Safe Sport Policy

Cheshire Junior Football and Cheerleading

(The Following Connecticut Safe Sport Policy has been adopted by

Cheshire Junior Football, Inc. in its entirety)

CONNECTICUT SAFE SPORT POLICY

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 DEFINITIONS

04 INTRODUCTION

05 STRATEGIES TO RECOGNIZE, REDUCE, AND RESPOND TO MISCONDUCT IN SPORT

06 STRATEGY 1: MISCONDUCT IN SPORTS

13 STRATEGY 2: SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

17 STRATEGY 3: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

18 STRATEGY 4: SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS

27 STRATEGY 5: RESPONDING TO ABUSE, MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

34 STRATEGY 6: MONITORING

35 APPENDIX A:

BACKGROUND CHECK CRITERION OFFENSES FOR VOLUNTEERS

DEFINITIONS

This section defines keywords and concepts used throughout this guideline. The definitions set forth are intended to be universal as sporting teams may participate in Connecticut and other states. Each state determines the legal definition of child abuse. Guidelines concerning specific states may be found by visiting the Child Welfare Information Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov.

ATHLETE

Any player who participates in any practice, drills, camps, games of the sport.

CHILD, CHILDREN, MINOR, AND YOUTH

Anyone under the age of 18. The terms child, children, minor, and youth are used interchangeably throughout the document.

COACH

Any adult who has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, schooling, training, or advising an athlete under the organization's auspices. However, these guidelines should also pertain to every volunteer, coach, administrator, or other person whose duties may include supervision or interaction with minors.

MISCONDUCT

Conduct that results in harm, the potential for harm, or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, harassment, hazing, and bullying.

ORGANIZATION

The youth athletic program that adopted this SafeSport guideline.

SAFESPORT COMMITTEE

Committee formed by the organization that manages all allegations of misconduct, abuse, and policy violations. The SafeSport Committee reports to the Board of Directors.

VOLUNTEER

Any individual providing service to the organization, including board members, coaches, administrators, trainers, team moms, dads, caregivers of the athletes, or other persons whose duties may include the supervision and or interaction with minors.

INTRODUCTION

This is a project of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children in Connecticut (GTF) in response to An Act Concerning the Provision of Information Concerning Child Sexual Abuse: https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/ACT/PA/PDF/2021PA-00064-R00HB-06113-PA.PDF. The GTF working group compiled resources from national organizations that support adult survivors and address child sexual abuse awareness including, the Zero Abuse Project, the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center, Adult Survivors of Child Abuse -- The Norma J. Morris Center, The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), Stop It Now. This guideline was developed through the collaborative work of staff from the CT Children's Alliance, the Office of the Child Advocate, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence, and The Village for Families & Children, Inc. This guideline was modified by the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children. It is closely patterned after the USA Football Youth Model Safe Sport Policy - 2-20-2015 and adapted from the US Olympic Committee "SafeSport" program, a guide to prevent misconduct in sport. United States Olympic Committee, Recognizing, Reducing, and Responding to Misconduct in Sport: Creating Your Strategy.

Youth play sports for a variety of reasons. It encourages a healthy lifestyle, builds self-confidence, and teaches essential life lessons about teamwork and discipline. Athletes also do better off the field. Athletes learn goal-setting, teamwork, and time management skills; they are less likely to use cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol; they have higher graduation rates and are more likely to attend college.

Unfortunately, youth sports can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse.

Connecticut is committed to protecting and improving the development and safety of athletes and participants involved in sports. This guideline is a resource to guide the development, implementation, and internal review of effective athlete safety and misconduct prevention strategies for its programs and events.

Misconduct may damage an athlete's psychological well-being. Athletes who have been mistreated experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, loss of self-esteem. This trauma negatively impacts their relationships with family, friends, and sports. Misconduct often hurts an athlete's competitive performance and may cause them to stop participating in sports entirely.

Here, we identify six primary types of misconduct:

1. Bullying
2. Harassment
3. Hazing
4. Emotional Misconduct
5. Physical Misconduct
6. Sexual Misconduct, including Child Sexual Abuse

https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-14-42.pdf

WHAT'S IN THE GUIDELINE?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended six strategies to recognize, reduce and respond to child physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct in sport[1]. These strategies include:

STRATEGY 1

MISCONDUCT IN SPORTS

- SafeSport Committee
- Sexual Misconduct
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Physical Misconduct
- Emotional Misconduct
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

STRATEGY 2

SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

- Background Check Policy
- Duty of Full Disclosure
- Criminal Background Check Process

STRATEGY 3

SEX ABUSE PREVENTION AND OTHER MISCONDUCT TRAINING AND EDUCATION

STRATEGY 4

SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS

- One-On-One Interactions
- Physical Contact with Athletes
- Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy
- Locker Rooms and Changing Areas
- Travel

STRATEGY 5

RESPONDING TO ABUSE, MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

- SafeSport Committee Operation Reporting Policy
- Reporting Procedure
- Confidentiality, Anonymous Reporting, and Bad Faith Allegations
- How Reports Are Handled
- Disciplinary Rules and Procedures
- Media Policy

STRATEGY 6

MONITORING THE ORGANIZATION'S POLICY

- Monitoring Compliance With Policies And Procedures
- Monitoring Methods
- Responding To Interactions
- Reporting

[1] See Saul J, Audage NC. Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2007.

STRATEGY 1

MISCONDUCT IN SPORTS

OVERVIEW

If any youth sports or camp volunteer, coach, staff observes inappropriate behaviors, suspected physical or sexual abuse, or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each administrator or volunteer to report their observations to the organization's board immediately.

Connecticut is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes' physical, emotional and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

Those who discover abuse should not attempt to evaluate or investigate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to the DCF Careline and appropriate law enforcement authorities. Instead, they must immediately report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse.

This organization recognizes that training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete. Still, it is nevertheless essential for everyone involved in sports to support motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

SAFESPORT GUIDELINES APPLICATION

This guideline applies to Connecticut youth sports and camp volunteers and staff, athletes and participants, including spectators. **Staff, volunteers, athletes, and participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:**

1. Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse
2. Physical misconduct
3. Emotional misconduct
4. Bullying
5. Harassment
6. Hazing

SAFESPORT BOARD

The organization shall form a "SafeSport Board" to implement this policy and report any suspicions or allegations of misconduct, abuse, and policy violations. The SafeSport Board will be comprised of at least three members of the organization's board of directors, represent a cross-section of the league to uphold a sense of impartiality, and complete Connecticut's Mandated Reporter Training.

You can find official mandated reporter training at https://portal.ct.gov/dcf.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

- Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner;

AN IMBALANCE OF POWER IS ALWAYS ASSUMED BETWEEN A COACH AND AN ATHLETE.

- Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative; or

- Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape).

TYPES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INCLUDE:

1. Sexual assault;
2. Sexual harassment;
3. Sexual abuse; and
4. Any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited. https://www.ageofconsent.net/states/connecticut

The Connecticut Age of Consent is **16 years old**. In the United States, the age of consent is the minimum age at which an individual is considered legally old enough to consent to participate in sexual activity. Individuals aged 15 or younger in Connecticut cannot legally consent to sexual activity, and such action may result in prosecution for sexual assault.

- A sexual assault based on age differences or where the abuser is in a position of power, authority, or supervision may occur in the following situations:
- When a minor under the age of 16 has sexual intercourse with another person and the minor is 13 years of age or older but under 16 years and the actor is more than three years older. §53a-71(a)(1)
- The minor is under 18 years old, and the other person is the minor's guardian or otherwise responsible for their welfare. §53a-71(a)(4)
- The actor is a coach or person providing intensive ongoing instruction, and the minor is either a student in a school setting or is under 18 years old. §53a-71(a)(9)
- There is no age requirement if the minor is a student enrolled in a school in which the school employee works in a school or works in a school in the jurisdiction the minor attends. §53a-71(a)(8)
- The actor is 20 years old and holds a position of power by virtue of their profession, legal or volunteer status over the minor, and the minor is under 18 years old. §53a-71(10)

Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this guideline include, without limitation:

1. **Touching offenses. Behaviors that include:**

   a. Fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks;
   b. Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors;
   c. Genital contact; and
   d. Sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority, and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sports participants.

2. **Non-touching offenses. Behaviors that include: (But are not limited to)**

   a. A coach discussing their sex life with an athlete;
   b. A coach asking an athlete about their sex life;
   c. Coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to an athlete;
   d. Exposing athletes to pornographic material;
   e. Sending athletes or encouraging athletes to send sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., "sexting");
   f. Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts;
   g. Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared);
   h. Sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature; and
      i. Is unwelcome, offensive, or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this; and
      ii. Is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force, or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

2. Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under federal or state law.

3. Sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure, or voyeurism.

CONCERNING PEER-TO-PEER CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: SEXUAL CONTACT BETWEEN MINORS ALSO CAN BE ABUSIVE. WHETHER OR NOT A SEXUAL INTERACTION BETWEEN CHILDREN CONSTITUTES CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TURNS ON THE EXISTENCE OF AN AGGRESSOR, THE AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHILDREN, AND WHETHER THERE IS ANIMBALANCE OF POWER AND INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITIES. ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF PEER-TO-PEER CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY.

PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

1. Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sports participants; or

2. Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault).

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improving athlete performance.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED BY THIS GUIDELINE INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION:

1. **Contact offenses.** Prohibited behaviors include:

   a. Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, or slapping an athlete;
   b. Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
   c. Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age;
   d. Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
   e. Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;
   f. Prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health.

2. **Non-contact offenses. Prohibited behaviors include:**

   a. Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);
   b. Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., Requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface);
   c. Withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.

EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT

1. A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behaviors include:

   a. Verbal acts
   b. Physical acts
   c. Acts that deny attention or support

2. Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect).

Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.

1. **Verbal Acts.** A pattern of verbal behaviors that (a) attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat, or disgusting) or (b) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose. It can also be accomplished in writing or electronically via IM, text, or social media.

EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED BY THIS GUIDELINE INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION:

2. **Physical Acts.** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sports equipment, water bottles, or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or (b) punching walls, windows, or other objects.

3. **Acts that Deny Attention and Support.** A pattern of (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

BULLYING

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND HAZING, DEFINED BELOW, OFTEN INVOLVE SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT.

1. An intentional, persistent, and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership.

2. Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law.

3. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion. For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and push through a strenuous training regimen.

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING PROHIBITED BY THIS GUIDELINE INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION:

1. **Physical behaviors.** Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an athlete; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects such as sporting equipment.

2. **Verbal and emotional behaviors.** Behaviors that include (a) teasing, ridiculing, intimidating; (b) spreading rumors or making false statements; or (c) using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate ("cyberbullying").

HARASSMENT

1. A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability; or

2. Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law

EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT PROHIBITED BY THIS GUIDELINE INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION:

1. **Physical offenses.** Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an athlete or participant; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects, including sporting equipment.

2. **Non-physical offenses.** Behaviors that include (a) making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; (c) withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on their sexual orientation.

HAZING

1. Coercing, requiring, forcing, or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members; or

2. Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

3. Connecticut Hazing Laws can be found here: https://stophazing.org/policy/state-laws/connecticut/

Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

EXAMPLES OF HAZING PROHIBITED BY THIS GUIDELINE INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION:

1. Requiring, forcing, or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs;

2. Tying, taping, blindfolding, or otherwise physically restraining an athlete;

3. Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature;

4. Sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food;

5. Social actions (e.g., Grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g., Public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule;

6. Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault; and

7. Excessive training requirements focused on individuals on a team.

ACTIVITIES THAT FIT THE DEFINITION OF HAZING ARE CONSIDERED TO BE HAZING REGARDLESS OF AN ATHLETE'S WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE OR PARTICIPATE.

WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT

It is a violation of this guideline if a Coach, Staff, or Volunteer knows of misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), the participant(s), or organization member(s).

REPORTING

Although this guideline is designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. All coaches, staff, administrators, and volunteers shall follow the reporting procedures set forth by the Connecticut Mandated Reporting Laws. Mandated Reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected, or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm (CGS 17a-101a).

A Mandated Reporter must report any suspicion to DCF or law enforcement regardless of the alleged perpetrator's identity. Reports should be made to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288.

DO NOT INVESTIGATE SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE OR ATTEMPT TO EVALUATE THE CREDIBILITY OR VALIDITY OF SUCH ALLEGATIONS AS A CONDITION OF REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of the SafeSport Policy shall be reported pursuant to the Reporting Policy and will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Mandated Reporters who fail to report allegations of child abuse and child sexual abuse may result in :

- Class A misdemeanor
- Class E felony if a repeat violation or an intentional or grossly negligent violation or mandated reporter had actual knowledge of abuse or neglect
- Class D felony if a mandated reporter intentionally interferes with or prevents the making of a report (or attempts/conspires to do so)

STRATEGY 2

SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

The organization conducts a criminal background check on administrators, board members, coaches, and other volunteers who have routine access to participants and minor athletes. The information revealed by the criminal background check may disqualify a potential volunteer from working with the organization in any capacity. Making a reasonable effort to obtain past criminal behaviors reduces the chance that athletes and other participants will come in contact with potentially dangerous individuals.

Although effective in eliminating potential volunteers who have been arrested, charged, and convicted for a crime, a background check is only one component of the effort to prevent misconduct.

BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

Persons Required to Submit to a Criminal Background Check

1. All of the organization's volunteers shall consent to and pass a criminal background check before performing services for the organization and at an interval not exceeding two years. (See Appendix A for a description of criterion offenses.)

2. All volunteer contractors shall consent to and pass a criminal background check before performing services for the organization and at an interval not exceeding two years if the volunteer, temporary worker, or independent contractor:

3. Is working or volunteering for the organization (e.g., we hired, recruited, or retained the person. It is our volunteer, not another group's volunteer);

4. May not always be directly supervised by an organization volunteer (e.g., the volunteer recording player heights and weights does not need a background check); and

   a. Has more contact with youth players than the general public (e.g., access to the playing field or locker rooms, and/or has physical contact with players);
   b. Has access to confidential personal or financial information. OR

5. All adult participants in an event or program where such adults supervise minors and/or stay in accommodations paid for by the organization.

DUTY OF FULL DISCLOSURE

Each applicant has the affirmative duty to disclose their criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest, plea, or conviction history in an application or any other information provided by an applicant during the screening process is grounds for volunteer dismissal and/or membership revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered. **The duty to disclose is relevant in the following situations:**

1. If an applicant (1) is arrested, (2) pleads, or (3) is convicted of a crime other than a traffic offense during the screening process, the applicant is required to disclose such information immediately.

2. In the event a person is serving as an employee, contractor, or volunteer and (1) is arrested, (2) pleads, or (3) is convicted after the completion of the screening process, they have an affirmative duty to disclose such information immediately to the organization's board. Breach of this affirmative duty is grounds for dismissal.

3. Any applicant who has been banned by another sport or youth organization, as temporarily or permanently ineligible, must self-disclose this information. A failure to disclose is a basis for disqualifying potential applicants or termination for existing employees/volunteers.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS

1. All applicants who meet the above criteria will be asked to undergo a criminal background check with the organization's approved third-party vendor that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act before providing services for the organization. Through this criminal background check, the organization will utilize reasonable efforts to ascertain past criminal history of an applicant. An applicant must receive a green light score (described below) from the background check vendor before performing services for the organization.

2. The criminal background check vendor will, at a minimum and without limitation:

   a. Perform a national search of state criminal repositories for evidence of criterion offenses **(listed in Appendix A);**
   b. Perform a search of state sexual offender registries; and
   c. Verify a person's identification against their social security number or other personal identifiers.
   d. The Organization's criminal background check vendor may also check motor vehicle records of employees and contractors who will operate motor vehicles as part of their job responsibilities.

3. The Organization's criminal background check vendor will return a "red light" or "green light" score.

   a. A **green light** score means that the background check vendor located no records that would disqualify the applicant. However, a green light score is not a certification of safety or permission to bypass/ignore other screening efforts. Other disqualifying factors may exist and can be revealed through an interview, reference checks, and a completed application.

   b. A **red light** finding means the criminal background check revealed criminal records that suggest the applicant "does not meet the criteria" and is not suitable for organization employment or volunteer assignment. Individuals who are subject to disqualification under a "red light" finding may challenge the accuracy of the reported information produced by the criminal background check vendor.

A "GREEN LIGHT" FINDING DOES NOT MEAN THAT AN INDIVIDUAL IS SAFE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN. INSTEAD A "GREEN LIGHT" INDICATES THAT NO CRIMINAL HISTORY WAS FOUND THAT WOULD DISQUALIFY THE INDIVIDUAL FROM WORKING WITH CHILDREN.

4. **Appeal.** Any disqualified individual has the right to dispute the findings of the criminal background check directly with the organization's approved criminal background check vendor. A disqualified individual may not appeal the automatic disqualification or the results of the findings of the criminal background check vendor to the organization. The organization will accept the findings of the approved criminal background check vendor.

5. NOTICE OF FINDINGS WILL BE PROVIDED TO:

a. The organization's SafeSport Committee; and
b. Where relevant, the organization's board or president; and
c. Other designated individuals, where necessary to protect the safety of minors Whenever possible, all that will be communicated is that the applicant is or is not eligible to participate in the organization's activities.

6. **Organization Action.** This organization will not engage in an individualized determination for volunteers or temporary workers. If its criminal background check vendor issues a red light, that individual will be ineligible to participate in Organization activities unless and until the organization's background check vendor issues a green light. The individual may engage in the appeal process directly with the background check vendor.

7. **Confidentiality.** Unless a red light is issued, the organization is not privy to any information submitted by a prospective or current volunteer to the background check provider or any information found by the provider. Under these circumstances, all materials sent to the organization shall be kept confidential among the board.

A BACKGROUND CHECK NEITHER PREDICTS NOR PREVENTS FUTURE CRIMES, SO A CLEAR BACKGROUND CHECK ALONE IS NOT PROOF THAT A VOLUNTEER WILL NOT VIOLATE THE SAFESPORT POLICY.

STRATEGY 3

SEX ABUSE PREVENTION AND OTHER MISCONDUCT TRAINING AND EDUCATION

It is critical that board members, administrators, the coaching staff, team managers, and all volunteers who have routine access to minor athletes are required to report abuse and misconduct. They should have a basic understanding of sexual abusers and "grooming," the most common strategy offenders use to manipulate victims. Using a combination of attention, affection, and gifts, abusers select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or guardian and the community), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing abuse.

Accordingly, all staff and volunteers should complete awareness training concerning misconduct in sports before performing services for the organization. Staff and volunteers should retake the course or a recertification course annually.

AN ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING COURSE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

1. **Provides definitions for, and effects of, child physical and sexual abuse**
2. **Identifies risk factors for child physical and sexual abuse**
3. **Addresses common myths about offenders and child abuse**
4. **Outlines patterns, behaviors, and methods of operation of sexual abusers**
5. **Requires testing consistent with existing standards of care and legislation, where applicable.**

It is recommended that board members, administrators, the coaching staff, team managers, and all volunteers participate in Connecticut's Mandated Reporter training. You can find official mandated reporter training at https://portal.ct.gov/dcf.

The Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children offers free virtual and in-person Minimal Facts Training to organizations throughout Connecticut. Child maltreatment and sexual abuse is disturbing, complex, and extremely difficult to investigate. How professionals react and respond to a suspected child abuse allegation will have a direct impact on the child's recovery from the traumatic act and on the integrity of the subsequent investigation. This training is designed to give professionals the tools needed to optimally respond when a child discloses or indicates that they may be a victim of abuse or maltreatment. The training is approximately 2 hours long and includes handouts that can be used by the professional in their respective agency/setting.

OUTLINE

- Definition of "Discoverer."
- What happens in CT when a child abuse report is made?
- Child maltreatment and abuse information.
- DCF definitions and reporting requirements.
- Obtaining information about the suspected abuse without interviewing the alleged victim.
- Responding to and supporting the child. https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/GTF-CJA/Training

STRATEGY 4

SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS

In the league setting, the organization should strive to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions to create a safe training environment and protect athletes and participants.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS:

Individual Meetings: An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, administrators, coaches, staff, and volunteers are to observe the following guidelines:

1. Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.

2. Where possible, an individual meeting should occur in a publicly visible and open area.

3. If an individual meeting occurs in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open.

4. If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the administrators, coaches, staff, and volunteers must inform other administrators, coaches, staff, or volunteers and ensure the door remains unlocked.

Individual training session(s) with an athlete or participant may also be desired or necessary. Under these circumstances, written permission of a minor athlete's parents or guardians is required in advance of the individual training session(s), and the organization encourages parents and guardians to attend the training session.

PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS:

Except as set forth previously, minor athletes and participants will not be left unattended or unsupervised during Organization activities. Organization Volunteers should refrain from being alone with an individual athlete or participant in any room or building.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ATHLETES

Appropriate physical contact between athletes and staff/volunteers, particularly coaches, is a productive and inevitable part of sports. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for misconduct in sports.

Physical contact with athletes – for safety, consolation, and celebration – has multiple criteria in common which make them both safe and appropriate. These include:

1. The physical contact takes place in public;
2. There is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact; and
3. The physical contact is for the athlete's benefit, not to meet an emotional or other needs of an adult.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT:

Safety: The safety of our athletes is paramount, and in many instances, we make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact.

Celebration: Sports are physical by definition, and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement, and victory through physical acts.

Consolation: It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition).

SOME FORMS OF PHYSICAL CONTACT MAY CONSTITUTE CHILD PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE THAT MUST BE REPORTED.

PROHIBITED PHYSICAL CONTACT:

Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately
under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:

1. Lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact;
2. Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking, or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete;
3. "Cuddling" or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel, or overnight stay;
4. Tickling, "horseplay" or wrestling;
5. Continued physical contact that makes an athlete uncomfortable.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

As part of the organization's emphasis on athlete safety, all electronic communications between staff, volunteers, and athletes must be professional and communicate information about sports-related activities. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete's family. Any email, electronic text, social media, or similar communication will copy or include the athlete's parents or guardians at the parent or guardian's request.

Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by coaches, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents, or athletes will not be tolerated.

Electronic Communications and Social Media violations should be reported to the board or the organization.

TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and Similar Sites	Staff, administration, officials, and volunteers may create an organizational "alter ego" social media accounts (e.g., "John Doe – Organization Role"). Athlete members over age 13 and parents may friend the official Organization page and alter ego accounts mentioned above. Coaches and Organization Volunteers may "follow" each other. They may communicate with athletes solely through official Organization social media sites or through their organization alter ego accounts. All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between them and the athlete must be professional in nature and communicate information about the organization's activities for sports-oriented motivational purposes, or respond appropriately to athletes' posts about sports-related activities.	Staff and volunteers should not have athletes of any team join a personal social media page. If there is a preexisting social media relationship between them and a minor athlete, we recommend that they terminate that social media relationship and transfer it to a social media relationship between the athlete and the official Organization pages and alter ego pages. Following a minor whose parents or guardians requested that you not follow.

TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
Email, Texts, Instant Messaging, and Similar Electronic Communications	Athletes and staff, administrators, officials, and volunteers may use email and texts to communicate. All email and text content between them and athletes must be professional in nature and for the sole purpose of disseminating information about organization activities. It is strongly encouraged that parents of minor athletes are copied on any communications.	Volunteer contacts minor athlete directly. The subject of communications is not related to the organization. Volunteer does not include parents/guardians of a minor(s). Volunteer contacts minor whose parents/guardians have requested no contact.
Digital Photos and Videos	From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos or videos may be submitted to local, state, or national publications, used in marketing or promotional videos, posted on the organization-associated websites, or offered to families seasonally in an electronic form. It is the default policy of the organization to allow such practices as long as the athlete(s) parents have signed a release, the athlete(s) are in public view, and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the organization.	Publishing images of anyone themselves or through their parent/guardian has requested not to be photographed/videotaped in writing.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

Connecticut is concerned with locker room activities between minors, minors, and adults, adults being alone with individual youth in locker rooms and changing areas, non-official or non-related adults having unsupervised access to minor participants, and inappropriate behavior among adults in locker rooms.

There should be predictable and limited use of locker rooms and **changing** areas (e.g., immediately before and following practices and competitions). This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make athletes uncomfortable and may even place staff and volunteers at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

1. There may be staggered games and practices with different groups arriving and departing throughout the day. Therefore, it is not practical to constantly monitor locker rooms and changing areas over this extended course of time.

2. 24/7 monitoring inside or at the doors of the locker rooms and changing areas may not be feasible. It is recommended to make occasional sweeps of these areas. Staff, coaches, and volunteers conduct these sweeps, with women checking on female-designated areas and men checking on male-designated areas.

The organization should make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition. If they do not return in a timely fashion, it is essential to check on the athlete's whereabouts.

Parents should not be allowed in locker rooms and changing areas unless truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-gender parent.

1. If this is necessary, parents should let the coach, staff, or volunteer know about this in advance to gain permission.

2. If an athlete needs assistance with their uniform or gear (for example, a child under the age of eight) or an athlete's disability warrants assistance, parents should let the coach, staff, or volunteer know beforehand that they will be helping the athlete.

USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras, increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. As a result, **THERE SHOULD BE NO USE OF A DEVICE'S RECORDING CAPABILITIES IN THE LOCKER ROOMS OR CHANGING AREAS.**

TRAVEL

The organization has established policies to guide travel, minimize one-on-one interactions, and reduce misconduct risk. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

We distinguish between travel to training, practice, and local competition ("local travel") and team travel involving overnight travel ("team travel").

LOCAL TRAVEL

Local travel occurs when the organization does not sponsor, coordinate or arrange for travel. For local travel, athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) to ensure the person transporting the athlete maintains all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicle and compliance with all state laws.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, staff, administrators, or volunteers who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and should only drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the athlete's parent or guardian in advance of travel. In any case, where staff, administrators, or volunteers are involved in the athlete's local travel, a parental release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that they are not alone with an athlete or

participant, e.g., picking the athletes up in groups. You can refer to "Minimizing Unsupervised One-on-One Time with Athletes" http://teamusa-SafeSport.cloudapp.net/content/assets/files/MinimizingRisks.LocalTravel.pdf.

Staff, administrators, or volunteers who are also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). It is encouraged that guardians pick up their athlete(s) first and drop off their athlete(s) last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/guardians of any minor athlete being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

Team Travel

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when the organization sponsors, coordinates, or arranges for travel to compete locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the athletes. However, no coach, staff member, or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including valid drivers' licenses, adequate insurance, well-maintained vehicles, and compliance with all state laws.

The organization makes efforts to provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones.

APPROPRIATE ADULT-TO-ATHLETE RATIOS WILL DEPEND ON THE AGE OF ATHLETES AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS. EVALUATE YOUR PROGRAM TO DETERMINE SUPERVISORY NEEDS.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance by the organization. Depending on accommodations, athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room. The organization will notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted. For instance, asking hotels to block pay-per-view channels and requesting an additional large room or suite so that staff, volunteers, chaperones, and athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms, and a separate space should be reserved for adults and athletes to socialize.

We encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, we encourage all athletes to call parents and guardians regularly and allow for any unscheduled calls by either the athlete or parent/guardian.

TEAM TRAVEL

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when the organization sponsors, coordinates, or arranges for travel to compete locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the athletes. However, no coach, staff member, or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including valid drivers' licenses, adequate insurance, well-maintained vehicles, and compliance with all state laws.

The organization makes efforts to provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance by the organization. Depending on accommodations, athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room. The organization will notify hotel management

should any special arrangements be warranted. For instance, asking hotels to block pay-per-view channels and requesting an additional large room or suite so that staff, volunteers, chaperones, and athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms, and a separate space should be reserved for adults and athletes to socialize.

We encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, we encourage all athletes to call parents and guardians regularly and allow for any unscheduled calls by either the athlete or parent/guardian.

TRAVEL NOTIFICATION

Reasonable advance notice before team travel will be provided when possible. Notification will include the dates, location, and duration of the competition. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays and a contact person within the organization. This individual will be the point of contact to confirm your travel and help with travel details.

The organization will post specific travel itineraries when they become available. These will include a more detailed, hour-by-hour itinerary and contact information for team travel chaperones.

MIXED-GENDER AND MIXED-AGE TRAVEL

Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same gender and age group. Athletes will also be grouped by age and gender to assign an appropriate chaperone. Every effort to provide these groups with at least one chaperone of the same gender should be made. However, organizations may rely on parents to serve as chaperones and may be limited in providing this match.

Regardless of gender, a staff, administrator, official, or volunteer shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the individual is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). Where an adult is registered both as a coach and an athlete member of the organization and functions primarily as a coach, they may share sleeping arrangements with another registered coach. **(NOT SURE THIS APPLIES. OR WHAT THIS MEANS.)**

COACH AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

During team travel, coaches, team managers, and chaperones will help athletes, fellow coaches, team managers, and volunteers to adhere to guidelines, including, without limitation, the Travel Policy, Locker Rooms, and Changing Areas Policy and Reporting policy.

If a coach or staff member transports an athlete or other member in a private car for team travel, a copy of the coach's or staff member's valid driver's license is required.

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches and staff will monitor the activities of athletes, fellow coaches, and staff during team travel. They will:

1. Prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/guardians of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14;

2. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel;

3. Conform to, and monitor for others' adherence to all policies during team travel;

4. Encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/guardians;

5. Help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible);

6. Assist with team travel logistical needs (as possible);

7. Support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary;

8. Ensure athletes are complying with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age bracket requirements;

9. Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff, and chaperones;

10. Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching or other duties;

11. Immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations; and

12. Notify parents before taking disciplinary action against a minor athlete if they are traveling without their parents.

CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES

Chaperones accompany team travel to ensure that the athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers adhere to all policy guidelines. If a chaperone has not undergone a criminal background check and awareness training, the chaperone will not be permitted to have any one-on-one interactions with athletes or other youth participants. If a chaperone has undergone a criminal background check and awareness training, they may have appropriate one-on-one interactions as outlined.

If a chaperone will be operating a private car for team travel, a copy of the chaperone's valid driver's license is required. Chaperones will monitor the activities of all coaches, staff, volunteers, and athletes during team travel. **Specifically, chaperones will:**

1. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel;
2. Monitor for adherence to policies during team travel;
3. Encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/guardians;
4. Help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible);
5. Assist coaches, staff, and other volunteers with team travel logistical needs (as possible);
6. Monitor athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary;
7. Ensure athletes comply with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age bracket requirements;
8. Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their chaperone duties;
9. Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff, and chaperones; and
10. Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct, or policy violations to a coach, staff member, or volunteer.

STRATEGY 5

RESPONDING TO ABUSE, MISCONDUCT, AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

1. The organization's board monitors its background check procedures and ensures that the policies are adhered to.

2. The organization's board may meet on an ad hoc basis whenever an allegation or suspicion of misconduct is reported.

3. Upon receiving an allegation of **bullying, hazing, harassment, physical misconduct, or emotional misconduct,** the SafeSport Committee will:

   a. Report the incident to authorities if warranted by the severity of the conduct
   b. Take appropriate action to address the conduct.

4. Upon receiving an allegation of **child physical abuse or child sexual abuse:**

   a. The organization's board will report any allegations of child physical abuse or child sexual abuse to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288.

   b. The organization's board will convene and immediately take steps to remove the coach, administrator, official, or volunteer from their position during the investigation. Because the safety and well-being of the athletes are of paramount importance, no hearing is required. The organization may notify the individual that they are no longer eligible to participate in the organization's activities. The allegation and reason for dismissal may remain confidential if the incident is not reportable to a law enforcement agency.

   c. Once the investigation by the authorities has concluded, the organization's board may reconvene to determine whether or not the individual accused of misconduct may be reinstated. In the event of a false allegation, this allows the accused individual a means to return to their position. Even if the investigation by the authorities is inconclusive, the organization's board may use its discretion to determine whether or not the individual should be reinstated. The organization is never obligated to retain or reinstate a coach, staff, official, or volunteer. **(School coaches have union representation that may counter this.)**

REPORTING POLICY

Every Organization volunteer is required to report to the organization's board:

1. Misconduct as defined in the Organization's SafeSport Policy, and

2. Suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse allegations regardless of whether the suspected activity occurred at an official Organization event.

The organization should not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting.

Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse: All Organization Volunteers are required to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse by an administrator, coach, player, participant, or volunteer to:

1. The Organization's Board;

2. An Organization administrator; and

3. **Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288**

GROOMING

Because sexual abusers "groom" children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity, and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that coaches, administrators, officials, or volunteers may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the board.

Examples of grooming behaviors include: [6, 7]

1. The individual buys gifts for the athlete or provides them with money.

2. The individual separates the athlete from their peers.

3. The individual treats a particular athlete differently from teammates, such as giving the athlete far more attention than teammates.

4. The individual tries to find ways to be alone with the athlete. For example, the individual may offer to take the athlete to and from practice, help with homework, or take them on unsupervised trips outside of the program.

5. The individual tells the athlete that they "need" them to succeed in sports.

6. The individual pushes boundaries in public and doesn't follow policies. For example, this individual may have athletes sit on their laps in public, even if against the guideline.

7. The individual manipulates the athlete emotionally, praising them one day and degrading them the next.

8. The individual spends an unusual amount of time with the athlete's parents outside of the program, trying to win the parent's trust.

[6] For additional details, see SafeSport's "Possible Red Flags" http://teamusa- SafeSport.cloudapp.net/content/assets/files/PossibleRedFlags.Grooming.pdf

[7] See the Connecticut Grooming Tip Sheet ADD LINK TO GTFJAC WEBSITE WHERE THIS WILL BE POSTED

9. The athlete tells you that the coach, administrator, official, or volunteer doesn't want them talking about what they do when they're together.

10. The individual attempts to control a particular athlete on and off the field.

It is strongly recommended that the board terminate an individual's involvement with the organization at the initial suspicion/allegation of grooming rather than waiting for a report of abuse.

PEER-TO-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE

Approximately 1/3 of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children, and the obligation to report it extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities.

REPORTING MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

If any Organization Volunteer receives an allegation or observes misconduct or other inappropriate behavior, such as grooming, that may not be reportable to the appropriate authorities, it is the responsibility of each coach, staff, volunteer, or administrator to report their observations to:

(1) The Organization's Board; or

(2) An Organization board member.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS THAT AN INTERACTION BETWEEN CHILDREN MAY CONSTITUTE SEXUAL ABUSE, REPORT IT TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES AND AN ORGANIZATION BOARD MEMBER.

The organization also encourages parents, athletes, and other sports participants to communicate violations of this SafeSport Policy or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse. Where applicable, they should also report to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

TO WHOM TO REPORT

Administrators and volunteers may report to any Organization board member with whom they are comfortable sharing their concerns or make a call directly to Connecticut's DCF Careline. Administrators, coaches, officials, and volunteers must report any child physical or sexual abuse allegation to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288. Mandated Reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected, or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm (CGS 17a-101a).

A Mandated Reporter must report any suspicion to DCF or law enforcement regardless of the alleged perpetrator's identity.

HOW TO REPORT

The organization will take a report in the most comfortable way for the person initiating a report, including an anonymous, in-person, verbal, or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to the organization for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s); (2) the type of misconduct alleged and (3) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct. This information will then be reported to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288.

State statutes indicate that a mandated reporter should make their report to the DCF Careline as soon as practical, but no later than twelve hours after the abuse or neglect has been identified. The mandated reporter should contact the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288 or contact law enforcement. Following the call, a mandated reporter must fill out the DCF-136 Report of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect form, which is available on the Internet. This form should be completed and sent to the appropriate DCF Area Office within forty-eight hours. The process must be done sequentially, with the oral report first followed by the written report.

REPORTING FORM

Individuals reporting child physical or sexual abuse or other misconduct must complete a DCF 136 Form. Information on this form will include but is not limited to:

1. The name, age, and gender of the alleged victim;
2. The type of misconduct alleged;
3. The name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct;
4. The approximate dates and the location where the misconduct was committed;
5. The names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct; and
6. A summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred and how the abuse was discovered.

The organization will withhold the complainant's name on request to the extent permitted by law.

CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMOUS REPORTING, AND BAD FAITH ALLEGATIONS

CONFIDENTIALITY

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, the organization will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator, or the people who made a child physical and sexual abuse report to the authorities.

ANONYMOUS REPORTING

The organization recognizes that it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend or family member to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. **Anonymous reports may be made without the formality of completing an Incident Report Form:**

1. By completing the Reporting Form without including their name;
2. By expressing concerns verbally to an Organization board member or
3. Through email, texts or notes left for an Organization board member or safesport Committee member.

All child physical or sexual abuse suspicions will be reported to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families 24 – hour Careline at 800-842-2288.

"WHISTLEBLOWER" PROTECTION

Regardless of the outcome, the organization will support the complainant(s) and their right to express concerns in good faith. The organization will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of our SafeSport Policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Individuals are immune from liability if a report is made in good faith.

BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS

A report of abuse, misconduct, or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous, or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of our SafeSport Policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous, or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings. Individuals are immune from liability if a report is made in good faith.

HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Report to Law Enforcement and/or Child Protective Services. An independent investigation can harm youth and interfere with the legal investigative process. The organization will not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. However, as necessary, the Organization board member may ask a few clarifying questions of the minor or person making the report to report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities adequately. For mandatory reporting laws, visit www.childwelfare.gov.
2. Immediate Suspension or Termination. When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against an Organization Volunteer, youth participant, or Administrator, the SafeSport Committee may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program.

An Organization Volunteer's failure to report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to an Organization's board member is a violation of this policy and grounds for immediate termination. Failure to report child physical or sexual abuse could result in personal liability.

MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS

The Organization's Board may address alleged policy violations and misconduct – bullying, harassment, hazing – that are not reportable under relevant state or federal law. Organization Volunteers and administrators must report policy violations and misconduct to a board member.

The Organization's Board may dismiss an individual for allegations of child physical and sexual abuse despite the result of an investigation by authorities. Such allegations may include:

1. Emotional abuse;
2. Abuse reported outside the relevant statutes of limitation;
3. Allegations of abuse that were reported to authorities, but: (a) legal authorities did not press criminal charges; (b) criminal charges were filed, but not pursued to trial, or (c) the alleged offender was acquitted.

NOTIFICATION

Following the Organization's Board notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of an Organization Volunteer or Administrator, the organization may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. At the organization's board discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with an attorney, the organization may notify its, Organization Volunteers, parents, or athletes of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other criminal behavior that law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.

DISCIPLINARY RULES AND PROCEDURES

While this organization endeavors to provide support and guidance to participants daily, it is also important for the organization to have a formal procedure for disciplinary action to address alleged violations of its policies and other inappropriate behaviors.

APPLICATION

This policy is used to address the following allegations against board members, volunteers, athletes, or participants for:

1. Violations of the organization's policies; and/or
2. Child abuse (physical or sexual), where the SafeSport Committee's actions will not undermine an ongoing legal investigation or criminal prosecution.

The organization will not enter into an investigation of the allegation.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Sanctions for violations of this guideline will be proportionate and reasonable under the circumstances. In addition to day-to-day guidance, the organization may take the following disciplinary actions with athletes who violate these guidelines, without limitation:

1. Inform the individual's coach, a board member, or in the case of a minor, the minor's parent or guardian;
2. Provide the individual with guidance, redirection, and instruction;

3. Temporary suspension from competition;
4. File a formal incident report;
5. Issue a verbal warning;
6. Issue a written and final written warning;
7. Provide informed supervision, where at least one volunteer is informed of the allegation and is instructed to supervise the accused individual(athlete) vigilantly in their interactions with the program or organization (e.g., in the case of reports of bullying);
8. Engage in restorative practices (i.e., creation of a respectful and safe dialogue when a misunderstanding or harm has occurred); and
9. Suspend or terminate membership in the organization or team.

ONGOING PARTICIPATION

Upon receiving a credible and specific allegation of child abuse or other serious misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual abuse as defined in this SafeSport Policy), the organization will immediately terminate the accused individual to ensure participant safety.

COMPLAINANT PROTECTION

Regardless of the outcome, the organization will support the complainant(s) and their right to express concerns in good faith. The organization will not encourage or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions themselves will be grounds for disciplinary action.

BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS

Any individual who alleges misconduct under the SafeSport Policy that, upon review, is determined to be malicious, frivolous, or made in bad faith will violate this guideline. Bad-faith reports may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings.

MEDIA POLICY

A designated staff is the official spokesperson for the organization and serves as the sole media contact. All media contact and response should be through the designated official.

The statement should include the following:

1. That the Organization has contacted the proper authorities
2. That the Organization is taking appropriate steps through an internal process to address the issue
3. A request that the privacy of all of the individuals be respected through the duration of the proceedings

Individuals' rights to privacy and confidentiality will be respected by all persons involved in any allegations of misconduct. The organization respects each individual's right to a good reputation. It will not proactively identify individuals accused of misconduct unless an allegation has been made in the public forum, law enforcement agency, or court has determined there is sufficient reason to believe the accusation is valid, or the organization has taken action to punish or remove the alleged offender.

STRATEGY 6

MONITORING THE ORGANIZATION'S POLICY

By monitoring the interactions among volunteers, coaches, administrators, athletes, and others, the organization works to prevent, recognize and respond to inappropriate and harmful behaviors as outlined in this guideline while reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The organization monitors for compliance with its policies and procedures, including without limitation its Awareness Training, Travel, Locker Room and Changing Areas, and Physical Contact Policies.

MONITORING METHODS

The organization utilizes multiple monitoring methods to observe how individuals are interacting, including without limitation (1) formal supervision, including regular evaluations; and (2) informal supervision, including regular and random observation (e.g., roving and checking interactions throughout practices), and (3) maintaining frequent contact with administrators, staff, coaches, volunteers, and athletes.

RESPONDING TO INTERACTIONS

While the organization has a formal reporting policy, administrators, coaches, officials, and organization volunteers should be prepared to respond immediately to inappropriate or harmful behavior, potential risk situations, and potential boundary violations.

THIS ORGANIZATION DOES NOT INVESTIGATE SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE OR ATTEMPT TO EVALUATE THE CREDIBILITY OR VALIDITY OF SUCH ALLEGATIONS AS A CONDITION FOR REPORTING TO THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 24 – HOUR CARELINE AT 800-842-2288.

Administrators, coaches, officials, and organization volunteers will redirect inappropriate behaviors to promote positive behaviors, confront inappropriate or harmful behaviors, and report behaviors if necessary.

REPORTING

Administrators, coaches, officials, and organization volunteers must report policy violations, misconduct, and physical and sexual abuse.

06

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND CHECK CRITERION OFFENSES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Reportable convictions, registrations or pending dispositions, or disclosures of convictions, registrations or pending dispositions for any of the following criminal offenses or registrations will prompt a determination that an applicant 'does not meet' the criminal background screening criteria, and a red light determination will be issued: Criminal offenses are defined on the basis of exposure to the offense for which the defendant was convicted, pled guilty or pled nolo contendere. If pled down, then the crime to which the defendant ultimately pled. Felony offenses are defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction. If range, alternate sentencing, or indeterminate sentencing, outer range is greater than one year.

R1. Offenses:
(a) Any felony of violence regardless of the amount of time since the offense, or
(b) one (1) non-violent felony within the past ten (10) years, or more than one (1) non-violent felony regardless of the amount of time since the offenses.
R2. Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person within the past ten (10) years or more than one(1) regardless of the amount of time since the offenses.
R3. Any crime (felony or lesser) of a sexual nature or classified as a sex offense including but not limited to non-contact of a sexual nature such as prostitution, pornography, indecent exposure, and crimes in which sexual relations is an element regardless of the amount of time since the offense.
R4. Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol) within the past ten (10) years or more than one (1) regardless of the amount of time since the offenses.
R5. Any crime (felony or lesser) involving animal cruelty regardless of the amount of time since the offenses.
R6. Any sex offender registrant.
R7. Any crime (felony or lesser) involving harm to a minor regardless of the amount of time since the offense.
R8. Any combination of two (2) or more offenses defined in R1(b), R2, or R4, regardless of the amount of time since the offenses.

Criminal offenses include "Attempted Crimes" in the above classifications.

OTHER POTENTIALLY DISQUALIFYING FACTORS

Even if an applicant passes a criminal background check, other factors may disqualify an applicant. An individual may be disqualified and prohibited from providing services for the organization if the individual has:

1. Been held liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor
2. Been subject to any court order involving any sexual or physical abuse of another person, including but not limited to domestic order or protection
3. A history with another organization (employment, volunteer, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors
4. Resigned, been terminated, or been asked to resign from a position – paid or unpaid – because of complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors
5. A history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to any participants.