

**NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH SOCCER
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

SAFE SOCCER POLICY

The North Carolina Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (“NCYSA”) is committed to establishing and enforcing requirements intended to create safe environments for its players participating in NCYSA sanctioned activities. Each participant in NCYSA sanctioned activities is expected to comply with this Safe Soccer Policy.

**ARTICLE I
DEFINITIONS**

The following capitalized terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below when used in this Policy.

- (a) “Abuse Prevention Liaison” means the Participant appointed by a Member Organization to undertake the relevant actions described herein.
- (b) “Family Members” means parents, domestic partners, step-parents, grandparents, guardians, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and first cousins.
- (c) “Member Organization” means an association member of NCYSA, the Boys Olympic Development Program of NCYSA, or the Girls Olympic Development Program of NCYSA.
- (d) “Participant” means any coach, assistant coach, coaching director, assistant coaching director, training assistant, team manager, referee, officer, director, employee, independent contractor or other individual (other than a Youth Participant) affiliated with (i) NCYSA, (ii) a Member Organization, or (iii) a referee organization, and (iv) who has direct or indirect contact with a Youth Participant through Sanctioned Activities.
- (e) “Sanctioned Activities” means matches, games, tournaments, Top Soccer events, practices, training sessions, tryouts, team meetings, and other similar activities conducted by Member Organizations and/or NCYSA; communications in connection with the foregoing activities (other than communications exclusively between or among Family Members); travel to and from the foregoing activities other than with Family Members; and overnight lodging in connection with the foregoing activities other than exclusively with Family Members.
- (f) “Youth Participant” means any minor (person of less than 18 years of age) who is a registered player of NCYSA through a Member Organization or who is otherwise a player participant in Sanctioned Activities.

Additional capitalized terms used in this Policy shall have the means ascribed to them hereinafter.

ARTICLE II **PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

Section 1. Prohibited Substances. Participants shall not be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while participating in Sanctioned Activities. Participants shall not provide alcohol or illegal drugs to Youth Participants.

Section 2. Sexual Misconduct. The following actions in connection with any Sanctioned Activity shall be deemed to constitute sexual misconduct (“Sexual Misconduct”).

- (a) Nudity. No Participant should be nude in the presence of any Youth Participant who is not a Family Member.
- (b) Sexually Oriented Conversations. No Participant should engage in sexually oriented communications with any Youth Participant who is not a Family Member.
- (c) Sexually Oriented Materials. No Participant should present or provide sexually oriented materials (e.g. magazines, other printed materials, videos, cell phone images, etc.) to any Youth Participant.
- (d) Sexually Oriented Physical Contact. No Participant should engage in sexually oriented physical contact with a Youth Participant. See Article III for guidance on physical contact.

Section 3. Harassment. No Participant should engage in harassment of any Youth Participant in connection with any Sanctioned Activity. “Harassment” means (a) a repeated pattern of behaviors that are intended (i) to cause fear or humiliation, (ii) to offend or degrade, (iii) to create a hostile environment, or (iv) to establish dominance or power over a Youth Participant based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability, and (b) any conduct within the definition of “harassment” under applicable federal or state laws.

Section 4. Hazing. No Participant should engage in hazing of any Youth Participant in connection with any Sanctioned Activity. “Hazing” means (a) coercing, requiring, or intentionally tolerating any humiliating or dangerous act or omission that serves as a condition for a Youth Participant joining a group or being socially accepted by a group and (b) conduct within the definition of “hazing” under applicable federal or state laws. “Hazing” does not include group or team activities that are intended to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

ARTICLE III **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Section 1. Appropriate Physical Contact. Appropriate physical contact between a Participant and a Youth Participant is an inevitable and productive part of youth sports. Such contact may occur in connection with training (positioning a Youth Participant’s body so an athletic skill is more quickly acquired), medical treatment (releasing muscle cramps), celebration

(brief hug), consolation (arm around a distressed Youth Participant) or safety concerns (pulling a Youth Participant out of harm's way).

Physical contact with a Youth Participant in these appropriate circumstances should comply with the following principles:

- The physical contact should take place in public;
- The Participant must structure the contact to avoid the potential for (or actual) sexually oriented intimacies during the physical contact (e.g. "side hugs" rather than front-to-front hugs); and
- The Participant must intend the physical contact to benefit the Youth Participant, not to meet an emotional, sexual or other need of the Participant.

Section 2. Inappropriate Physical Contact. Certain physical contact is either (a) ill-advised in that it presents the appearance of inappropriate contact or (b) to a reasonable and objective observer would constitute sexually oriented physical contact, harassment or hazing. Examples of such conduct include:

- Lingering or repeated embraces of a Youth Participant;
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or similar contact to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a Youth Participant;
- Continued physical contact that makes a Youth Participant obviously uncomfortable; and
- Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire of a Youth Participant for decreased or no physical contact (where such decreased or no physical contact is feasible in the context of the existing athletic environment).

ARTICLE IV

MISCONDUCT BETWEEN YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Participants should be aware that sexual interaction between Youth Participants or between a Youth Participant and another minor within the context of Sanctioned Activities can constitute sexual abuse. Whether such sexual interaction constitutes sexual abuse depends on a variety of factors, including whether an imbalance of power (e.g. age difference, disparity in size, existence of physical or intellectual disability, etc.) is present. If a Participant has a concern that such an interaction has occurred and may constitute sexual abuse, the Participant should review Article VI on Reporting Obligations.

ARTICLE V
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION
AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Section 1. Communications. Electronic communication between a Participant and a Youth Participant must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating about Sanctioned Activities. Participants should observe the following guidelines in electronic communications with Youth Participants who are not Family Members.

- The parent (or guardian) of the Youth Participant should be copied on all electronic communications.
- A Participant should not request a Youth Participant to join the Participant's personal social media page. Group social media pages are permissible (must include parents (or guardians) of Youth Participants).
- Twitter, instant messaging and similar media communications may not be used by a Participant to "direct message" a Youth Participant.
- Email and text messages from a Participant to a Youth Participant are permissible if the communication is solely with respect to Sanctioned Activities. Group emails and texts are advisable whenever possible.

A parent (or guardian) of a Youth Participant may request that one or more Participants not contact the Youth Participant through one or more forms of electronic communications. Such request shall be honored.

Section 2. Imagery. From time to time, digital photos, videos of training or competition, or other publicly obtainable images of a Youth Participant in a public setting may be taken by a Participant. This imagery may be used for athletic instruction, team videos or team websites, or offered to the Family Members of a Youth Participant. Such uses are permissible so long as the imagery is in the best interests of the Youth Participant. A parent (or guardian) may request in writing that such imagery of a Youth Participant not be posted on team websites (understanding that group photography or videography may make honoring such request impracticable). To the extent such a request is practicable, it will be honored.

ARTICLE VI
REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Section 1. Reports of Abuse. NCYSA has zero tolerance for Abuse of Youth Participants by Participants. "Abuse" means sexual or physical abuse of a Youth Participant, including all instances of Sexual Misconduct.

- (a) Each Participant who witnesses an event of Abuse (an "Event") or reasonably suspects the occurrence of an event of Abuse (a "Suspected Event"), in either case in connection with a Sanctioned Activity, must promptly report the Event or

Suspected Event (an “Abuse Report”) to appropriate law enforcement authorities in compliance with federal, state and local laws. The failure to make such an Abuse Report is a violation of this Policy.

- (b) The Participant making the Abuse Report, the Abuse Prevention Liaison for the relevant Member Organization, the Member Organization and NCYSA must also comply with all federal, state and local laws applicable to the reporting of Events and Suspected Events.
- (c) An Abuse Prevention Liaison who becomes aware of the assertion of charges against or the indictment of a person for Abuse in connection with Sanctioned Activities should promptly advise the President of the relevant Member Organization and the Risk Management Coordinator of NCYSA of such matter.
- (d) NCYSA, its Member Organizations, the Abuse Prevention Liaisons of the Member Organizations and Participants are not obligated, and will not attempt, to investigate allegations or suspicions of Abuse or to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations or suspicions as a condition of making reports to applicable federal, state or local authorities.

Section 2. Reports of Other Policy Violations.

- (a) Each Participant who witnesses or reasonably suspects violations of this Safe Soccer Policy, other than Events or Suspected Events, should promptly report such witnessed or suspected violations (“Policy Violations”) to the Abuse Prevention Liaison of the Member Organization with which the Participant is affiliated (a “Violation Report”). The failure to make a Violation Report is a violation of this Policy.
- (b) An Abuse Prevention Liaison who receives a Violation Report shall promptly transmit the Violation Report to the President of the Member Organization.
- (c) In the event that the Abuse Prevention Liaison reasonably concludes that the Violation Report describes an instance of criminal misconduct, the Abuse Prevention Liaison should advise the Participant making the Violation Report to consider whether he or she should report such criminal misconduct to applicable state and local law enforcement authorities.

ARTICLE VII **VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY**

Section 1. Abuse. Any Participant who is (a) the subject of an Abuse Report or (b) is otherwise alleged to have engaged in an Event, in each case that becomes known to the relevant Member Organization and NCYSA, shall be promptly suspended by the Member Organization and NCYSA from participation in Sanctioned Activities. Such suspension shall continue during the pendency of any investigation by applicable legal authorities.

Section 2. Conviction. Any Participant who is convicted of (or pleads guilty to) a crime a material element of which is Abuse of a Youth Participant in connection with Sanctioned Activities shall be prohibited from participation in Sanctioned Activities as provided in NCYSA's Risk Management Policy. Any Participant who is convicted of (or pleads guilty to) a crime a material element of which is a Policy Violation shall be also subject to the provisions of NCYSA's Risk Management Policy.

Section 3. Other Violations. Any Participant who is determined to have engaged in a Policy Violation shall be subject to such consequences as are deemed appropriate by the Member Organization with which such Participant is affiliated.