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| Policy title: | **Athlete Health and Wellness Policy** |
| Approval authority: | Board of Directors |
| Adopted: | 2021 |
| Current version approved: | March 4, 2022 |
| This Policy has been prepared by Ontario Artistic Swimming (OAS) and is applicable to OAS and its Affiliated Organizations. This document cannot be modified without consultation with and approval by OAS | |

**Definitions**

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
2. *“Activity or Event”* means an activity or event of OAS or an Affiliated Organization, including a conference, meeting, workshop, teams’ meeting, exhibition, competition, trial or selection event, training camp, and any other activity or event sanctioned or organized by the OAS or the Affiliated Organization;
3. “*Affiliated Organization*” means any Competitive, Recreational, Scholastic, University artistic swimming club or AquaGO! Or Trillium awards program provider registered with OAS;
4. “*Athlete*” means any Individual participating in the sport of artistic swimming, recreationally or competitively, who is registered with OAS;
5. “*CAS*” means Canada Artistic Swimming;
6. “*Coach*” means an Individual certified by the Coaching Association of Canada and registered with OAS as an artistic swimming coach, and includes an instructor, which is a specific level of Coach who teaches AquaGO! or other recreational programming;
7. “*Designated Person*” means the person who has final decision-making authority in removing an injured or suspected injured athlete from further training or competition;
8. “*Illness*” means a state of sickness and poor health;
9. “*Including*” means including but not limited to;
10. “*Individual*” means any individual who has fulfilled the registration requirements of OAS, as well as any individual engaged on a volunteer or contractual basis in an Activity or Event with OAS or an Affiliated Organization, whether or not they are registered;
11. “*Injury*” means damage or harm due to trauma;
12. “*Licensed Healthcare Professional*” means a family physician, pediatrician, emergency room physician, sports medicine physician, nurse practitioner, physical therapist, athletic therapist, or other healthcare professional who is licensed to provide athletic injury related healthcare services that fall within their licensed scope of practice;
13. “*Mental Health Concern*” means any disruption in cognitive, behavioural or emotional well-being that affects the ability to perform activities of daily living;
14. “*Minor*” means any person under 18 years of age;
15. “*Official*” means a judge (including a practice judge), referee, or scorer recognized by OAS, CAS, or FINA;
16. “*OAS*” means Ontario Artistic Swimming;
17. “*Parent*” means a natural or adopted parents or guardian of an Athlete or other Individual registered with OAS or an Affiliated Organization;
18. “*Registrant*” means any Affiliated Organization or Individual that has fulfilled the requirements of registration in the CAS and OAS By-laws or Policies and has paid any associated registration fees to CAS and OAS;
19. “*Sport Partner*” means a sport organization that CAS, OAS, or an Affiliated Organization works with to deliver its Activities and Events;
20. “*Support Personnel*” means any person other than a Coach supporting the development of an Athlete at all Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) stages including a fitness trainer, sport science specialists, health care practitioner, or specialists affiliated with or recognized by CAS, OAS, an Affiliated Organization, or a Sport Partner; and
21. “*Vulnerable Person*” means a person who, because of age, disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them, and includes a Minor or a person with a physical, developmental, or other disability.

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for Members to foster a safe sport environment through raising awareness of the importance of promoting athlete health and wellness.
2. This policy will also provide guidance for Athletes, Coaches, Support Personnel, Officials, Parents, and others in the safe management of Injury or Illness in artistic swimming.

**Guiding Principles**

1. OAS recognizes the importance of investing in athlete health and wellness as a critical part of a positive sport experience. The following guiding principles underpin the OAS Athlete Health and Wellness Policy:
2. **Safety**: All Athletes should feel safe at all times while participating in artistic swimming.
3. **Support**: Artistic swimming should be a positive and supportive part of an Athlete’s life.
4. **Health Promotion**: Athletes should feel that participating in artistic swimming enhances their ability to lead a healthy life.
5. **Inclusion**: All Athletes should feel able to participate in artistic swimming activities to the full extent that they wish to.

**Application**

1. This Policy applies to all Individuals and organizations including OAS, Affiliated Organizations, and Registrants, and applies at all times wherever an Activity or Event takes place, which includes their respective offices as well as external locations in Canada and abroad.
2. Failure to abide by this Policy and the protocols set out in the OAS Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol may result in disciplinary action according to the CAS *Safe and Welcoming Sport Policy Suite*.
3. This policy applies to all physical Injuries, Illness, and Mental Health Concerns. Concussions or suspected concussions should be managed according to the OAS *Concussion Policy* and OAS Artistic Swimming-specific Concussion Guidelines.

**Implementation**

***Injury or Illness Reporting or Management***

1. Safe and effective management of athletic injuries or illnesses is a cornerstone of the protection of Athlete health and safety.
2. All Individuals including Athletes, Coaches, Support Personnel, Officials, and Parents are responsible for creating a safe and positive environment that promotes open communication and emphasizes minimizing risks to physical, mental, and emotional safety while participating in OAS sanctioned Activities or Events.

***Physical Injury or Illness***

1. Any Injuries sustained during artistic swimming participation or sustained outside of artistic swimming that would affect full participation must be reported to a Designated Person.
2. An incident report must be submitted using the OAS Injury Tracker for all injuries that occur during an OAS-sanctioned Activity or Event including training or practice time, competitions, or special Events such as selection, trials, and assessment processes. When appropriate, reported injuries should be evaluated by a Licensed Healthcare Professional.
3. Any Athlete affected by an Illness that prevents full participation in artistic swimming Activity should follow the OAS Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol.

***Mental Health Concerns***

1. OAS recognizes the importance of supporting mental health as part of a holistic approach to Athlete development aligned with OAS’s values of Health and Wellbeing and Sport for Life.
2. Any Athlete affected by a Mental Health Concern that prevents full participation in artistic swimming Activity should follow the OAS Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol.

**Responsibilities**

1. OAS will:
   1. Maintain an Injury surveillance program to collect and analyze injury data, maintaining confidentiality as set out in the OAS *Privacy Policy* and *Records Retention Policy*;
   2. Record Injury trends and patterns over time, and make recommendations with respect to training and skill development, if appropriate;
   3. Develop and make accessible resources for Injury prevention;
   4. Make accessible to Athletes and Coaches resources that support mental health; and
   5. Receive and investigate complaints of any breach of the OAS *Athlete Health and Wellness Policy* or the OAS *Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol.*
2. Affiliated Organizations will:
   1. Support and promote a positive and safe sport environment;
   2. Adopt the OAS *Athlete Health and Wellness Policy* and related protocols outlined in the OAS *Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol*;
   3. Adopt the CAS *Safe and Welcoming Sport Policy Suite* and ensure their Coaches are abiding by the behaviour expectations and standards set out in these policies;
   4. Report all instances of physical Injury sustained by athletes during artistic swimming Activity or Events that affect full participation;
   5. Maintain records of all reported Injuries;
   6. In collaboration with OAS, communicate athlete health and wellness resources to their members; and
   7. Ensure all Activity or Events are properly supervised.
3. Designated Persons will:
4. Recognize when an Athlete has sustained an Injury or Illness during artistic swimming Activity and remove the Athlete from training or practice time or competition, if necessary;
5. Receive reports from Athletes or Parents when an Athlete is affected by an Injury or Illness that prevents full participation in artistic swimming Activity;
6. Call 911 immediately in an emergency situation;
7. Inform an Athlete’s Parent of Injury or Illness if the Athlete is a minor or other Vulnerable Person;
8. Provide a copy of the OAS *Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol* to the Athlete and to the Athlete’s Parent if the athlete is a minor or other Vulnerable Person: and
9. Ensure the appropriate protocol set out in the OAS *Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol* is implemented.
10. The Designated Person may delegate any or all of the above responsibilities to another Designated person.
11. Coaches will:
12. Act in the best interest of the Athlete’s development as a whole person;
13. Ensure a positive and safe sport environment by selecting Activities and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved Athletes;
14. Educate Athletes as to their responsibilities in contributing to a positive and safe sport environment;
15. Work cooperatively with other Support Personnel including sport healthcare professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of Athletes’ medical or psychological treatments;
16. Ensure the appropriate protocol set out in the OAS *Injury and Illness Return to Pool Protocol* is implemented and never encourage or knowingly permit an Athlete to return to artistic swimming Activity prematurely; and
17. Never withhold, recommend against, or deny adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.

**Communication**

1. OAS and Affiliated Organizations will ensure this Policy is well-publicized, including on the organization’s websites, and is communicated to those who will be responsible for upholding it as well as those who will be responsible for its implementation.

**Review**

1. OAS will conduct a review of this Policy annually and updated as necessary to reflect new medical or legislative developments in Athlete health and safety.