

Travel Guidelines to Help Protect Children in Sport

These guidelines are intended for use by sport organizations to help establish a common understanding of expectations for increasing the protection of children/youth (athletes) taking part in overnight trips. The Coaching Association of Canada strongly recommends coaches and athletic staff are to adhere to the Rule of Two¹ in interactions with athletes. Athletes and parents are to be informed of the Rule of Two and how it applies to all coach and athletic staff interaction with athletes.

OVERNIGHT STAYS

The guidelines on managing overnight stays prioritize the physical and emotional safety of all athletes:

- Always aim to ensure that people are roomed with those with whom they feel comfortable and safe, and invite athletes/parents to provide any details, specifications, as well as suggestions about whom they or their child feel most comfortable.
- It is recommended that athletes under the age of 13 stay in hotel rooms with their parents/guardians.
 - If a child's parent/guardian is not present, then arrangements should be made (signed permission form) for a child to share a room with another athlete and their screened guardian.²
 - If there are situations where athletes under the age of 13 do not have a parent/guardian available for travel, consider grouping these athletes together with older athletes who are chosen to help supervise.
- If athletes over the age of 13 are assigned to hotel rooms together, arrangements should include placing similarly aged and same gender teammates together, giving consideration to your organization's inclusion policy (should one be in place).
- Coaches and/or athletic staff should not be permitted share rooms with athletes.
- Screened adult chaperones are placed on all floors with athletes. Whenever possible, athletes all stay on the same floor and same wing in the hotel. Interactions between athletes and adult chaperones, coaches, and/or athletic staff follow a rule of two.³
- Establish expectations of privacy with athletes, coaches, and athletic staff around bathroom use, showering, and changing in hotel rooms and dorm rooms. Adults, including team staff and chaperones, should **not** share bathrooms or showers with athletes.
- Specify where athletes can and cannot go on their own or without an adult accompanying them. Establish expectations that athletes must use the buddy system when within the hotel, but outside of the room. If leaving the hotel, an adult chaperone must be informed, athletes must be in groups of three or more, and athletes must adhere to curfew hours and policies about where they can and cannot go unsupervised.

¹ The Coaching Association of Canada's Responsible Coaching Movement has formalized the Rule of Two as meaning that a coach is never alone or out of sight with a child. For additional details about the Rule of Two and the Responsible Coaching Movement, visit www.coach.ca.

² The Canadian Centre for Child Protection's Commit to Kids Program Kit (www.commit2kids.ca) provides guidelines and templates for screening of employees and volunteers. Screening of parents should be similar given the role they may play with other athletes during travel. In addition, this kit helps sport organizations assess their programs, services, procedures, and provides templates to assist in updating or creating policies and procedures, and a code of conduct from a child protection lens.

³ In the context of this document, a rule of two means that, with the exception of the child's parent/guardian, no adult should be alone with the child during the travel. Alone means out of sight of another responsible adult.

The above are general guidelines and are not intended as a replacement for legal advice. References to third party resources are not endorsements.

- Athletes do not leave the room after curfew without adult chaperones and only within team guidelines or with expressed permission (except in the event of emergency).
- Coaches and athletic staff should not be meeting with the athletes in personal/private spaces such as hotel rooms or change rooms.
- Always use designated conference rooms/meeting areas in hotels for socialization between athletes, coaches, athletic staff, and chaperones (e.g., athletic therapists, doctors, and nutritionists). All socialization occurs in groups and is subject to a rule of two. Meetings and other interactions between athletes, coaches, athletic staff or chaperones take place in public areas of the hotel or an athletic facility, and does not occur in hotel rooms.
- Chaperones are responsible for the safe transport of athletes and are to accompany them in groups. If a situation requires transporting a single athlete, adhere to a rule of two or parents should transport their own child. All transportation should be transparent where it is well communicated who is with the youth athletes, when, and for what purpose.
- Safety planning: if athletes are sleeping in a room without parents/guardians, a safety plan shall be put in place. This plan is clearly communicated and shared in writing with the athletes and parents/guardians on the trip. This should be done in advance of the trip in order to allow for questions and feedback. A safety plan shall include:
 - Having adult chaperones, who adhere to a rule of two, in the hotel and available to athletes at all times.
 - Answering the door (e.g., not opening the hotel room door for someone unknown or unexpected). Coaches, athletic staff, and adult chaperones (and in some instances parents) should not show up at the hotel rooms without phoning in advance.
 - Behaviour expectations: athletes are not to leave their hotel room at night except in case of emergency (and in accordance with the emergency situation procedures); no alcohol/drugs; steps for an athlete to take should there be behaviour issues with another athlete to address with an adult in charge; and what to do should the athlete have a concern with a coach, member of the athletic staff, chaperone, or other adult.
 - Emergency situation procedures (e.g., in case of injury, severe illness, accident, fire, hotel evacuation).
 - A phone list should be shared with athletes and parents which includes numbers for coaches and athletic staff on the trip, parents/guardians of each child, and emergency phone numbers.⁴
 - Establish expectations for use of electronic devices (e.g., phones, tablets, computers), including:
 - Prohibiting taking pictures or recording videos of others in private situations (e.g., in bathrooms, when changing, or when sleeping), or in a secretive or disrespectful manner;
 - Ensuring athletes receive permission from another athlete prior to taking pictures⁵ of or recording videos that person both in field of play or off;
 - Prohibiting private communications between an individual athlete and a coach/athletic staff member/chaperone other than for that which is directly related to and necessary for the sporting event. Should communication be in an electronic format, the athlete's parent/guardian should be included on the communication.

4 When creating/using a phone list it should be made clear that the list is to be used only in the context of the trip. Adults should not be using the phone list to contact athletes for any purpose outside of the trip.

5 This does not include the sport club/association/team taking photos. A consent form should be provided to parents/guardians at the start of the year to obtain permission to film athletes for any purposes. From a child protection perspective, consideration should be given to having a team camera that is used to take pictures of athletes, and to having procedures in place to ensure the transparency of what has been photographed/recorded.

OTHER RESOURCES:

These guidelines do not address billeting. For information on athletes being billeted, you may wish to refer to other resources, such as [Hockey Canada's Player Billeting Resource Package](#), as a reference for developing guidelines in this area.

The Coaching Association of Canada has created a resource on supporting gender nonconforming, trans, and nonbinary athletes during travel. For more information, please refer to the document titled [Inclusivity Resource Supplement for Travel Guidelines to Help Protect Children in Sport](#).

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