

# Peel Region Football Coaches Code of Conduct

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| <b>Policy Number</b>  | <b>PRF-POL-006</b>                                 |
| <b>Policy Owner</b>   | Board of Directors                                 |
| <b>Applies To</b>     | All Coaches and Team Staff acting for PRF programs |
| <b>Approved By</b>    | Board of Directors                                 |
| <b>Effective Date</b> | September 22, 2026                                 |
| <b>Last Reviewed</b>  | September 22, 2026                                 |
| <b>Next Review</b>    | As required                                        |

## 1. Purpose and Acknowledgement

This policy sets out the standards of behaviour, qualification and care that Peel Region Football (“PRF” or the “Club”), home of the Peel Panthers, expects of every Coach and member of Team Staff. Youth football exists for the education, development, safety and enjoyment of Athletes. Coaches hold a position of trust and authority, and this policy is intended to protect Athletes, support Coaches, and ensure the Club meets its obligations as a volunteer-run Canadian not-for-profit organization, as a member of Football Canada and Football Ontario, and as a member club of the Ontario Summer Football League, Ontario Fall Football League and Ontario Women’s Football League (each, the “League”).

This policy adopts the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS) and follows the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol/Policy in accordance with Ontario’s Rowan’s Law (Concussion Safety), 2018. Where this policy is silent, the UCCMS and the rules and policies of Football Canada, Football Ontario and the League apply.

Before being assigned to a team each Season, every Coach must review this Coaching Code of Conduct and sign the Coach Acknowledgement at the end of this policy. Coaches must renew their acknowledgement annually.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all head coaches, assistant coaches, position coaches, coordinators, team managers, trainers and other volunteers who instruct, supervise or travel with Athletes in any PRF

program across Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, including Spring and Fall tackle football, Flag Football and the Club's women's teams.

This policy applies at all PRF activities, including practices, games, tryouts, camps, team meetings, travel, fundraisers and social events, and to electronic and social media communications with or about Athletes, whether or not those communications take place during a Club activity.

This policy is read together with the Registration Policy (PRF-POL-001), the Equipment Policy (PRF-POL-003), the Club's Conduct and Ethics Policy and the Club's Discipline and Complaints Policy. Where this policy sets a higher standard for Coaches, this policy applies.

### 3. Definitions

- Athlete – any person registered in a PRF program.
- Board – the Board of Directors of Peel Region Football.
- Club or PRF – Peel Region Football, a not-for-profit corporation governed by the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act.
- Coach – any person appointed by the Club to instruct, train or direct Athletes, including head coaches, assistant coaches, position coaches and coordinators.
- Concussion Awareness Resources – the concussion awareness resources published by the Government of Ontario under Rowan's Law.
- Concussion Protocol – the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol/Policy, including its removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols, as amended from time to time.
- League – Ontario Summer Football League, Ontario Fall Football League and Ontario Women's Football League, the leagues that sanction the Club's regular-season and playoff play.
- Maltreatment – any form of psychological, physical or sexual maltreatment, neglect, grooming or boundary transgression as defined in the UCCMS.
- Parent/Guardian – the parent or legal guardian of an Athlete who is under 18 years of age.
- Rule of Two – the requirement that two screened and trained adults be present, or within sight and hearing, whenever a Coach interacts with an Athlete, as described in section 6.2.
- Season – the period of a PRF program, from the first scheduled practice to the last scheduled game, as published by the Club.
- Team Staff – team managers, equipment staff, trainers and other volunteers assigned to a team, other than Coaches.
- Therapist – a certified athletic therapist, physiotherapist or other qualified health-care practitioner appointed by the Club to provide care to a team.
- UCCMS – the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport, as adopted by Football Canada and Football Ontario and amended from time to time.

## 4. Role of the Coach

Coaches serve as volunteers for Peel Region Football as a whole. Teams belong to the Club and its Athletes, not to any individual Coach.

PRF is a development-first organization that believes every registered Athlete should have the opportunity to learn, participate and play. For clarity, the following requirements apply:

- Coaches will place the physical and mental well-being of Athletes ahead of any personal desire to win.
- Coaches will treat each Athlete as an individual, keeping in mind the wide range of emotional and physical development among youth of the same age group.
- Coaches will use coaching techniques and drills appropriate to the age, size and skill level of the Athletes, consistent with Football Canada's long-term athlete development model and safe-contact guidelines.
- Coaches will provide meaningful playing time and fair opportunity to all Athletes, in keeping with League rules and the Club's development-first approach.
- Coaches will remember that youth football is for the Athletes, not for Coaches, spectators or other adults.

Coaches must accept and implement decisions of the Board and of Club officials acting under their delegated authority. A Coach who disagrees with a decision may raise the concern through the process in section 11, but must not challenge or undermine the decision in front of Athletes, Parents/Guardians or other teams.

## 5. Qualifications, Screening and Training

A Coach may only be assigned to a team, appear on the sidelines, or instruct Athletes once the Club has confirmed that the Coach meets all of the following requirements:

- Holds the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) training or certification required by Football Canada and Football Ontario for the age level and role being coached.
- Is registered for the current year in the Football Canada national registry through Football Ontario, and is a member in good standing with Football Ontario.
- Has completed the Safe Sport training required by Football Canada and Football Ontario, such as the Coaching Association of Canada's Safe Sport Training, and renews it as required.
- Has provided a current Vulnerable Sector Check from the police service where the Coach resides, and an annual screening declaration, as set out in section 7.4 (Volunteer Screening) of the Registration Policy (PRF-POL-001).

- Has confirmed, as part of their annual registration in the Football Canada national registry, that they have reviewed the Rowan's Law information and the Concussion Awareness Resources, as required by Rowan's Law.
- Has completed the Making Headway in Football e-learning module before coaching, as required by the Concussion Protocol.
- Has completed the Football Canada Safe Contact workshop, as required by the Concussion Protocol. A Coach in their first year of coaching has one year from their first assignment to complete the workshop.
- Holds current first aid training where required by the League or the Club for the Coach's role.

A Coach may only be on the sidelines and provide coaching to Athletes at a game if the Coach's name is listed on the official game sheet.

Coaches must inform the President in writing, within 48 hours, of any criminal charge or conviction, any suspension or discipline by another sport organization, or any change that may affect their screening status. The Club may suspend a Coach's assignment while the matter is reviewed.

## 6. Athlete Welfare and Safe Sport

### 6.1 Prohibited Conduct

Coaches must not engage in, permit or ignore Maltreatment or any other conduct prohibited by the UCCMS, including:

- psychological maltreatment, such as yelling, belittling, threatening, humiliating, or using foul, derogatory or abusive language toward Athletes, officials, opponents or others;
- physical maltreatment, including using exercise, conditioning or the denial of water, food or rest as punishment;
- sexual maltreatment, grooming, or any romantic or sexual relationship with an Athlete;
- neglect, including failing to provide adequate supervision, rest, hydration or medical attention;
- discrimination or harassment on any ground protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age and disability; and
- hazing, initiation rituals, or retaliation against any person who makes a report in good faith.

### 6.2 Rule of Two and Communications

Coaches must follow the Rule of Two at all times. For clarity, the following requirements apply:

- A Coach must not be alone with an Athlete who is under 18. Interactions must take place in an open and observable setting with a second screened adult present or within sight and hearing.

- Electronic communications with Athletes must take place in team group channels approved by the Club, with a second Coach or the team manager included. For Athletes under 18, a Parent/Guardian must be copied on any individual message.
- Coaches must not transport an individual Athlete, other than their own child, without the prior written consent of the Athlete's Parent/Guardian and a second adult present.
- Coaches must respect Athletes' privacy in change rooms and must not take, share or post photographs or videos of Athletes except in accordance with the Photograph Waiver/Release (PRF-POL-005).

## 6.3 Duty to Report

A Coach who witnesses, suspects or is told of Maltreatment or other conduct prohibited by this policy must report it promptly to the President or to Football Ontario's independent Safe Sport reporting mechanism. Reports may be made confidentially, and the Club will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who reports in good faith.

Under Ontario's Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must report the suspicion directly to a children's aid society. This duty cannot be delegated to the Club or to another person, and it applies in addition to any report made to the Club.

# 7. Health, Safety and Concussion

## 7.1 Concussion Protocol (Rowan's Law)

In accordance with Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 and the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol/Policy, every Coach and member of Team Staff commits to the following:

- maintaining a safe learning environment and teaching and enforcing the rules of the game and Football Canada's safe-contact techniques;
- creating opportunities for Athletes to talk openly about how they feel, and encouraging Athletes to report concussion symptoms without fear of losing playing time or status on the team;
- immediately removing from play any Athlete who has sustained, or is suspected of having sustained, a concussion, in accordance with the removal-from-sport protocol in the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol, and informing the Athlete's Parent/Guardian the same day;
- not allowing an Athlete who has been removed from play to return unless a medical doctor or nurse practitioner has cleared the Athlete and, where the Athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion, not allowing a return to full-contact practice or competition until the Athlete has completed the Return-to-School and Football-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategies in the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol and given the Coach a Medical Clearance Letter; and
- respecting the privacy of Athletes' health information.

## 7.2 Decisions of Therapists

Coaches must respect and follow the instructions and decisions of the team's Therapists, and must not pressure an Athlete, Therapist or Parent/Guardian to alter a decision. This includes decisions on:

- concussion management, including removal from play, referral to other professionals such as sport medicine physicians, and each stage of the Return-to-School and Football-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategies in the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol, including required documentation and rest periods;
- injuries, including removal from play, reduced or modified participation, whether supportive taping is indicated, and referral to other professionals such as physicians; and
- safety matters, including the thunder and lightning protocol, heat and hydration measures, equipment fit and condition, and any other safety-related situation.

Where no Therapist is present, the head coach is responsible for applying the removal-from-sport protocol in the Football Ontario Concussion Protocol and the Club's safety protocols and for reporting any injury to the Club within 24 hours.

## 7.3 Safe Environment

Coaches will ensure and enforce a positive, safe playing environment. For clarity, the following requirements apply:

- Coaches will inspect fields and equipment before use and will not permit play on unsafe surfaces or in unsafe weather conditions.
- All Club activities, including games and practices, must be free of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, vaping products and illegal drugs. Coaches must not be under the influence of any of these substances while responsible for Athletes. Smoking and vaping are also prohibited at sporting and spectator areas under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017.
- Coaches will follow the Club's policies on field usage, including using team-dedicated fields only and respecting cancelled bookings.
- Coaches will ensure that Athletes wear Club-issued equipment correctly, in accordance with the Equipment Policy (PRF-POL-003).

## 8. Conduct and Sportsmanship

Coaches represent the Club at all times while acting in their role and at any football event they attend. For clarity, the following requirements apply:

- Coaches will know, follow and teach the rules of football and the rules of the League in which the team plays.
- Coaches will promote and support the Football Ontario Code of Conduct – Players & Spectators with Athletes and Parents/Guardians.

- Coaches will show respect for, and abide by, the decisions, calls and judgments of officials at any game, including when attending as a spectator.
- Coaches will not use foul, derogatory or abusive language when coaching or when attending any other club's games or events.
- Coaches will not criticize a fellow Coach, Board member, Athlete or family member in front of Athletes or other Coaches. Disagreements, conflicts or differing opinions will be raised only with the person or persons involved, at an appropriate time and place, or through the process in section 11.
- Coaches will wear Club-provided apparel at all game-day events.
- Coaches will not post or share content on social media that is disrespectful to Athletes, officials, opponents, the League or the Club, or that discloses confidential Club or Athlete information.
- Coaches will declare to the Board any conflict of interest, including any financial interest in Club suppliers or any role with another club, and will not use their position for personal gain.

Coaches who collect or receive Athletes' personal information, including contact details, medical information and photographs, must use it only for Club purposes, keep it secure, and handle it in accordance with the Club's privacy practices and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

## 9. Breaches and Discipline

Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline under the Club's Conduct and Ethics Policy and/or Discipline and Complaints Policy, including a verbal or written warning, required education, suspension, removal from a team, or removal from all PRF coaching and volunteer roles.

The President, or a person designated by the Board, may suspend a Coach on an interim basis, pending review, where an allegation involves Maltreatment, a risk to Athlete safety, or a criminal matter. An interim suspension is not a finding of wrongdoing.

Allegations of Maltreatment that fall within the jurisdiction of Football Ontario or Football Canada will be referred to the applicable independent Safe Sport process, and the Club will cooperate fully. The Club will report sanctions to Football Ontario and the League where required.

## 10. Responsibilities

- Board – approves this policy and any changes to it, appoints Coaches, confirms that each Coach meets the requirements in section 5 before assignment, keeps signed acknowledgements and coaching records, and hears appeals.
- President – receives reports of breaches and Safe Sport concerns, imposes interim suspensions, and liaises with Football Ontario and the League.
- Head Coaches – ensure that their assistant coaches and Team Staff understand and follow this policy, and apply the Club's safety protocols at every team activity.

- Coaches and Team Staff – comply with this policy, maintain their qualifications and screening, and report concerns as set out in section 6.3.

## 11. Questions and Appeals

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Board at [info@peelregionfootball.ca](mailto:info@peelregionfootball.ca). A Coach who disagrees with a decision made under this policy may submit a written appeal to the Board within 14 days of the decision, in accordance with the Discipline and Complaints Policy. Appeals of matters decided by Football Ontario or another independent Safe Sport process must follow that body's appeal procedure. The Board's decision is final.

## 12. Policy Review and Administration

This Coaching Code of Conduct is subject to change at the discretion of the Board and will be reviewed annually before the Spring Season, and whenever Football Canada, Football Ontario, the League or applicable law change their requirements. The current version is posted on the Club website.

Decisions under this policy will be made in accordance with the Club's commitment to Athlete safety, fairness, transparency and responsible program management.

## Coach Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the Peel Region Football Coaching Code of Conduct (PRF-POL-006), including the concussion requirements in section 7.1. I confirm that I have reviewed the Rowan's Law information and concussion education resources. I agree to follow this policy, and I understand that failure to do so may result in my suspension or removal under the Club's Conduct and Ethics Policy and/or Discipline and Complaints Policy.

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| <b>Coach Name</b>    |  |
| <b>Role and Team</b> |  |
| <b>Season</b>        |  |
| <b>Signature</b>     |  |
| <b>Date</b>          |  |