

Dealing with Abuse and Neglect Code

OAKVILLE JAGUARS SOCCER ACADEMY

This Code outlines the conduct expected of all staff, coaches, volunteers, and individuals from external organizations who work with children and youth through

OAKVILLE JAGUARS SOCCER ACADEMY.

It provides guidance for recognizing and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect and reinforces the legal duty to report in the Province of Ontario.

1. Definitions

Abuse and/or Neglect

Refers to any form of maltreatment as defined under Ontario child protection legislation, including but not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Exposure to family violence
- Neglect

Child

A child is any person under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of child protection services, special considerations apply for youth aged 16 or 17. In such cases, concerns may require reporting to police, and in certain circumstances, also to a Children's Aid Society (CAS).

2. Categories of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes any action by a caregiver that results in physical harm to a child.

This may result from inappropriate or excessive discipline and can range from minor injuries (e.g., bruising) to severe harm or death.

Any form of punishment that causes injury, leaves marks, or involves the use of objects is considered inappropriate and unacceptable.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power over a child to involve them in any form of sexual activity. This includes situations where the offender exploits:

- Age difference
- Authority
- Physical or intellectual advantage
- The child's dependency

Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate touching or fondling
- Sexual language or harassment
- Voyeurism or exhibitionism
- Online sexual exploitation
- Involving a child in pornography or prostitution

This type of abuse often involves manipulation, coercion, threats, or grooming, and is frequently perpetrated by someone known to the child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that harms a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth.

This may include:

- Rejecting, isolating, or degrading
- Terrorizing or exploiting
- Ignoring emotional needs
- Constant criticism or humiliation

Children exposed to violence in the home are also considered to be experiencing emotional abuse.

Exposure to Family Violence

This occurs when a child sees, hears, or is aware of violence or threats of violence between family members or intimate partners.

Even indirect exposure can cause significant emotional and psychological harm.

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including:

- Food, clothing, and shelter
- Supervision and safety
- Medical and psychological care
- Education and emotional support

Neglect can severely impact a child's development, and in some cases, the effects may be long-term or irreversible.

3. Legal Duty to Report

Under Ontario law, all individuals have a legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

1. Mandatory Reporting

Every person in Ontario must immediately report to a Children's Aid Society (CAS) if they suspect that a child is in need of protection.

2. Personal Responsibility

The duty to report is individual. It cannot be delegated to another person.

3. Ongoing Duty

If new information arises, additional reports must be made, even if a previous report has already been filed.

4. Applies to Professionals

Individuals working with children (e.g., coaches, teachers, social workers) have a heightened legal responsibility to report.

5. Legal Consequences

Failure to report may result in penalties under Ontario law.

6. Confidentiality Does Not Override Reporting

The duty to report applies even when information is considered confidential, with the exception of solicitor-client privilege.

7. Protection for Reporters

Individuals who report in good faith are protected from legal liability.

8. Direct Reporting Requirement

The person who witnesses, suspects, or receives disclosure must make the report directly to CAS.

9. When in Doubt

If unsure whether a situation meets the threshold for reporting, individuals should contact a CAS anonymously for guidance.

4. Expectations of OAKVILLE JAGUARS SOCCER ACADEMY Personnel

All staff, coaches, and volunteers must:

- Act immediately if they suspect abuse or neglect
- Prioritize the safety and well-being of the child
- Follow reporting procedures without delay
- Avoid investigating or questioning the child beyond what is necessary
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism

5. Commitment Statement

OAKVILLE JAGUARS SOCCER ACADEMY is committed to safeguarding all children and youth in its programs.

We recognize that protecting children is a shared responsibility and that timely reporting of concerns is essential to ensuring their safety, well-being, and development.