

## US Adult Soccer Association Safe Sport



US Adult Soccer Association is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional, and social development and ensuring it promotes an environment free from abuse and misconduct. As part of this program US Adult Soccer Association has implemented policies below addressing certain types of abuse and misconduct, and certain policies intended to reduce, monitor and govern the areas where potential abuse and misconduct might occur.

### The Policies below address the following types of abuse and misconduct:

- Sexual Abuse and Misconduct
- Physical Abuse and Misconduct
- Emotional Abuse and Misconduct
- Bullying, Threats and Harassment
- Hazing

### The above Policies set forth some of the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct. The Policies below are implemented to reduce the risks of potential abuse:

- Locker Room Policy
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Policy
- Affirm the organization's commitment to child protection
- Identify who is expected to adhere to the policy (e.g. employees, volunteers, youth, parents, coaches, staff...)
- Define and prohibit forms of misconduct (e.g. emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, hazing, harassment)
- Screening policy
- Outline procedures for responding to, reporting, and investigating concerns
- Training and education including, grooming behaviors and red flags
- Monitor the program and updating
- Recommendations of SafeSport are to establish Proactive Policies to Prevent Abuse in sport.



# Definitions

Emotional Abuse/Misconduct Definitions-Repeated or severe non-contact behavior involving (a) Verbal acts, (b) Physical Acts and/or (c) Acts that Deny Attention or Support. Emotional Misconduct is determined by the objective behaviors, not whether harm is intended or results from the behavior.

- **Verbal acts-Verbal assaults that repeatedly attacks someone personally (worthless, fat, disgusting) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular athlete or other participant in a manner that services no productive training or motivational purpose.**
- **Physical acts-Physically aggressive behaviors such as throwing sports equipment, water bottles, chairs at or in the presence of others, punching walls, or objects.**
- **Acts that deny attention-ignoring or isolating an athlete, excluding from practice**
- **Exclusions**
- **Criminal conduct-federal or state laws**



Physical Abuse/Misconduct Definitions-Any contact or non-contact conduct that causes or reasonably threatens to cause physical harm to another person.

- **Contact violations: punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping, intentionally hitting another with objects, encouraging an athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury w/o medical clearance.**
- **Non-contact violations- isolating an athlete to a confined space, forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose, denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep, providing alcohol, illegal drugs, or non-prescription medications to another.**

**Sexual Abuse/Misconduct Definitions-sexual touching or non-touching sexual behavior, with a person of any age, that is non-consensual or forced, coerced, or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. Creates an inappropriate or hostile environment and includes the following behavior:**

- **Sexual harassment**
- **Intimate relationship with a person in position of power or power imbalance**
- **Sexual jokes comments or innuendos to or about an athlete**
- **Child sexual abuse- any sexual behavior with a minor**
- **Sexual exploitation-non-contact**
  - **Voyeurism**

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- **Exposing genitals or encouraging others to expose themselves**
- **Pictures and videos or audio of a sexual act**
- **Disseminating to threatening to disseminate pictures, videos, or recordings of another person in a sexual act or private activity**
- **An intimate relationship between a coach and an athlete or another person is a position of power, trust, and authority**

Harassment Definitions-Repeated or severe conduct that, (a) causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance (b) Offends or degrades (c) creates a hostile environment (d) reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on age, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability (e) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state laws.

- **Emotional, physical or Sexual Misconduct as well as:**

Discriminatory harassment-race, age, sex...

Stalking-following a person, frequents phone calls, emails ect

Sexual Harassment-sexual advances, request for sexual favors, verbal or physical behaviors of sexual nature

Threats- written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted expression or intent to physically injure or harm someone.

Bullying Definitions - Repeated or severe (a) aggressive behavior (b) among minors (c) that is intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish another person emotionally, physically, or sexually.

## Forms:

- **Social/Cyberbullying-using rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate someone; socially excluding someone and asking other to do the same.**
- **Physical-hitting, punching, pushing, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting, or slapping; throwing objects such as sporting equipment at another person.**
- **Verbal-teasing, ridicule, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.**
- **Sexual-teasing, ridiculing or taunting based on gender or sexual orientation (real or implied), gender traits or behavior (e.g. taunting someone for being too effeminate), or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.**

(Rude, mean and conflict-distinguished- Conduct may not rise to the level of Bullying Behavior if it is rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not part of a pattern of behavior) or arising from conflict or struggle between persons absent a Power Imbalance, who perceive they have incompatible goals.)

# Hazing Definition



Any conduct that subjects another person whether physically, mentally, emotionally or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, humiliate, degrade, or intimidate the person as a condition of joining a group, team or organization.

- **Tying taping or physically restraining another person**
- **Beating paddling or physical assault**
- **Forcing consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, binge drinking or drinking games**
- **Provocative clothing or public nudity**
- **Excessive training, sleep deprivation**
- **Withholding food or water, personal hygiene restrictions**
- **Actual or stimulated sexual conduct or any nature**
- **Morally degrading or humiliating games or activities**
- **Mentally abusive, harassment, threats, chants, songs and yelling or screaming**

Position of Power-when a person has direct supervisory, evaluative, or other authority over another.

- **Coach**

Imbalance of Power-

- **Coach athlete relationship is an imbalance of power relationship**

Prohibit Retaliation-

- **Make clear with members that any report of retaliation will be fully investigated and those who do retaliate will be held responsible.**

# US Adult Soccer's **Safe Sport Policies**

Screening Policy: All coaches, volunteers or staff that come into regular contact with minor's athletes or hold a position of power, should be properly vetted and screened, prior to contact with minors.

## **Purposes of a Screening Policy**

- **Protect US Adult Soccer participants from known offenders so that such known offenders do not have access to US Adult Soccer members.**
- **Deter offenders that have not been caught from joining US Adult Soccer programs because the program has a known policy against abuse.**
- **Protect US Adult Soccer's reputation as a sport where participants are safe from abuse.**
- **Help protect US Adult Soccer, US Adult Soccer Member Programs and their respective employees and volunteers from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.**

Locker Room: the locker room can be a vulnerable place for athletes and misconduct. All clubs should have clear policies for expectations in this environment. Below are suggestions on ways to keep the LR safe.

- **Locker room must be supervised by a screened and approved, appropriate adult. This adult will regularly and frequently enter the locker room to monitor activity.**
- **Coaches and adult participants are not to dress, shower or change in the locker room with athletes**
- **Coaches and adult participants are not to be alone with an athlete in locker room**
- **Any meeting with a coach and minor in the locker room must include another adult**
- **Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities which include voice, still camera and video cameras, are not permitted in the locker room.**
- **Separate locker rooms should be available for both genders**
- **Athletes are not bully, abuse or misbehave in the locker room**

Social Media- Offenders use social media to gain access to minors and to first introduce them to sexual content. Clubs need to have policy to make clear rules around this concerning dynamic.

- Coaches are not permitted to privately text, email, telephone, or socially engage with individual athletes on any social media site,
    - All text should be to the team, pertain to the sport and include parents
    - Text should never include offensive, sexual, or inappropriate language
    - Members of the club and coaches can follow TeamSnap or club Facebook page.
    - Social media sites or other platforms should not be used for bullying, harassment or threats.
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## Physical Contact Guidelines



- Coaches are not permitted to have bodily contact with athletes outside of the sport and can only have physical contact within the sport with the following conditions:
    - Permission is given by athlete and the contact is for correcting physical form or mechanical position
    - Spotting with permission
    - Congratulatory high five, pat on head or back
  - Coaches are not to massage or give back rubs to athletes, wrestle, tickling, or horseplay
  - Coaches are prohibited from kissing, lap sitting, or touching an athlete in the genitals, breast or buttock or thigh area.
  - Physical abuse and sexual abuse are prohibited
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## One on One



- Coaches are not allowed to be alone with an athlete
- Coaches are not permitted to drive alone with an athlete in a car
- Coaches are not permitted to be alone with an athlete in a hotel room, athletes home, locker room, storage room, car, or coaches home, or social setting
- Coaches are not permitted to socialize, alone outside of the sport with an athlete
- Intimate, sexual, or romantic relationship with an athlete

# Travel Policy



- Coaches are not permitted in an athlete's hotel room to visit or sleep.
- Coaches are not permitted to travel alone with an athlete
- Have appropriate chaperones
- Athletes should travel and stay with parents. If parents are unable to travel they can assign their child to travel with another family (not the coach or coaches family)

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## Other prohibited behavior



- Commenting on an athlete or employee's bodies or appearances in sexual manner
- Exchange or give gifts
- Romantic communications with athletes
- Show obscene or suggestive photos
- Video or photograph athletes in revealing or suggestive poses
- Discuss sexual topics with athletes, jokes, comments, sexually oriented banter
- Ask an athlete about their dating behavior
- The coach is prohibited from sharing personal marriage or dating, or sexual behaviors
- Socialize with parents outside of the sport
- Holding "closed" practices or practices or events not open to parents or other adults

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## Grooming behaviors



Grooming- Predators are allowed access to an athlete's life by gaining the confidence of the child's parents and organizations. The child's family is led to believe that the special attention the child receives is beneficial and empowering. The predator using grooming; special treatment over time to lower the victim's defenses. The predator uses institutional manipulation, mastering organizational rules to exploit lapses, create opportunities to prey on the victim, and later to keep the victim quiet.

# Grooming Behaviors or Red Flags:



- Singling youth out for special attention
- Gift giving by coach to individual athlete
- Spending one on one time with minor athletes or separating an individual athlete, or finding ways to be alone with an athlete
- Touching minor athletes in ways not related to training or sport
- Telling youth sexual or inappropriate jokes or stories
- Commenting on child's appearances when not related to sport
- Provides money to families and athletes
- Treats an individual athlete different than others and making that athlete feel special
- The coach creates a dynamic where the athletes "need" him and he "needs" the athlete
- Pushes the limits on physical contact; wrestling, tickling, horseplay
- A coach who has befriended an athlete's parents and socializes outside of the sport
- When an athlete keeps secrets about the team activities, travel, and practices
- A coach making an athlete feel special
- The coach will be "friends" with the athlete, someone to lean on, a good listener
- Showing an athlete obscene or suggestive photo
- Asking an athlete person info such as dating history, sex questions,
- A coach this is "handsy" always touching athletes, hugging, patting butt, and thighs