



Parent Guide: Understanding USA Hockey Safe Sport

Creating a safe, respectful, and positive environment for every player is the top priority of USA Hockey and your local association. Safe Sport policies are in place to protect athletes, coaches, volunteers, and families. Sometimes, however, these policies are misunderstood. This guide highlights the most common misconceptions so that we can all start the season on the same page.

What Safe Sport Is

- A program to protect athletes from abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing, and misconduct.
- A set of rules and best practices (including the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies, or MAAPP) to keep interactions transparent and safe.
- A mandatory reporting system: adults in hockey must report suspected misconduct.

What Safe Sport Is Not

- Not a tool for disputing ice time, coaching decisions, or roster selections.
- Not a way to “get back at” a coach, official, or another family.
- Not an automatic guarantee that parents will be updated on case details (confidentiality is important for everyone involved).

Common Misunderstandings

1. Boundaries & Communication

- Coaches cannot text or message your child one-on-one without copying a parent/guardian.
- This rule protects athletes and coaches—it’s about transparency, not mistrust.

2. Locker Room & Travel

- Locker room monitors and rooming rules are in place to prevent unsafe situations.
- These safeguards help everyone, even if they seem strict.

3. Reporting Concerns

- Concerns should go through the coach or team manager first when appropriate.
- Reports to Safe Sport are required only for misconduct issues—not for game complaints.

4. Retaliatory Reporting

- Filing a false or retaliatory Safe Sport report is itself a violation.
- Using Safe Sport as a weapon—because of a roster decision, a penalty, or a personal conflict—can cause real harm and may lead to discipline against the person who files it.
- Every report is taken seriously, and resources should go toward genuine safety concerns.

5. Temporary Restrictions

- Sometimes, adults or players are restricted during an investigation.
- This does not mean they are guilty—it’s simply a precaution to keep the environment safe while facts are reviewed.

Key Takeaway

Safe Sport is here to protect children and strengthen our hockey culture. By understanding what it does (and doesn’t) cover, parents can help create the respectful environment our players deserve.

Thank you for helping us build a culture of safety, integrity, and respect—on and off the ice.



⊘ Not Safe Sport

These concerns are NOT Safe Sport and are reported as follows:
Coach → Team Manager → Program Administrator / Hockey Director

Team & Coaching Decisions

- ✗ Playing time / shifts
- ✗ Position assignments
- ✗ Line combinations
- ✗ Rostering decisions (making or not making a team, level of placement)
- ✗ Ice time distribution during games or tournaments

Competition & Officiating

- ✗ Referee calls made during a game (missed penalty, offsides, goal/no goal)
- ✗ Perceived referee "bias" against a team
- ✗ Tournament results or scheduling complaints
- ➔ If it's about an official's conduct or performance → Referee-in-Chief (RIC)

Program Operations

- ✗ Practice times / locations
- ✗ Travel requirements
- ✗ Tournament fees or team budget
- ✗ Fundraising expectations
- ✗ Board of Director decisions

Interpersonal Disagreements

- ✗ Parent conflicts in the stands
- ✗ Disputes over coaching philosophy (systems, drills, competitiveness)
- ✗ Concerns about locker room assignments that aren't tied to misconduct

✓ Safe Sport

These concerns ARE Safe Sport and are reported as follows:
Local Safe Sport Coordinator → PNAHA Safe Sport Coordinator AND/OR
US Center for SafeSport

Physical Misconduct / Sexual Misconduct / Abuse

- ➔ Immediate Reporting Required.
- Call Law Enforcement.
- Report to U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- Also notify PNAHA Safe Sport Coordinator so immediate safety measures can be put in place.

Everything Else (Bullying, Hazing, Harassment, Inappropriate Communication, Locker Room Concerns, Boundary Issues, etc.)

- ➔ Report to: Your Program's Safe Sport Coordinator.
- Reports may also be made to the PNAHA Safe Sport Coordinator.
- Note: Reports sent directly to USA Hockey will come back to PNAHA/Program for resolution.

How to Report to Center.

Reports to the Center may be reported by (1) completing an online report to the Center at uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/, by (2) calling 833-587-7233, or (3) by clicking on a link to the Center's reporting portal found on USA Hockey's website at usahockey.com/safesport. Reports to the Center shall be handled according to the SafeSport Code.

How to Report to PNAHA

Reports to PNAHA may be made by: (1) emailing to safesport@pnaha.com or (2) calling 509-714-2998. Reports to PNAHA are initially handled by the Affiliate Safe Sport Coordinator and may be referred to the local program Safe Sport Coordinator.