PROCEDURE: Code of Conduct and Ethics For All Participants Including Parents/Guardians

POLICY SECTION:	ORGANIZATION – RISK MANAGEMENT	PROCEDURE #	O-002-06
RESPONSIBILITY:	Policy and Governance Committee	EFFECTIVE DATE	Sept. 1, 2026
SUBJECT:	CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS INCLUDING PARENTS/GUARDIANS	FIRST ENACTED	June 2015
AUTHORIZED BY:	Board of Directors	REVISED AND APPROVED	December 2023 January 2025 July 2026

The Code of Conduct and Ethics ("Code") is a procedure that outlines the **minimum expectation** for appropriate conduct by anyone participating in activities sanctioned by Swim Ontario and Member Clubs. Individuals may be subject to the provisions of more than one code of conduct at any given time (see standards of conduct for other organizations such as Swimming Canada, athlete clubs, tour teams, and more).

The Code supports Swim Ontario's Risk Management Policy.

1. DEFINITIONS

Individuals – All categories of Membership within the Swim Ontario, as per the Swim Ontario Bylaws, as well as all individuals engaged in activities with Swim Ontario, including but not limited to, clubs, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, directors and officers of Swim Ontario, and parents/guardians of Swim Ontario Registrants.

Member Clubs – all clubs that are registered members of Swim Ontario.

Personal demographic characteristics – characteristics that cannot be easily changed or are essential to a person's identity, including but not limited to: body type, physical characteristics, athletic ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ancestry, color, ethnic or racial origin, nationality, national origin, age, marital status, religion, religious belief, political belief, disability, or economic status.

2. PURPOSE

2.1. The purpose of the Code is to provide a safe and positive environment within Swim Ontario programs, activities, and events by setting out the appropriate and expected behaviors for all individuals.

2.2. Individuals are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the values of Swim Ontario, which include fairness, integrity, open communication, and mutual respect.

2.3. Swim Ontario is committed to providing an environment free of maltreatment, in which all individuals are treated with respect.

2.4. Conduct that violates the Code may be subject to sanctions pursuant to Swim Ontario's policies related to discipline and complaints.

3. APPLICATION

3.1. The Code applies to conduct that may arise during the course of Swim Ontario business, activities, and events, including, but not limited to conduct: in its or a member club's office environment; during competitions, practices, training camps, and travel; and in any meetings of, or on behalf of, Swim Ontario.

3.2. The Code also applies to conduct that may occur outside of Swim Ontario's business, activities, and events when such conduct adversely affects relationships within Swim Ontario, Swim Ontario's work and sport environment, or is otherwise detrimental to the image and reputation of Swim Ontario.

3.3. Swim Ontario will respect and reciprocally adopt any penalty enacted pursuant to a breach of the Canadian Anti-Doping Program, the World Anti-doping Code, or enacted by the Canadian Swimming Coaches Association, Swimming Canada, Word Aquatics, or another applicable sports regulatory body.

4. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All individuals have a responsibility to maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of Swim Ontario registrants, members, and other individuals by:

4.1. **Adhering to Applicable Laws and Rules**

a) Adhering to all federal, provincial, municipal, and applicable host country **laws;** the Swim Ontario **by-laws, policies and procedures**; and the **rules and regulations** of Swimming Canada, Swim Ontario, and the applicable member clubs;

b) **encourage other** Individuals to play by the rules and to conduct themselves in accordance with applicable laws, rules, policies and procedures, and the Code, including refraining from assisting or enabling a sanctioned individual in violating or evading their sanction;

c) avoiding the use of cellphones and/or any other recording or photographic device contrary to the Swim Ontario Photography, Videography, and Cellphone Procedure;

d) Abstain from the non-medical use of drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs or methods. Abide by the Canadian Anti-Doping Program;

e) refraining from **retaliating** or threatening retaliation against an individual who brings a Complaint to Swim Ontario pursuant to the Complaint and Discipline Process;

4.2. **Demonstrating Respect, Sportsmanship, and Leadership**

a) consistently demonstrating the spirit of **sportsmanship, sports leadership, and ethical conduct**, including consistently treating others **fairly and reasonably** and demonstrating **respect** towards others regardless of their personal demographic characteristics;

b) approaching comments or criticism appropriately and avoiding public criticism of athletes, coaches, officials, organizers, volunteers, employees, and Members, including never ridiculing an athlete for a poor performance;

c) refrain from the **misuse of power and authority**;

d) In the case of adults, **avoid consuming intoxicants** in situations where minors are present, and take reasonable steps to manage the responsible consumption of intoxicants in adult-oriented social situations associated with Swim Ontario events;

4.3. Refrain from Physical Maltreatment

4.3.1. Refrain from all **contact forms of physical maltreatment**, including

a) deliberately punching, kicking, beating, biting, striking, strangling or slapping another;

b) deliberately hitting another with objects;

c) unwanted physical contact, including, but not limited to, touching, petting, or pinching; and

d) any other forms of physical violence, contact, or assault that results in harm or has the potential for physical or psychological harm;

4.3.2.Refrain from all **non-contact physical maltreatment**, including:

a) isolating a person in a confined space;

b) forcing a person to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., requiring an athlete to kneel on a hard surface);

c) the use of exercise for the purposes of punishment;

d) withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep;

e) denying access to a toilet;

f) promoting or condoning the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed medications) or performance-enhancing substances pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program, and, in the case of minors, alcoholic beverages, cannabis, and/or tobacco; and

g) providing alcohol to an Individual who is under the legal drinking age or providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to an Individual;

4.4. Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes **psychological maltreatment, harassment, or bullying** including:

a) written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts;

b) the display of visual material that is offensive or that one ought to know is offensive in the circumstances;

c) unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendos, or taunts;

d) leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures;

e) condescending or patronizing behavior that is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance, or adversely affect working/team/activity conditions;

f) practical jokes that cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endanger a person's safety, or negatively affect performance; and

g) any form of hazing.

4.5. refrain from behaviors such as those described in Section 4.4 of the Code that are not directed towards a specific individual or group but have the effect of creating a negative or hostile environment.

4.6. Refrain from any behavior that constitutes **sexual maltreatment and sexual harassment**, including, but not limited to:

a) sexist jokes;
b) conduct of a sexual nature;
c) contact of a sexual nature;
d) display of sexually offensive material;
e) sexually degrading words used to describe a person;
f) inquiries or comments about a person's sex life;
g) unwelcome sexual flirtations, comments, advances, propositions, or requests for sexual favours; and
h) unwanted physical contact that is sexual in nature;
i) sexual assault.

4.7. **Respect the Property of Facilities** of Swim Ontario member clubs, and others and not willfully cause damage.

5. ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to section 4 above, Athletes will have additional responsibilities to:

5.1. **report any medical problems** in a timely fashion, where such problems may limit the athlete's ability to travel, train, or compete; and

5.2. adhere to Swim Ontario's rules and requirements regarding **clothing and equipment**.

6. PARENT/GUARDIAN AND SPECTATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to section 4 above, **Parents/Guardians** of Swim Ontario Members and **Spectators** at events will:

6.1. **respect and show appreciation** to all competitors and to the coaches, officials, referees and volunteers who give their time to the sport. This includes not maliciously questioning a referee, official, or Swim Ontario staff member's judgment or honesty;

6.2. report minor **athlete's medical problems** in a timely fashion, where such problems may limit the athlete's ability to travel, train, or compete;

6.3. **refrain from entering the competition area** and not interfere with events or calls; and,

6.4. **Participate in and be bound by the results** of any Complaints and Discipline Process.

7. COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to section 4 above, Coaches have additional responsibilities. The athlete-coach relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal as well as sport and athletic development of the athlete. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, consciously or unconsciously. Coaches will at all times:

7.1. be **registered** with Swimming Canada, Swim Ontario, and the Canadian Swimming Coaches Association as coach members in good standing;

7.2. ensure a **safe environment** by selecting activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability and fitness level of athletes, and educating athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a safe environment while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes;

7.3. act in the **best interest of the athlete's development** as a whole person;

a) avoid compromising the present and future health of athletes by **communicating and cooperating with the athlete's care providers** in the diagnosis, treatment and management of athletes' medical and psychological problems;

b) accept and promote athletes' **personal goals** and refer athletes to other coaches and sports specialists as appropriate and as opportunities arise, including when the athlete qualifies for a training camp, provincial team, national team, or other such competitive opportunity;

c) recognize the role and importance of parents being involved in decisions of importance for athletes who have not attained the legal age in their jurisdiction; and

d) respond professionally and objectively to athletes' and parents' requests about joining another club, prioritizing the athlete's welfare. Notify the new club's head coach of the swimmer's departure within 3 days of first contact, unless extraordinary circumstances arise.;

7.4. avoid any self-induced disability, such as the use **of intoxicants or drugs,** which interferes with or prejudices one's ability to provide services to the athlete;

7.5. respect the **responsibilities and preferences of other coaches** and interact with them in a professional manner;

7.6. respect all other teams, and athletes from other teams, and, in dealings with them, **not encroach upon topics or actions which are deemed to be within the realm of 'coaching'**, unless first receiving approval from the coach who is responsible for the team or athlete(s) involved;

7.7. never engage in an **intimate or sexual relationship** with:

a) an athlete under the age of 18 years or

b) with an athlete over the age of 18 if the coach is in a position of power, trust or authority over such an athlete;

7.8. when interacting with minor athletes, always do so in an **open and observable environments** and adhere to the Coaching Association of Canada's 'Rule of Two';

7.9. refrain from intervening in **personal affairs of an athlete** that are outside the generally accepted jurisdiction of a coach; and

7.10. conduct oneself **professionally and inoffensively** including in one's bearing, manor of dress and use inoffensive and respectful language, taking into account the audience being addressed.

8. OFFICIALS' RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to section 4 above, officials will have additional responsibilities to:

8.1. Honour the full **commitment, responsibility and formality of their assigned position**; including following the dress code prescribed by Swim Ontario and/or Swimming Canada as applicable, report as the designated time as needed, attend session briefings, remain in the assigned session as designated (unless otherwise instructed);

8.2. **Accept the assignments** that have been given for competition sessions;

8.3. **Remain professional** at all times and not lecture or debate decisions with others;

8.4. While serving duties as an official, be as **unobtrusive and inconspicuous** as possible; and

8.5. Make **independent judgments, be fair, impartial and objective**, and avoid conflicts of interest, or situations where a conflict of interest may arise.

9. STAFF AND BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF SWIM ONTARIO AND/OR MEMBER CLUBS

In addition to section 4 above, Swim Ontario and member board, committee and staff members will:

9.1. conduct themselves openly, professionally, lawfully and in **good faith in the best interests** of Swim Ontario and/or the applicable Member Club by:

a) **avoiding conflicts of interest** or disclose conflicts of interest where they cannot be avoided;

b) functioning first and foremost as a member of the Board of Directors, committee, or staff, not as a member of any other particular constituency;

c) exercising due diligence in upholding one's **fiduciary responsibility** to Swim Ontario and/or the Member Club, and registrants (where applicable);

9.2. respect the **confidentiality** appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature or information received by virtue of one's position;

9.3. ensure that all registrants and/or Member Clubs are given sufficient **opportunity to express opinions**, and that all opinions are given due consideration and weight; and

9.4. **respect decisions** made with proper authority as prescribed by the by-laws and resign if unable to do so.

10. SANCTIONS

The following principles will guide the determination and imposition of sanctions:

10.1. Harmonization;

10.2. Comprehensiveness;

10.3. fairness;

10.4. trauma-informed;

10.5. evidence-driven;

10.6. independent administration;

10.7. proportionate; and,

10.8. expert-informed.

11. PRESUMPTIVE/MANDATORY SANCTIONS

11.1. where there is a finding of sexual maltreatment there is a presumptive lifetime ban from Swim Ontario activities;

11.2. where there is a finding of misconduct related to video or photo use of a non-sexual nature where the conduct was otherwise consensual there is a presumptive penalty of at least one month suspension from Swim Ontario activities;

11.3. where there is a finding of misconduct related to video or photo use with a component of a sexual, harassing, bullying, or non-consensual taking or use of photos or videos, there is a presumptive penalty of three months' suspension from Swim Ontario activities;

11.4. where there is a finding that an individual was using a cell phone in a changeroom **a mandatory monetary penalty of $500** (to be charged to parents/guardians where the individual is a minor athlete);

11.5. where there is a finding of physical or psychological maltreatment, there is a presumptive penalty of at least three months' suspension from Swim Ontario activities;

11.6. where there is a finding that the action or inaction of a member club contributed to the misconduct, the club is required to complete a culture review within 6 months with an investigator appointed by Swim Ontario; the sharing of costs may be apportioned between Swim Ontario and the member club at Swim Ontario's discretion; and

11.7. where there is a finding of a breach of confidentiality in a complaint or disciplinary process there is a presumptive penalty of at least one months' suspension from Swim Ontario activities.

Responsibility	***Action***
SOCC, SOOC	Ensure support and membership commitment
Clubs	Ensure support and membership commitment
Registrant & Parent/Guardian	Read and understand the expectations
Please note that while every effort is taken to ensure accuracy this procedure may have changed. Please contact Swim Ontario staff for any assistance or additional information.	