



## **US Club Soccer Athlete and Participant Safety / Risk Management Policies**

*For convenience, this document contains the Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies as they appear within US Club Soccer's Policy Manual Section 13 and Appendix A.*

*While revisions to US Club Soccer's Policy Manual were made and effective on April 9, 2020, these specific Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies were updated on August 16, 2019, to be effective September 1, 2019.*

## SECTION 13 – ATHLETE AND PARTICIPANT SAFETY/RISK MANAGEMENT:

**Policy 13.01 – Policy Statement.** US Club Soccer has zero tolerance for abuse or misconduct. US Club Soccer is committed to providing a safe environment and preventing abusive conduct in any form.

For the purposes of the policies set forth in Section 13 and Appendix A (collectively, “Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies”), as well as elsewhere in this Policy Manual, the following terms have been adopted:

- **Participating Adult:** Any adult individual US Club Soccer or a Member Organization authorizes, approves or appoints to have regular contact with Youth Participants in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, coaches, club and team administrators, sports medicine/health care professionals, and anyone traveling as a member of a team delegation. There are two types of Participating Adults: 1) Direct Participating Adult; and 2) Third-party Participating Adult.
- **Direct Participating Adult:** Any Participating Adult that is directly affiliated with US Club Soccer or a Member Organization.
- **Third-party Participating Adult:** Any Participating Adult that is not directly affiliated with US Club Soccer or a Member Organization. (Example 1: Athletic trainers from a hospital/healthcare system that a Member Organization uses for a game(s). Example 2: U.S. Soccer Federation-registered referees, or referee assignors having regular contact with Youth Participants.)
- **Youth Participant:** Amateur athletes who are minors or referees who are minors. This includes coaches who are minors.
- **Covered Personnel:** Includes 1) Participating Adults; 2) any individual affiliated with US Club Soccer or a Member Organization involved in or with decision-making authority for activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction; 3) Youth Participants; and 4) US Club Soccer employees and Board members.
- **Activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction.** This includes not only activities directly operated by US Club Soccer, but also sanctioned and related activities operated by Member Organizations, including, but not limited to, practices/training, scrimmages, sanctioned league and tournament activities, team travel, and applicable off-field activities.

All Covered Personnel are responsible for knowing and complying with all US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules (including those guidelines and directors on the US Club Soccer website) in addition to all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations and any applicable Member Organization policies and rules. Member Organizations are responsible for ensuring their own Covered Personnel comply with US Club Soccer’s Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies.

Limited exceptions to the Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies may be granted by US Club Soccer on a case-by-case basis where appropriate, provided that such exceptions do not materially impact athlete safety.

**Policy 13.02 – Eligibility Determinations.** US Club Soccer will, in its absolute and sole discretion, make a determination for each potential or current US Club Soccer registrant, as follows:

- **Eligible:** An individual has met the criteria necessary for registration with US Club Soccer or participation in US Club Soccer activities.
- **Closed:** A determination of eligible or disqualified has not be made because of incomplete background screening, applicant withdrawal, lack of registration request, lack of response, or other similar situation. By definition, individuals with a “closed” determination are also ineligible.
- **Ineligible:** An individual has not met the criteria necessary for registration with US Club Soccer or participation in US Club Soccer activities, and as such, is prohibited from doing so.
- **Disqualified:** An individual has been prohibited from all involvement in US Club Soccer activities, including registration with US Club Soccer or participation in US Club Soccer programming. Disqualifications are usually based upon Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies. Unless specified otherwise by US Club Soccer, the

disqualified individual may reapply for registration or participation with US Club Soccer for the subsequent registration year. Depending on the circumstances, US Club Soccer may, at its sole discretion, extend the period of disqualification. By definition, all disqualified individuals are also ineligible.

Notification of disqualified individuals shall be submitted to the Federation in accordance with its Bylaw 212 (Reporting Risk Management Disqualification) and its Policy 601-10 (Recognition of Risk Management Actions).

### **Policy 13.03 – Disqualification of Individuals.**

- (a) US Club Soccer may deny registration to and disqualify any individual, or deny membership to or otherwise discipline any Member which i) intentionally disregards US Club Soccer's Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies or registration procedures, or participates with players before registration is approved and an "eligible" determination is made; ii) continues to employ or utilize any individual who either fails to comply with the registration procedures; iii) falsifies information, completes an application on behalf of another; or iv) as a result of risk management procedures is determined by US Club Soccer to be unfit to continue in his or her current position, and is thereby disqualified.
- (b) US Club Soccer may use any information and its absolute discretion in determining disqualification, but at a minimum such information may include, without limitation, the following offenses: any felony, gross misdemeanors, violation of these guidelines, or driving offenses, including loss of license, reckless driving, impaired driving, or a DUI.
- (c) Any person accused of a sexual offense, an offense against a minor, or an offense involving physical violence may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be disqualified by US Club Soccer until the matter is resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of US Club Soccer and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated within US Club Soccer.
- (d) In addition, an individual's actions may give rise to a suspension instead of a disqualification under US Club Soccer's Disciplinary Procedures.
- (e) US Club Soccer and its Members shall further comply with the Federation's Risk Management Bylaws, Rules, and Policies, including Bylaw 212, and Policies 212 and 601-10.

### **Policy 13.04 – Reporting.**

- (a) **Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement.** Pursuant to the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (the "SafeSport Act"), which amended the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990, **all mandatory reporters are required to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to the local law enforcement agency or local child protective services agency that has jurisdiction to investigate reports of child abuse or to protect child abuse victims, or to the FBI. This requirement applies to, among others, all Covered Personnel.**

Specifically, the definition of mandatory reporter now includes any "adult who is authorized, by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or an amateur sports organization that participates in interstate or international amateur athletic competition, to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or such an amateur sports organization."

The reporting obligation is triggered when a mandatory reporter becomes aware of "facts that give reason to suspect" a child has suffered an incident of child abuse. Child abuse includes physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or negligent treatment of a child. Sexual abuse is defined to include the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in, or assist another person to engage in, sexually explicit conduct or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children or incest with children. Mental injury means harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning which may be exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or outward aggressive behavior, or a combination of those behaviors, which may be demonstrated by a change in behavior, emotional response or cognition.

- (b) **Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Reporting Form.** Beyond the obligations described in Section 13.04(a), Covered Personnel who are adults also have an affirmative duty to report suspected abuse or other

misconduct. Incidents which must be reported include, but are not limited to, arrests for a felony or other crime of violence, sexual misconduct, or any other act or pattern of behavior which may have or in the future put youth players at risk. Members are encouraged to err on the side of reporting, and allow US Club Soccer to ascertain whether a disqualification from participation or other action is warranted.

**US Club Soccer encourages reports to be made via the online form at: [usclubsoccer.org/reportaconcern](https://usclubsoccer.org/reportaconcern)**

Reports may be made anonymously, and there is no direct fee or cost involved in making a report. US Club Soccer does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. No individual who makes a good-faith report of misconduct will be subject to retaliation or any adverse employment consequence, as a result of making a report.

**Policy 13.05 – Prohibited Conduct Policy.** US Club Soccer’s Prohibited Conduct Policy is included within this US Club Soccer Policy Manual as Appendix A.

**Policy 13.06 – Prevention Policies.** All Covered Personnel are required to abide by the following policies and procedures limiting one-on-one interactions between individual Youth Participants and any Participating Adult who is not their legal guardian during activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction.

- (a) **One-on-One Interactions/Meetings.** The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, the risk of child sexual abuse is reduced. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relations.

(i) **Observable and interruptible.**

- a. One-on-one interactions between minors and an adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer are permitted, if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
- b. Isolated, one-on-one interactions between minors and an adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer are prohibited, except under emergency circumstances.

(ii) **Meetings.**

- a. Meetings between adults and minors at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it shall occur in an office that (if available) has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

- (iii) **Meetings with mental health care professionals.** If a mental health care professional meets with minors at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy – provided that (1) the door remains unlocked, (2) another adult is present at the facility, (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to US Club Soccer or the applicable US Club Soccer member organization directly operating the activity.

- (iv) **Individual training sessions.** Individual training sessions between adults and minors are permitted at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. The adult must obtain the written permission of the minor’s legal guardian in advance of the individual training session. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months.

(v) Monitoring. When one-on-one interactions between adults and minors occur at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer, adults shall monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes: knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one.

(vi) Out-of-program contacts. Adults are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home, restaurants, and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact. Such arrangements are nonetheless strongly discouraged.

(b) **Massages and Rubdowns**.

(i) Licensed, certified professional.

- a. Any massage or rubdown performed by an adult on a minor athlete at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer or a training or competition venue is prohibited unless such adult is a licensed massage therapist.
- b. Any massage or rubdown performed at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer or a training or competition venue by a licensed professional must be conducted in open and interruptible locations. Any massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room.
- c. Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.

(ii) Written consent. It is recommended that written consent by a legal guardian be provided before providing each massage or rubdown on a minor athlete. Parents must be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

(c) **Locker Rooms, Rest Rooms and Changing Areas**.

(i) Use of recording devices. Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras in locker rooms, rest rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by US Club Soccer or the applicable US Club Soccer member organization and two or more adults are present.

(ii) Undress. Under no circumstances shall an unrelated adult at a facility under US Club Soccer's jurisdiction be undressed (disrobed or partial or full nudity where private body parts are exposed) in front of minor athletes.

(iii) Isolated one-on-one interactions.

- a. At no time are unrelated adults permitted to be alone with a minor in a locker room, rest room, or changing area when at a facility under US Club Soccer's jurisdiction, except under emergency circumstances.
- b. If US Club Soccer or a US Club Soccer member organization is using a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, times for use by adults, if any, shall be designated.

(iv) Monitoring. The use of locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas at facilities under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer shall be regularly and randomly monitored to ensure compliance with these policies.

(v) Non-exclusive facility. If US Club Soccer or its members use a facility not under its jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, adults in categories (i)b. through (i)d. are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth here.

- (vi) To minimize the risk of bullying and hazing, locker room monitors should be used to ensure that minors are not left unattended in locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas.
- (vii) Adults shall make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, check on the athlete's whereabouts.
- (viii) Parents are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent. If this is necessary, parents should let a coach or administrator know about this in advance.

(d) **Social Media & Electronic Communications.**

- (i) Content. All electronic communication originating from adults to amateur athletes who are minors must be professional in nature.
- (ii) Open and transparent.
  - a. If an adult needs to communicate directly with an amateur athlete who is a minor via electronic communications, another adult or the minor's legal guardian shall be copied.
  - b. If a minor athlete communicates to the adult privately first, the adult should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another adult or the minor's legal guardian.
  - c. An adult communicating electronically to the entire team shall copy another adult.
  - d. Amateur athletes who are minors may "friend" the applicable organization's official page.
- (iii) Prohibited electronic communications.
  - a. Adults are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications with amateur athletes who are minors, except under emergency circumstances.
  - b. Adults are not permitted to "private message," "instant message," "direct message", or send photos via Snapchat or Instagram to a minor athlete privately.
  - c. Adults are not permitted to maintain social media connections with minors; such adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from amateur athletes who are minors and existing social media connections with amateur athletes who are minors shall be discontinued.
- (iv) Requests to discontinue. Legal guardians may request in writing that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by US Club Soccer or Covered Personnel. US Club Soccer and/or the applicable US Club Soccer member organization shall abide by any such request that their child not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.
- (v) Hours. It is recommended that real-time electronic communications only be sent between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., unless there is a specific safety- or soccer-related need to communicate.
- (vi) Monitoring.
  - a. Social media pages shall be monitored and posts that violate US Club Soccer's policies and practices for appropriate behavior shall be removed.
  - b. The legal guardian or a minor athlete and the applicable organization's administrator shall be informed of any prohibited posts.

(e) **Local Travel.** Local travel consists of travel to training, practice and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

(i) Transportation.

- a. US Club Soccer generally does not arrange for local travel.

- b. Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated athlete who is a minor, absent emergency circumstances, and may only drive with at least two other minor athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.
  - (ii) Shared or Carpool Travel Arrangement. US Club Soccer encourages parents/legal guardians to pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
  - (iii) It is recommended that parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor to travel alone with an adult.
- (f) **Team Travel**. Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that US Club Soccer or a Member Organization plans and supervises.
- (i) Team/competition travel. When only one adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete must have his/her legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with the adult.
  - (ii) Hotel rooms. Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the minor athlete).
  - (iii) Meetings.
    - a. Meetings shall be conducted consistent with US Club Soccer's policy for one-on-one interactions – i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible.
    - b. Meetings shall not be conducted in a hotel room.
  - (iv) It is recommended that team travel policies are signed and agreed to by all minor athletes, parents, and adults traveling with the organization.
  - (v) It is recommended that adults who travel with the organization must successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with the organization's policies.
  - (vi) During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and observable and interruptible environments should be maintained.
  - (vii) It is recommended that parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor to travel alone with an adult.
- (g) **Minor Athletes Who Become Adult Athletes**. A minor athlete that reaches the age of majority may not be subject to Prevention Policies in their capacity as an athlete, and when interacting with Youth Participants who are 16 or older. Prevention Policies must be in effect when this now age of majority athlete interacts with minor athletes 15 or younger. (For example, an 18-year-old teammate is not necessarily subject to disciplinary action for emailing a 16-year-old teammate unless that email would, for example, violate the Prohibited Conduct Policy.) Should a minor athlete reach the age of majority and then obtain a position that presents a potential power imbalance, such as become a coach, the individual is subject to Prevention Policies.

**Policy 13.07 – Risk Management Committee**

- (a) The primary responsibilities of the US Club Soccer Risk Management Committee are as follows:
  - (i) Conduct a review or hearing of an appeal of an individual who has been disqualified from registration with US Club Soccer or participation in US Club Soccer programming.
  - (ii) In accordance with Federation Policy 601-10 (Recognition of Risk Management Actions), conduct a review or hearing to determine eligibility for registration or participation with US Club Soccer of an

individual who has been disqualified or disciplined for violation of another Federation Organization Member's Risk Management program.

(iii) Review violations of US Club Soccer's Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies.

The committee may undertake additional responsibilities on an as-needed basis.

(b) A US Club Soccer Risk Management Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of US Club Soccer's Board of Directors for each review or hearing, and consist of three individuals, as follows:

- Two (2) US Club Soccer Board of Directors members
- The US Club Soccer CEO/Executive Director or his or her designee

One individual shall be designated as the Risk Management Committee Chairperson.

**Policy 13.08 – Risk Management Appeals.** Individuals who have been disqualified from registration or participation with US Club Soccer may appeal the determination to the US Club Soccer Risk Management Committee within 15 calendar days of such determination by submitting a letter indicating such appeal, along with supporting material, to:

Attn Risk Management Committee  
US Club Soccer  
192 East Bay Street, Suite 301  
Charleston, SC 29401

The information submitted, or otherwise available and relevant, will be shared with the members of the Risk Management Committee. The Risk Management Committee shall then determine next steps, and ultimately render a final decision.

**Policy 13.09 – Background Screening.**

(a) Background screening is required of the following individuals:

- (i) Participating Adults
- (ii) Member Organization Board of Directors, officers, and directors
- (iii) Individuals affiliated with a Member Organization who have access to personally identifiable information
- (iv) US Club Soccer staff and board members.

Direct Participating Adults must complete background screening via the US Club Soccer staff registration process. For other individuals, US Club Soccer staff registration may be used to complete background screening requirements, but it is not required. Those individuals are nevertheless required to abide by the background screening requirements outlined herein, and compliance is the responsibility of the Member Organization.

(b) Background screening of minors is not required.

(c) Timing. Background screening is required by the earlier of prior to regular contact with a Youth Participant, or within the first 45 days of the individual taking on the roles specified or that otherwise provide access to Youth Participants, and every other year thereafter.

**Policy 13.10 – U.S. Center for SafeSport Training.**

(a) **SafeSport Core and Refresher Training.** Completion of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Core Training is required of the following individuals, by the earlier of prior to regular contact with a Youth Participant, or within the first 45 days of the individual taking on the roles specified or that otherwise provide access to Youth Participants. Thereafter, the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Refresher Training is required on an annual basis following completion of the Core training.



- (i) Participating Adults
- (ii) Member Organization Board of Directors, officers, and directors
- (iii) Individuals affiliated with a Member Organization who have access to personally identifiable information
- (iv) US Club Soccer staff and board members.

Direct Participating Adults must complete or document compliance with SafeSport Training via the US Club Soccer staff registration process. For other individuals, US Club Soccer staff registration may be used to complete or document compliance with SafeSport Training requirements, but it is not required. Those individuals are nevertheless required to abide by the SafeSport Training requirements outlined herein, and compliance is the responsibility of the US Club Soccer Member Organization.

US Club Soccer also recommends that all players age 18 or older be in compliance with the SafeSport Training requirements outlined herein.

The U.S. Soccer access code may be needed to access SafeSport Training if the automated US Club Soccer staff registration process is not being used. The U.S. Soccer access code and instructions may be obtained via [usclubsoccer.org](http://usclubsoccer.org) or by emailing [SafeSport@usclubsoccer.org](mailto:SafeSport@usclubsoccer.org).

- (b) For Youth Participants. US Club Soccer strongly encourages all Youth Participants, subject to parental consent, to take the U.S. Center for SafeSport Youth Athlete Training on an annual basis. The training is free and available at [athletesafety.org](http://athletesafety.org).
- (c) For parents of Youth Participants. US Club Soccer strongly encourages all parents of Youth Participants to take the U.S. Center for SafeSport Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport training on an annual basis. The training is free and available at [athletesafety.org](http://athletesafety.org).

#### **Policy 13.11 – Compliance.**

- (a) US Club Soccer reserves the right to audit, require certifications of compliance with, or otherwise review Members' compliance with US Club Soccer's Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies.
- (b) Violation of the Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies may result in disqualification and/or disciplinary action with respect to the applicable Covered Personnel and/or Member Organization, in accordance with US Club Soccer and/or U.S. Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules.
- (c) Third-party Participating Adult Certification Forms. The following forms are available via [usclubsoccer.org](http://usclubsoccer.org) and may be used by Member Organizations to document compliance by Third-party Participating Adults with US Club Soccer's Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies.
  - i. US Club Soccer Third-party Participating Adult Individual Certification Form
  - ii. US Club Soccer Third-party Participating Adult Group Certification Form

It is the responsibility of the Member Organization to collect and retain these forms. While these forms are provided to aid in documenting compliance, Member Organizations are not required to use them if compliance is documented via another method.

## **APPENDIX A: US Club Soccer Prohibited Conduct Policy**

This policy set forth in this Appendix A ("Policy") applies to all Covered Personnel (as that term is defined in Policy 13.01) as well as conduct by any subcontractor, supplier, customer or third party and their employees in their dealings with US Club Soccer and personnel of Member Organizations. This Policy has been adopted from and is consistent with U.S. Soccer's Prohibited Conduct Policy.

US Club Soccer is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of any legally protected status. Accordingly, US Club Soccer does not permit any form of unlawful harassment, discrimination or intimidation against its employees by anyone, including managers, supervisors, coworkers, executives, directors, officers, other employees, vendors, clients, customers or third parties. Protected status includes race, color, age, religion, marital status, sex, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, veteran's status, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, protected activity, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. The policy also prohibits harassment on the basis of the protected status of an individual's relatives, friends or associates.

US Club Soccer is also committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from all forms of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying and hazing.

Any violation of this Policy by Covered Personnel may subject the Covered Personnel to disciplinary action. Appropriate action also will be taken against any subcontractor, supplier, or customer found in violation of this Policy.

This Policy is in addition to all other provisions of the US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules as well as all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. It is the obligation of all Covered Personnel to know and comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

### **HARASSMENT:**

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status. US Club Soccer will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or safety, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Among the types of conduct prohibited by this Policy are epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or intimidating acts based on an individual's protected status and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward an individual because of his or her protected status.

Prohibited conduct can also include jokes, kidding, or teasing about another person's protected status. While harassing conduct is unlawful only if it affects tangible job benefits and/or interferes unreasonably with work performance and creates an abusive or hostile work environment, this Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of law.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT:**

Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting that individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may involve individuals of the same or different gender. It may also occur between individuals of any employment status.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment and are prohibited by this Policy include, but are not limited to:

- unnecessary touching, patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against a person’s body;
- staring, ogling, leering, or whistling at a person;
- continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- sexually explicit statements, sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, subtle pressure for sexual activity, comments, questions, jokes, or anecdotes;
- graphic or degrading comments about a person’s clothing, body or sexual activity;
- sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, posters, calendars, or pictures in the workplace;
- suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations;
- harassing use of electronic mail, electronic or instant messaging, or telephone communication systems; or
- other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

US Club Soccer prohibits managers and supervisors from threatening or insinuating, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee’s submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any personnel decision regarding that employee’s wages, assigned duties, advancement, evaluation, shifts, career development, or any other condition of employment.

**RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN HARASSMENT:**

Racial, religious, or national origin harassment deserves special mention as well, and is expressly prohibited by US Club Soccer. Racial, religious, or national origin harassment includes any verbal, written, or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner which would make a reasonable person uncomfortable in the work environment or which would interfere with the person’s ability to perform the job. Examples of race, religious or national origin harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- jokes, which include reference to race, religion, or national origin;
- the display or use of objects or pictures which adversely reflect on a person’s race, religion, or national origin; or
- use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person’s race, religion, or national origin.

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:**

Any sexual activity with a child is prohibited. 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.

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:**

Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority is prohibited. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

**EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT:**

Emotional misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Emotional misconduct is a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or 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, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

**PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT:**

Physical misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Physical misconduct is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or 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 athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in soccer.

## **BULLYING:**

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

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

All Covered Personnel are responsible to help ensure that we avoid misconduct. US Club Soccer cannot act to eliminate misconduct unless it has notice of the conduct. Covered Personnel are thus charged with reporting any concerns regarding compliance with its Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies. For the avoidance of doubt, in some instances, Covered Personnel will be required to report to law enforcement.

Furthermore, US Club Soccer employees are responsible to help assure that the work environment, on or off-premises, is free from harassment. Additionally, US Club Soccer expects all Member Organizations to have similar policies for their respective employees. All employees have an obligation to promptly report any and all allegedly harassing conduct they are the subject of, that they learn of, or that they witness. US Club Soccer's policy provides for immediate notice of problems to the persons designated in this Policy so that we may address and resolve any problems as quickly as possible.

An employee must report the harassing conduct to either:

- The person to whom you report (supervisor or manager);
- Department Head;
- The Human Resources Department;
- The Legal Department;
- The Chief Executive Officer; or
- Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management Reporting Form

If the employee feels uncomfortable going to his or her supervisor with the complaint, he/she must report the matter to any other member of management as designated above.

This Policy does not require reporting the misconduct to any individual who is creating the harassment or discrimination. All Covered Personnel have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing any and all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a violation of this Policy.

US Club Soccer's Prohibited Conduct Policy offers its employees greater protection from harassment than does the law. Consequently, Covered Personnel who are found to have violated US Club Soccer's Prohibited Conduct Policy shall be subject to corrective action, discipline or termination, even in cases where applicable laws may not have been violated and without regard to whether the conduct constitutes a violation of the law.

An employee wishing to file a complaint outside the Federation may also contact either the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the fair employment agency in his or her state.

## **TRAINING AND EDUCATION:**

See Section 13.10 of the US Club Soccer Policy Manual.

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