the athlete's capabilities;
ix. Verbally attacking an athlete personally (e.g., belittling them or calling them worthless, lazy, useless, fat or disgusting);
x. Routinely or arbitrarily excluding athletes from practice;
xi. Using conditioning as punishment;
xii. Throwing sports equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, athletes;
xiii. Body shaming – making disrespectful, hurtful or embarrassing comments about an athlete's physique.

b) Neglect - acts of omission (i.e., the coach should act to protect the health/well-being of an athlete but does not). Examples of neglect include:

i. Isolating an athlete in a confined space or stranded on equipment, with no supervision, for an extended period;
ii. Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep;
iii. Ignoring an injury;
iv. Knowing about sexual abuse of an athlete but failing to report it.

c) Physical Maltreatment - involves contact or non-contact behaviour that can cause physical harm to an athlete. It also includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault). Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity. Athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete—such as extreme disciplinary actions or punishment—is unacceptable. Physical maltreatment can extend to seemingly unrelated areas, including inadequate recovery times for injuries and restricted diet. Examples of physical maltreatment include:

i. Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete;
ii. Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
iii. Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age;
iv. Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
v. Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion);
vi. Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete;
vii. Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose, or excessive repetition of a skill to the point of injury;
viii. Using excessive exercise as punishment.

d) Grooming - a slow gradual and escalating process of building comfort and trust with an athlete and/or their parents/guardian that is often very difficult to recognize. The process allows for inappropriate conduct to become normalized. It is often preceded by building confidence and

comfort that an individual can be trusted with the care of the athlete. Examples of grooming include:

i. Nudity or exposure of genitals in the presence of an athlete;
ii. Sexually oriented conversation or discussions about personal sexual activities;
iii. Excessive discussions about a coach's personal life outside of coaching (ie: family, work, medical challenges);
iv. Spending time with an individual athlete and/or their family outside of team activities;
v. Excessive gift-giving to an individual athlete;
vi. Socially isolating an athlete;
vii. Restricting an athlete's privacy;
viii. Providing drugs, alcohol or tobacco to an athlete;
ix. Becoming overly-involved in an athlete's personal life;
x. Making sexual or discriminatory jokes or comments to an athlete;
xi. Displaying material of a sexual nature in the presence of an athlete;
xii. Mocking or threatening an athlete;
xiii. Putting coach's needs above needs of athlete and/or going to athlete to have coach's needs met.

9. 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.

10. Potential warning signs of abuse of children or youth can include[2][3]:

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 or adult.

Vulnerable Adult Abuse

11. 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.

12. The following description of Vulnerable Adult Abuse has been modified and adapted from Ecclesiastical's Guidelines for Developing a Safety & Protection Policy for Children / Youth / Vulnerable Adults [1].

13. 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:

a) Psychological abuse includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate vulnerable adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of abuse may include, for example:

i. Threatening to use violence;
ii. Threatening to abandon them;
iii. Intentionally frightening them;
iv. Making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need;
v. Lying to them;
vi. Failing to check allegations of abuse against them.

b) Financial abuse encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation, including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using a vulnerable adult's money or property in a dishonest manner or failing to use a vulnerable adult's assets for their welfare. Abuse occurs any time someone act without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another. This type of abuse against a vulnerable adult may include, for example:

i. Stealing their money, disability cheques, or other possessions;
ii. Wrongfully using a Power of Attorney;
iii. Failing to pay back borrowed money when asked.

c) Physical abuse includes any act of violence – whether or not it results in physical injury. Intentionally inflicting pain or injury that results in either bodily harm or mental distress is abuse. Physical abuse may include, for example:

i. Beating
ii. Burning or scalding
iii. Pushing or shoving
iv. Hitting or slapping
v. Rough handling
vi. Tripping
vii. Spitting

d) All forms of sexual abuse are also applicable to vulnerable adults.

14. 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

15. The NBTTA enacts measures aimed at preventing abuse. These measures include screening, orientation, training, practice, and monitoring.

Screening

16. Individuals who coach, volunteer, officiate, deliver developmental programs, are affiliated with provincial teams, accompany a team to an event or competition, are paid staff, or otherwise engage with Vulnerable Individuals involved with the NBTTA will be screened according to the organization's Screening Policy.

17. The NBTTA will use the Screening Policy to determine the level of trust, authority, and access that each Individual has with Vulnerable Individuals. Each level of risk will be accompanied by increased screening procedures 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 (for Individuals who transport Vulnerable Individuals);
f) Other screening procedures, as required.

18. 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

19. The NBTTA will offer 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, as described in the Screening Policy.

20. 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.

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

22. 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.

Practice

23. When Individuals interact with Vulnerable Individuals, they are 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 adult;

c) Ensuring that more than one person is responsible for 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 Individuals 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). Individuals are aware that such communication is subject to the NBTTA's Code of Conduct and Ethics and Social Media Policy;

f) When traveling with Vulnerable Individuals, the Individual will not transport Vulnerable Individuals without another adult present and will not stay in the same overnight accommodation location without additional adult supervision.

Monitoring

24. The NBTTA will regularly monitor those Individuals who have access to, or interact with, Vulnerable Individuals. The monitoring will be based on the level of risk, as described in the Screening Policy.

25. 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

26. 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 NBTTA 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.

27. Complaints or reports that describe an element of abuse will be addressed by the process(es) described in the NBTTA's Discipline and Complaints Policy and the Investigations Policy - Discrimination, Harassment and Abuse.

Review and Approval

28. This Policy was reviewed and approved by the the NBTTA's Board of Directors on February 3rd, 2025.

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[1] Retrieved from: https://www.ecclesiastical.ca/guidelines_developsafetyprotectionpolicy_children-youths-vulnerableadults_faith/

[2] Adapted from: https://www.all4kids.org/2014/03/04/warning-signs-child-abuse-neglect/

[3] Adapted from: https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/warning_signs.htm