BC Amateur Baseball Association

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Physical Intervention & Restraint Policy

(1.0) Introduction

Baseball BC believes in fostering a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for participants. Unfortunately, from time to time, conflict between minor athletes may escalate and become physical. In these instances, adult intervention may be required to 'break up' the physical conflict. While potentially well intended, the physical intervention of adults into such conflicts is often not helpful, causes additional risk of injury to both the adult and the athlete, and can escalate the conflict already in progress. The purpose of this policy is to provide expectations for when it is appropriate for adults to physically intervene in conflict between minor athletes and what that intervention should look like.

(2.0) Application

This policy applies to adult participants, including coaches, umpires, and spectators.

This policy does not apply to minor athletes.

This policy does not apply to adult-to-adult interactions.

This policy does not apply to a parent/guardian's interactions with their own child, including a coach's, interaction with their own child. For example, it is not a breach of this policy for a parent to carry a non-compliant five-year-old off a field, while it would be a breach of policy for a non-parent coach to do so. That said, other policies, such as the code of conduct, still apply to interactions between parents and their own child, and a parent/coach can still be subject to discipline for such interactions.

(3.0) Definition

Physical intervention is defined as physical contact between an adult and a minor athlete, whereby the adult is attempting to restrict the minor athlete's freedom of movement or mobility.

Temporarily touching an athlete's hand, wrist, shoulder or back, for the purpose of accompanying or inducing an athlete to move to a new location, is not physical intervention.

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(4.0) No Requirement to Physically Intervene

Intervening in a physical conflict poses a risk to the individual intervening. An adult should not physically intervene in a conflict when they feel it is unsafe to do so; however, an adult who feels it is unsafe to physically intervene still has a duty of care to those under their supervision and must take other reasonable steps to break up the physical conflict, such as, calling for help, commanding the individuals to stop, blowing a whistle, etc.

(5.0) Baseline Requirements of Physical Intervention

An adult shall only physically intervene in a conflict between minor athletes when:

- Exceptional circumstances exist where an athlete is in imminent danger of causing harm to self or others.
- It is conducted in a manner that could not, in any way, cause harm to an athlete, restrict the breathing of the athlete, or places an athlete in a prone position (facing down on their stomach) or a supine position (on their back face up).
- Every effort is first made to use non-physical interventions including verbal commands.
- It is discontinued once the imminent danger has dissipated.
- The lowest levels of force are applied to the athlete(s) as is necessary.
- The adult does so in a calm and respectful manner.

Physical interventions shall never be used as:

- A method of removing a non-compliant athlete from one location to another.
- A form of punishment.
- To prevent the destruction of property.

Additional Guidelines

- It is generally recommended that umpires refrain from physically intervening in conflict on the field of play. Ideally, this should be left to the coaching staffs of both teams and/or parents/guardians. Umpires should generally take a ‘watch and record’ role during such interactions. That said, umpires have a duty of care towards minor athletes and are not prohibited from physically intervening but must do so in compliance with

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the baseline requirements of this policy. Minor umpires should never physically intervene in conflict.

- It is generally recommended that when physical intervention is required and permitted under this policy, that coaches physically intervene with athletes on their own team and not athletes on the opposing team.

(6.0) Requirement to Report

When an adult uses physical intervention on a minor athlete, they are required under this policy, to self-report the incident to their association President or designate. Such report must summarize the conduct of the athletes and explain why the adult felt an imminent danger existed. The association is required to investigate the incident to ensure such intervention was consistent with this policy, and to initiate a disciplinary process against the minor athletes or refer such a process to Baseball BC as required by policy.

(7.0) Sanctions

Adults who use physical intervention in breach of this policy shall be subject to discipline, per the Baseball BC discipline policy.

Credit

Some language in this policy was borrowed from the BC Ministry of Education's provincial guidelines for physical restraint and seclusion in school settings.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/diverse-student-needs/physical-restraint-seclusion-guidelines.pdf