

USA Gymnastics

# SAFETY & RESPONSE POLICY

January 2025

USA Gymnastics may update its Safety & Response Policy at any time. Unless otherwise stated, changes are effective immediately upon publication. **The Safety & Response Policy can be found at [usagym.org/safety](https://usagym.org/safety)**





# INTRODUCTION



## PURPOSE

The 2025 USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy (formerly the Safe Sport Policy) defines our organization’s framework to ensure the protection of our Members. Underpinning our vision is an unwavering commitment to our mission: to build a community and culture of health, safety, and excellence, where athletes can thrive in sport and in life.

Every athlete has the right to train and compete safely, regardless of whether they are learning a basic skill or representing the United States on the international stage. That is why we are committed to fostering a culture that actively works to prevent the opportunity for abuse to occur. The USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy provides a blueprint to reach that aim. The supporting educational materials and initiatives provide the tools for its execution. All of us—athletes, parents, coaches, judges, administrators, event directors, club owners, and the club community—must know the Policy and understand its educational components. The safety and well-being of our athletes depends on all of us.

The Policy outlines a three-pronged process to ensure the protection of our athletes and Members. Specifically, it requires mandatory reporting by and education for all Adult Participants, sets boundaries for interaction between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes through Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies, and defines categories of misconduct.

USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy is effective January 1, 2025. USA Gymnastics may update its Policy at any time. Unless otherwise stated, changes are effective immediately upon publication.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	
Purpose .....	1
Definitions .....	4
The U.S. Center for SafeSport .....	7
Jurisdiction .....	7
<b>II. SCOPE OF POLICY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>III. SAFESPORT TRAINING &amp; BACKGROUND SCREENING</b>	
SafeSport Training .....	9
Background Screening .....	9
Additional Training Opportunities .....	11
<b>IV. MEMBER CLUB REQUIREMENTS</b>	
Prohibited Conduct Policy .....	12
Staff Background Screening & SafeSport Training .....	12
Club Handbooks—Duty to Report, Abuse Prevention Policies.....	12
Online Reporting Portal & Education Links.....	12
Exclude Suspended & Ineligible Persons .....	12
<b>V. REPORTING CONCERNS &amp; ABUSE</b>	
Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse .....	14
Reporting to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.....	14
Reporting to USA Gymnastics .....	14
Confidentiality & Anonymous Reporting.....	14
<b>VI. MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES</b>	
Policy Exceptions .....	16
Individual Training Sessions.....	16
Meetings.....	17
Parental Access to Practice at Member Clubs .....	17
Transportation .....	18
Lodging .....	18
Electronic Communication & Social Media.....	19
Photography and Videography.....	20
Locker Rooms and Changing Areas.....	20
Gifts.....	21
Manual Therapy and Therapeutic Recovery and Modalities.....	21
Physical Contact Boundaries .....	21
<b>VII. TYPES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT</b>	
Sexual Misconduct.....	22
Physical Misconduct .....	23
Emotional Misconduct.....	23
Bullying .....	24
Harassment .....	24
Hazing .....	24
Abuse of Process, Failure to Report & Other Misconduct .....	25
Retaliation – Violation of Abuse Prevention Policies .....	26

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**Appendix A**  
One-on-One Exceptions Overview..... 28

**Appendix B**  
Professional Photography, Videography, and  
Medical Personnel Requirements at Sanctioned Events..... 29

**Appendix C**  
Safety & Response Protocol for Sanctioned Events .....31

**Appendix D**  
USA Gymnastics Compliance with U.S. Center for SafeSport.....32

# DEFINITIONS

The definitions below apply to all sections of this Policy. For any definitions not included but contained in the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (SafeSport Code) or the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP), the SafeSport Code and Center for SafeSport's MAAPP definitions are adopted as if they were fully set out.

## Adult Participant

Any individual 18 years of age or older who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of any alleged Policy violation:

1. A Member of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
2. An employee or board member of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
3. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
4. Authorized, approved, or appointed by USA Gymnastics or a Member Club to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes.

This includes but is not limited to all non-Member employees of Member Clubs related to participation in gymnastics; all Members of USA Gymnastics' committees or task forces; all USA Gymnastics employees and Directors; and all adults, including volunteers, judges, and health care professionals, authorized by USA Gymnastics or any Member of USA Gymnastics to interact with athletes.

## Athlete

An amateur athlete who participates, or participated within the previous 12 months, in an event, program, activity, or competition that is part, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction, of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club.

## Authority

When one person's position over another person is such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, they have the power or right to direct, control, give orders to, or make decisions for that person. Also see the Power Imbalance definition in the SafeSport Code.

## Child Abuse

The term "child abuse" has the meaning set forth in Section 203 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. § 20341) or any applicable state law.

## Close-in-Age Exception

An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant has no authority over a Minor Athlete and is not more than four years older than

the Minor Athlete determined by birth date (e.g., a 19-year-old and a 16-year-old). Note: this exception only applies within the Athlete Protection Policies and not regarding misconduct defined in the SafeSport Code.

## Dual Relationship

An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant has a relationship with a Minor Athlete outside of gymnastics and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the exception. Examples of Dual Relationships include but are not limited to family members, mental health professionals, teachers, medical professionals, and family friends. The consent must identify for which Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies the parent/guardian is allowing the one-on-one In-Program Contact. Dual Relationship consent forms may be found here.

## Event

The term "Event" has the meaning set forth in the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. § 20341), which includes the following activities sanctioned by USA Gymnastics, Member Clubs, Members, or related to those activities:

1. Travel;
2. Lodging;
3. Training (practice);
4. Competition;
5. Health or medical treatment.

## In-Program Contact

Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in gymnastics.

Examples of In-Program Contact include but are not limited to competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post game meals or outings, team travel, review of film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.

# DEFINITIONS

## **Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP)**

A collection of proactive prevention and training policies for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement developed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. The MAAPP addresses training requirements and required prevention policies focused on limiting one-on-one interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes. USA Gymnastics has adopted the required education, training, and prevention policies in its Prevention Policies below.

## **Member**

Any individual that has agreed to terms and conditions of membership with USA Gymnastics and/or holds (or has held) a USA Gymnastics membership.

## **Member Club (Local Affiliated Organization)**

Any organization or club of USA Gymnastics as described in the USA Gymnastics Bylaws. A Member Club is subject to requirements under the SafeSport Code for a "Local Affiliated Organization."

## **Minor or Child**

An individual who is, or is perceived by the Respondent to be, under the age of 18 as defined by the SafeSport Code.

## **Minor Athlete**

An amateur athlete under 18 years of age who participates, or participated within the previous 12 months, in an event, program, activity, or competition that is part, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction, of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club.

## **Observable and Interruptible**

A requirement that all In-Program Contact is both able to be seen by another adult individual ("observable") and that another adult individual is able to stop the progress of the interaction easily ("interruptible"), unless an exception applies. Contact is not considered one-on-one if it is observable and interruptible.

## **Open and Transparent**

When an Adult Participant copies or includes a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, another adult immediate family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant on electronic communication.

## **Out-of-Program Contact**

Any contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete unrelated to In-Program Contact. Adult Participants who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete should not have Out-of-Program contact with Minor Athlete(s), even if the Out-of-Program contact is not one-on-one.

## **Partial or Full Jurisdiction**

Includes any sanctioned event (including all travel and lodging in connection with the event) by USA Gymnastics or a Member Club, or any facility that USA Gymnastics or a Member Club owns, leases, or rents for practice, training, or competition.

## **Participant**

Any individual who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of any alleged Policy violation:

1. A Member of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
2. An employee or board member of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
3. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
4. Authorized, approved, or appointed by USA Gymnastics or a Member Club to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes related to participation in gymnastics.

## **Personal Care Assistant**

An Adult Participant who assists a parasport athlete who requires help with activities of daily living and preparation for athletic participation. This support can be provided by a guide for blind or visually impaired Athletes or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration, and toileting. Personal Care Assistants are different for every Athlete and should be individualized to fit their specific needs. When assisting a Minor Athlete, a Personal Care Assistant must be authorized by the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.

# DEFINITIONS

## **Power Imbalance**

May exist where, based on the totality of the circumstances, one person has supervisory, evaluative, or other authority over another. Whether there is a Power Imbalance depends on several factors, including but not limited to the nature and extent of the supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the person; the actual relationship between the parties; the parties' respective roles; the nature and duration of the relationship; the age of the parties involved; whether there is an aggressor; and whether there is a significant disparity in age, size, strength, or mental capacity.

Once a coach-Athlete relationship is established, a Power Imbalance is presumed to exist throughout the coach-Athlete relationship (regardless of age) and is presumed to continue for Minor Athletes after the coach-Athlete relationship terminates until the Athlete reaches 20 years of age.

A Power Imbalance may exist, but is not presumed, where an Intimate Relationship existed before the sport relationship (e.g., a relationship between two spouses or life partners that preceded the sport relationship).

## **Regular Contact**

Ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein an Adult Participant is in a role of direct and active engagement with any amateur athlete who is a minor.

## **Residential Environment**

A place in which participants live or stay temporarily. Residential environments include but are not limited to onsite housing at training facilities, billeting, hotel stays, or rentals (i.e., Airbnb, VRBO, HomeToGo, etc.).

## **Billeting**

A residential environment facilitated by an Adult Participant, USA Gymnastics, a Member Club, the USOPC, or sanctioned event staff in which a Minor Athlete is temporarily housed in a private home with an adult or family who

is not related to or known by the Minor Athlete. This lodging arrangement is in conjunction with an activity related to sport.

## **SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (SafeSport Code)**

The rules, policies, and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport. In the event of a discrepancy between any of the rules and policies set forth in USAG's Safety & Response Policy and the SafeSport Code, the provisions of the SafeSport Code shall govern.

## **U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC)**

A federally chartered nonprofit corporation that serves as the National Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee for the United States.



# THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “**Center for SafeSport**”) is an independent nonprofit organization created in 2017 to reduce the abuse of athletes, particularly minors, in Olympic and Paralympic sports programs in the United States. Established by the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, the Center is charged with developing resources and policies to safeguard athletes from bullying, harassment, hazing, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual misconduct. The law entrusts the Center as the exclusive authority to respond to reports of allegations of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct within the USOPC and their recognized National Governing Bodies (NGBs).

The Center promulgated the [SafeSport Code](#) and required the [MAAPP](#) that bind all Participants of the Olympic and Paralympic Movement and subjects them to discipline for violations. USA Gymnastics must comply, in all respects, with the SafeSport Code and required MAAPP and is prohibited from interfering in, attempting to interfere in, or influencing the outcome of the Center for SafeSport’s investigations. See 36 U.S.C. § 220541(f)(4). Further, federal law requires the Center for SafeSport to conduct regular and random audits of USA Gymnastics to ensure compliance with these policies. See 36 U.S.C. § 220542 (a)(2)(E).

## JURISDICTION OVER ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT



### U.S. Center for SafeSport

#### Exclusive Jurisdiction

The Center for SafeSport has exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations that a Participant engaged in one or more of the following:

- Sexual Misconduct, including without limitation child sexual abuse and any misconduct that is reasonably related to an underlying report of Sexual Misconduct;
- Criminal Charges or Dispositions involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct;
- Misconduct related to Reporting, where the underlying report involves Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct;
- Misconduct related to Aiding and Abetting, Abuse of Process, or Retaliation, when it relates to the Center’s process;
- Other Inappropriate Conduct, as defined in the SafeSport Code.



### Discretionary Jurisdiction

USA Gymnastics has jurisdiction, and the Center has discretionary jurisdiction, to investigate and address any allegations of violations of the USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy and/or SafeSport Code that are not within the Center for SafeSport’s exclusive jurisdiction, including:

- Non-sexual Child Abuse;
- Emotional and physical misconduct, including stalking, bullying, hazing, and harassment;
- Criminal Charges or Dispositions not involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct;
- USA Gymnastics Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy violations;
- Misconduct Related to Aiding and Abetting, Abuse of Process, or Retaliation, when it relates to the processes of USA Gymnastics.

If the Center exercises jurisdiction of a matter within its discretionary jurisdiction, then USA Gymnastics shall no longer exercise jurisdiction over that matter.

# SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy applies to all Members and Participants as defined in the SafeSport Code. Members and Participants are responsible for knowing the information outlined in this Policy and in the SafeSport Code and, by virtue of being a Member and Participant, have expressly agreed to this Policy and the SafeSport Code, including the applicable policies and procedures.



# SAFESPORT TRAINING & BACKGROUND SCREENING



Education and background screenings are key components in creating a safe and healthy environment free from misconduct and abuse. The Center for SafeSport's training courses provide Participants with information necessary to proactively take steps to prevent abuse, recognize warning signs, and respond to concerns while background screenings help protect gymnastics participants from known offenders. For those reasons, all qualifying Adult Participants in certain roles (addressed below) must successfully complete a background screening and SafeSport training before having regular contact with minor athletes.

## Adult Participants Required to Complete SafeSport Training

The following Adult Participants must complete the Center's SafeSport Trained Core Course through the Center's online training:

- Adult Participants who have **Regular Contact** with any amateur Athlete(s) who is a minor, including Athletes upon turning 18 years of age;
- Adult Participants who have **Authority Over** any amateur Athlete(s) who is a minor;
- Adult Participants who are an employee or board member of USA Gymnastics, a Member Club, or the USOPC.

Adult Participants, who are medical providers, required to take training may take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the SafeSport Trained Core Course.

- **Timing of SafeSport Training**

Adult Participants must complete SafeSport training before Regular Contact with an amateur Athlete who is a minor or within the first 45 days of either initial membership or upon beginning a new role subjecting the Adult Participant to this policy, whichever comes first.

- **Refresher Training**

The above-listed Adult Participants must complete the Center's SafeSport Refresher Course on an annual basis, within 12 months after completing the SafeSport Trained Core Course. Every four years Adult Participants must complete the SafeSport Trained Core Course.

- **Adult Athlete Educational Requirement**

Upon turning 18 years of age, Athletes must complete the U110: SafeSport Trained Core Course prior to regular contact with minor athlete(s). Parents/guardians of 17-Year-Old Athletes may grant permission for their Child to complete the training course early to fulfill this requirement.



## Background Screening

USA Gymnastics requires a criminal background screening for non-Athlete Adult Participants (18 years of age and older)<sup>1</sup> involved with its programs as part of a greater effort to promote a safe environment for gymnastics participants. Background screenings are performed on behalf of USA Gymnastics by the National Center for Safety Initiatives in accordance with the USOPC requirements. A background screening must be completed before Regular Contact with any Minor Athlete or upon beginning a new role subjecting the Adult Participant to this Policy. Background screenings must be refreshed every two years. The USA Gymnastics Criminal Background Screening Policy is available [here](#).

## Member Responsibilities in Self-Reporting Criminal Charges & Convictions

Members must self-report charges or indictments for any offense that would violate the USA Gymnastics Criminal Background Screening Policy found [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> Adult Athletes attending USOPC training and events are required to complete a background screening and SafeSport Training.

# SAFESPORT TRAINING & BACKGROUND SCREENING

## Adult Participants Required to Complete SafeSport Training & Background Screening:

USA Gymnastics	USAG Member Clubs	Events/Competitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USAG Employees, Staff &amp; Interns</li> <li>• USAG Board Members</li> <li>• USAG Committee Members</li> <li>• USAG Task Force Members</li> <li>• USAG Independent Contractors and/or Vendors authorized to have Regular Contact with minor athletes</li> <li>• Medical/Health Care Professionals supporting USAG national or international events</li> <li>• Staff, chaperones, and volunteers at USAG training camps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club owners</li> <li>• Competitive Gymnastics Coaches</li> <li>• Recreational Gymnastics &amp; Ninja, Cheer, &amp; Dance Coaches</li> <li>• Adult Athletes who coach</li> <li>• Adult Athletes attending USOPC training &amp; events</li> <li>• Adult Athletes (*SafeSport Training only)</li> <li>• Safety Champion</li> <li>• Athletic Trainers</li> <li>• In-house medical staff</li> <li>• Club Board of Directors</li> <li>• Locker Room/Changing Area monitors</li> <li>• Managerial and other non-coaching staff related to the administration of gymnastics program in the Member Club</li> <li>• Guest choreographers &amp; clinicians</li> <li>• Personal Care Assistants hired by the Member Club to assist Minor Athlete(s)</li> <li>• All other volunteers or individuals authorized to have Regular Contact with minor athletes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet/Event Directors</li> <li>• Judges</li> <li>• Coaches</li> <li>• Adult Athletes (*SafeSport Trained only)</li> <li>• Event staff assigned to monitor designated locker room or changing area</li> <li>• Medical staff, including athletic trainers, physicians, nurses, and physical therapists (Emergency personnel not included)</li> <li>• Independent Photographers</li> </ul>

Conversely, USA Gymnastics does not consider persons serving solely in the following roles to have Regular Contact with and/or Authority Over minor athletes for purposes of the SafeSport Training requirement:

- Emergency medical (who provide only emergency medical services)
- Concession/apparel workers
- Venue entry/ticket takers
- Equipment installers (e.g., Spieth, AAI)
- Security personnel
- Media (Reporters and TV Personnel)
- Announcers
- Venue staff (food service, hotel personnel, venue security, janitorial staff)
- Sponsors

- Other persons who do not have Regular Contact with and/or Authority over minor athletes

### SafeSport Trained Exemptions and Accommodations

- Exemptions to the SafeSport training requirement may be requested by survivors of abuse and misconduct. Survivors of abuse can request an exemption by contacting USA Gymnastics at [response.resolution@usagym.org](mailto:response.resolution@usagym.org) or may choose to contact the Center directly to request an exemption at [exemptions@safesport.org](mailto:exemptions@safesport.org). All exemptions granted by the Center or USA Gymnastics in this category are considered indefinite and do not need to be re-requested every year.

# SAFESPORT TRAINING & BACKGROUND SCREENING

- Exemptions to the SafeSport training requirement may be requested for persons with cognitive or physical disabilities or language barrier. Exceptions may be requested by contacting USA Gymnastics at [response.resolution@usagym.org](mailto:response.resolution@usagym.org). USA Gymnastics will provide reasonable accommodations and track any exemptions granted.
- The Center has several options available to assist individuals in completing the online training courses, including screen-reader-compatible versions and course availability in several languages, including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Russian, German, and Japanese. If none of the available options fits the individual's needs, USA Gymnastics may determine whether to grant an exemption.

## Additional Training Opportunities

The Center for SafeSport provides parents and athletes with resources on how to help keep children safe and supported. Access to these resources is free and includes online training courses. The below training courses may be accessed on the Center for SafeSport's website [here](#).

### Parent Training

All parents are strongly encouraged to take "Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport," offered through the Center for SafeSport. Designed for parents of youth athletes at any age, this free course educates parents on recognizing, responding to, and preventing abuse and misconduct in their child's sport setting. It features voices and perspectives of experts and advocates, with sound guidance on fostering positive and safe sport experiences for children both on field and at home. Parents will come away equipped with information and tactics to minimize risks of harm to their children. USA Gymnastics notifies parents throughout the year of this course offering in newsletters and annually upon registration of an athlete membership.

### SafeSport for Youth Athletes (Ages 13-17)

This course focuses on consent and respectful behavior, supporting friends who have experienced abuse or misconduct, and provides resources for reporting. Parental consent is required at the start of course.

### SafeSport for Kids

This course educates young athletes ages 5-12 about the difference between discipline and abuse and encourages them to reach out to a trusted adult when something is not right. It also stresses the importance of being a good teammate, positive sportsmanship, and having a healthy sport environment focused on fun and safety. Parental consent is required at the start of course. Parents should plan to take the course alongside their child to supervise and reinforce important lessons.

### Volunteer Training

This course allows volunteers in diverse roles—from event logistics to vendor operations—to learn to recognize types of abuse and misconduct, describe best practices for limiting one-on-one adult-Minor Athlete interactions, and identify situations to report.

# MEMBER CLUB REQUIREMENTS

# IV.

All Members Clubs must maintain, as part of their respective risk management programs, an Athlete-and-participant-safety program that includes the following five components:

## Prohibited Conduct Policy

- Implement and enforce, at a minimum, a Prohibited Conduct Policy, which prohibits misconduct, including child abuse, bullying, hazing, harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, and Prevention Policies as defined by the Policy.

## Background Screening & SafeSport Training

- Implement and enforce compliance with the Policy requiring certain Adult Participants to have successfully completed the required background screening and U110: SafeSport Trained Core Course prior to any contact with Minor Athletes.

## Club Handbooks – Duty to Report & Athlete Protection Policies

- Adopt and include the following in staff or employee handbooks:
  - Duty to immediately report child abuse to the local authorities and the Center for SafeSport;
  - Duty to immediately report sexual misconduct to the Center for SafeSport; and
  - Each of the Prevention Policies.

## Online Reporting Portal & Education Links

- Publicly reference (e.g., list on the Club website):
  - A link to the Center for SafeSport’s reporting portal;
  - A link to the USA Gymnastics reporting portal;
  - A link to the U.S. Center for SafeSport Youth and Parent Training on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.

## Exclude Suspended & Ineligible Persons and Individuals Listed on a Sex Offender Registry

- Member Clubs must not hire or permit access to any Athletes in the club:
- Any persons who are deemed ineligible or permanently ineligible for membership in USA Gymnastics (list is available at [usagym.org/safety/ineligible](https://usagym.org/safety/ineligible));
- Any persons who are suspended from all contact by USA Gymnastics (searchable data available at [usagym.org/safety/suspended-restricted-persons](https://usagym.org/safety/suspended-restricted-persons));
- Any persons who are deemed ineligible, permanently ineligible, or suspended from all contact by the U.S. Center for SafeSport (searchable database available at [uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/centralized-disciplinary-database](https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/centralized-disciplinary-database)); or
- Any person who is listed on a federal or state sex offender registry (a search may be conducted at [www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov)).

## MEMBER CLUB REQUIREMENTS

USA Gymnastics and the Center for SafeSport may deem an individual permanently ineligible for membership, ineligible for membership, and/or suspended from all contact. Any person who is deemed permanently ineligible, ineligible, or suspended from all contact cannot participate, in any capacity, in any program, activity, Event, or competition sponsored by, organized by, or under the auspices of the USOPC, USA Gymnastics, any Member Club, or at a facility under the jurisdiction of those entities.

A Member Club will be subject to termination of Member Club status if it knowingly employs or permits access to Athletes in the club a person listed as “ineligible” by USA Gymnastics or the Center for SafeSport; a person listed as “suspended from all contact” by USA Gymnastics or the Center for SafeSport; or a person listed on a federal or state sex offender registry.

Note: These requirements do not prevent any Member Club from adopting higher safety standards consistent with state and federal law. USA Gymnastics reserves the right to review Member Club policies and practices for compliance with this Policy.

### **USA Gymnastics State and Region Associations**

All state and regional associations must post a link to the 2025 [USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy](#) and the links for reporting misconduct to the [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#) and [USA Gymnastics](#) on their website.

# REPORTING CONCERNS OF ABUSE & MISCONDUCT



This Policy, the SafeSport Code, federal law, and state law impose reporting requirements on all Adult Participants. These reporting obligations aim to ensure the safety of Participants and prevent abuse. The reporting requirements are an obligation of each individual Adult Participant.

Adult Participants should **not** investigate suspicions or allegations of child abuse or other Prohibited Conduct or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of allegations as a condition of reporting to the Center for SafeSport or to appropriate local authorities.

## Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

All Adult Participants are considered mandatory reporters of child abuse. An Adult Participant who learns of information or reasonably suspects child abuse, including sexual abuse, must immediately (**within 24 hours**) [report to local law enforcement and/or child protective services](#). An Adult Participant must also immediately report to the Center for SafeSport. Filing a report with the Center for SafeSport or USA Gymnastics does not satisfy the requirement for reporting to local law enforcement or child protective services.

For state-by-state information on reporting Child Abuse, see: [childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/can/reporting](http://childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/can/reporting)

## Reporting to the U.S. Center for SafeSport

The Center for SafeSport handles reports of sexual misconduct, child abuse, and other allegations within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. The following allegations must be reported to the Center immediately:

- Child abuse, including child sexual abuse;
- Sexual Misconduct (including sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, and criminal charges or dispositions involving sexual or intimate relationships involving a Power Imbalance);
- Criminal Charges or Dispositions involving Sexual Misconduct or misconduct involving Minors; and
- Misconduct related to the Center's process, including suspected incident(s) of Aiding and Abetting and/or Abuse of Process and Retaliation as it relates to the Center's process.

Click [here](#) (or go to [uscenterforsafesport.org](http://uscenterforsafesport.org)) to make an online report to the Center. You may also call the Center at 833.587.7233.

Reports to the Center for SafeSport may be made anonymously and at no cost.

## Reporting Concerns to USA Gymnastics

USA Gymnastics handles reports of non-sexual misconduct. An Adult Participant who learns of information or reasonably suspects an incident of non-sexual child abuse, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying, hazing, harassment, and/or a violation of the Abuse Prevention Policies must report it to USA Gymnastics or to the Center for SafeSport when the Adult Participant becomes aware of the information.

- Click [here](http://usagymconcern.ethicspoint.com) (or go to [usagymconcern.ethicspoint.com](http://usagymconcern.ethicspoint.com)) to make an online report to USA Gymnastics.
- You may also call USA Gymnastics at 833.844.7233.

Reports to USA Gymnastics may be made anonymously and at no cost.

## Reporting to the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee

USA Gymnastics will notify the USOPC's Office of Athlete Safety as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours of learning of an allegation of Prohibited Conduct, as defined in the SafeSport Code, that occurred at an Olympic & Paralympic Training Center, at any third-party-sponsored event to which the USOPC sends a delegation, or any other event, including but not limited to, travel, lodging, practice, competition, and health or medical treatment, which is organized, operated, sanctioned, or authorized by the USOPC.

## No Statute of Limitations or Time Bars

USA Gymnastics and the Center assess a Participant's fitness to participate in gymnastics. No criminal, civil, or rules-based statute of limitations or time bars of any kind prevent USA Gymnastics or the Center from investigating, assessing, considering, and adjudicating any relevant conduct under this Policy regardless of when it occurred.

## Confidentiality and Anonymous Reporting

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, reports filed with USA Gymnastics are confidential. In a confidential filing, the reporting party's name and contact information would be shared with USA Gymnastics, but USA Gymnastics will not use the reporting party's (or Claimant's) name during its



## REPORTING CONCERNS OF ABUSE & MISCONDUCT

investigation without prior consent. USA Gymnastics may, however, disclose such information to the Center for SafeSport, other organizations, and/or law enforcement authorities as necessary.

Reports may be made anonymously to USA Gymnastics and to the Center for SafeSport. Anonymity means USA Gymnastics and/or the Center for SafeSport will not know the personally identifying information of the reporter. It does not mean that the underlying information will be protected. An anonymous report may limit USA Gymnastics and/or the Center for SafeSport's ability to investigate or properly address misconduct or abuse, but USA Gymnastics recognizes that it may be difficult for a person to report an allegation otherwise. USA Gymnastics strongly encourages Adult Participants to provide their name and contact information when reporting.

For information regarding how reports are handled, see USA Gymnastics Response and Resolution Procedures [here](#).

# MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

# VI.

USA Gymnastics has adopted and expanded upon the Center for SafeSport's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies ("MAAPP"), with the aim of helping young athletes feel safe, supported, and strengthened by limiting one-on-one interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes and promoting environments in which misconduct is less likely to occur. These Prevention Policies set standards for professional boundaries, minimize the appearance of impropriety, and have the effect of preventing boundary violations and prohibiting grooming tactics.

In general, all one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be **Observable and Interruptible**, absent an exception. Contact is Observable and Interruptible if it is both able to be seen by another adult individual ("observable") and that other adult individual is able to stop the progress of the interaction easily ("interruptible").

## Policy Exceptions

There are certain relationships and situations in which one-on-one interactions may be allowed or necessary. USA Gymnastics recognizes the following four exceptions to the Abuse Prevention Policies (approved by the U.S. Center for SafeSport):

### Close-in-Age Exception:

This exception applies to certain policies and allows for In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

- a) The Adult Participant has **no** authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- b) The Adult Participant is not more than four years older (determined by birth date) than the Minor Athlete.

### Dual-Relationship Exception:

This exception applies to certain policies and allows for In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete when the Adult Participant has a relationship with a Minor Athlete outside of gymnastics. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian, which written consent must be renewed at least annually. The consent must identify for which Prevention Policies the parent/guardian is allowing the one-on-one In-Program Contact.

### Personal Care Assistant:

This exception allows for one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants and Minor Athletes to assist a Minor Athlete with activities of daily living and preparation for athletic participation if the following requirements are met:

- a) The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent annually to the Member Club for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
- b) The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has completed SafeSport Core Training (or the appropriate Refresher course); and
- c) The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA Gymnastics Criminal Background Screening Policy.

### Emergency Exception

This exception applies to all Prevention Policies for situations where an Adult Participant must violate requirement(s) of the Prevention Policies due to an emergency (such as a fire, medical emergency, or if a Minor is left without parental supervision after training or at a competition). Adult Participants must carefully consider whether specific circumstances meet the threshold of emergency and should document emergency situations.

# MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

## Individual Training Sessions

Individual training sessions between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete must adhere to the following three requirements:

- Adult Participants must ensure individual training sessions with a Minor Athlete are Observable and Interruptible<sup>2</sup> unless an exception exists.
- All individual training sessions require advance, written consent<sup>3</sup> from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, which written consent must be renewed at least annually and can be withdrawn at any time.
- A Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be allowed to attend the individual training session.

Exceptions: Dual Relationship Exception, Close-in-Age Exception, Emergency Exception

<sup>2</sup> Closed Circuit Broadcast and web-based viewing is not considered Observable and Interruptible.

<sup>3</sup> Consent forms may be found [here](#).

## Meetings

### Meetings in General

All In-Program Meetings between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes must be Observable and Interruptible, unless the Dual Relationship, Personal Care Assistant, or Close-in-Age Exception applies.

### Meetings with Licensed Mental Health Professionals and Health Care Providers (other than athletic trainers<sup>4</sup>):

If a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider meets one-on-one with a Minor Athlete at a sanctioned event or a Member Club, all the following requirements must be met:

- The meeting must be Observable and Interruptible;
- Another Adult must be present at the facility and notified that a meeting is occurring, although the Minor Athlete's identity need not be disclosed;
- The Member Club, Event Director, or other person of authority is notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and
- The professional or provider must obtain consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.

Closed-door meetings with Minor Athletes are not allowed at any event or facility under the jurisdiction of USA Gymnastics absent circumstances falling under the Emergency Exception.

## Parental Access to Practice at Member Clubs

Member Clubs must permit parents and guardians access to practice and training sessions.

- Access to practice and training may include sitting areas, in-person viewing options, closed-circuit broadcast, or similar methods of viewing.
- Each training and practice session must be accessible to the Member Club's parents/guardians.
  - If space constraints exist, a Member Club may create a schedule allowing a portion of the parents/guardians of both recreational and team programs to allow for access to each practice. Some portion of the Member Club's parents/guardians must have access to view training sessions of both recreational and team programs at all times.
  - Parents/guardians of Minor Athletes under the age of 8 or with a disability should not be excluded from access to their Child's training/practice absent just cause.
- Member Clubs may set parameters for appropriate viewing behavior through team and club policy, including but not limited to a requirement that Participants and parents/guardians respect the coach-Athlete relationship and do not interrupt training sessions, absent a legitimate concern of misconduct.
- Member Clubs may not prohibit a specific parent/guardian from physical access without just cause. If a parent/guardian is denied access due to the parent's/guardian's conduct, the Member Club must set a reasonable time limit for the parent/guardian to regain access (not to exceed 30 days). The Club must also provide a reasonable alternative for that parent/guardian to view their Athlete's training sessions, which can include allowing another designee approved by the parent/guardian to view practice.

<sup>4</sup> Athletic trainers who are covered under these policies must follow the Manual Therapy and Therapeutic and Recovery Modalities policy.

# MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

## Transportation

The USA Gymnastics Transportation Policy exists for the safety of all Participants engaged in carpooling or traveling, both locally and overnight, to practice, camps, and meets/competitions without the supervision of their parents/guardians.

An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one unless:

- One of the following exceptions exists: Close-in-Age Exception; Dual Relationship Exception; Personal Care Assistant Exception; or Emergency Exception; or
- The Adult Participant has advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, which consent must be renewed at least annually<sup>5</sup> and may be withdrawn by the Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian at any time; or
- The Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors who are at least 8 years of age.

## Additional Requirements for Transportation Organized by Member Clubs

For all In-Program travel authorized or funded by Member Clubs, the following requirements must be met:

- The Member Clubs permitting or authorizing a transportation exception (such as airline travel or local travel with parental consent) will be responsible to indemnify USA Gymnastics from all liability and must execute the terms of the [Assumption of Liability, Release, and Indemnity Agreement](#) before facilitating any one-on-one transportation between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes.
  - Member Clubs must publish a transportation policy agreed to and signed by all Adult Participants, which policy must be signed by all Adult Participants annually.

- Parents/guardians of Minor Athletes must give written consent on an annual basis for transportation sponsored by the Member Club. Minor Athletes' parents/guardians can withdraw this consent at any time.
- Parents/guardians should be provided full travel itineraries in advance of travel.
- Parents/guardians should be encouraged to complete the Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport provided by the Center before providing written consent.
- It is the responsibility of the Member Club to maintain parent/guardian consent forms.

## Additional Requirements for Transportation Organized by USA Gymnastics

- For all In-Program travel authorized or funded by USA Gymnastics, all Adult Participants will agree to and sign USA Gymnastics' travel policy annually.
- Parents/guardians of Minor Athletes must give written consent on an annual basis for travel sponsored by USA Gymnastics. Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw this consent at any time.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to complete the Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport provided by the Center before providing written consent.

\* Consent forms may be found [here](#).

## Lodging

The USA Gymnastics' Lodging Policy exists for the safety of all Participants traveling overnight without the supervision of their parents/guardians.

All In-Program Contact during lodging between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Observable and Interruptible, unless an exception exists. Lodging arrangements covered under this policy include, but are not limited to, hotel stays, rentals (i.e., Airbnb, VRBO, HomeToGo, etc.), and long-term residential environments, including lodging at training sites and billeting.

<sup>5</sup> USA Gymnastics' receipt of parental consent forms, trip itineraries, or indemnification documents does not imply or indicate permission by USA Gymnastics for the travel.

# MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

An Adult Participant **cannot** share a hotel room, rental (Airbnb, VRBO, HomeToGo), or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s), unless:

- (1) The Dual Relationship Exception or the Close-in-Age Exception apply;
- (2) The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided advance, written consent before each instance for the lodging arrangement; **and**
- (3) The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided annual written consent for all In-Program lodging.

A parent/guardian of a Minor Athlete can withdraw consent at any time. Note: It is the responsibility of the Member Club to maintain parent/guardian consent forms (unless lodging is sponsored by USA Gymnastics). Lodging may also occur in the very rare circumstances under the Emergency Exception.

## **Additional Requirements for Lodging Authorized or Funded by USA Gymnastics or Member Clubs**

Adult Participants who travel overnight with Minor Athlete(s) are assumed to have Authority over Minor Athlete(s) and thus must complete SafeSport Training and successfully pass a background screening. Adult Athletes who meet the Close-in-Age exception are exempt from the background screening requirement if they are not in a position of Authority but must complete SafeSport training.

Athletes must be permitted to make and receive regular check-in telephone calls to and from their parents/guardian. Emergency calls must be permitted regardless of team schedule or events.

## **Monitoring or Room Checks During In-Program Travel**

If room checks are performed during In-Program lodging, they must be Observable and Interruptible and at least two adults must be present.

## **Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy**

All electronic communication between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be professional in nature, for the purpose of communicating about gymnastics activities, and Open and Transparent, unless an exception applies. Electronic communication includes text messages, email, phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching/training, direct messaging, fitness applications,

gaming platforms, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, and all other means of digital communication.

For an electronic communication between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete to meet the Open-and-Transparent requirement, the communication must include (e.g., copy) at least one of the following adults:

- The Minor Athlete's parent or legal guardian
- An Adult immediate family member of the Minor Athlete
- Another Adult Participant

If a Minor Athlete communicates electronically with the Adult Participant first without copying one of the required adults outlined above, the Adult Participant must either not respond or include one of the required adults listed above in the response.

When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, the Adult Participant must copy or include the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, an Adult immediate family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant as outlined above. Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication and can record/maintain the message may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

## **Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and other Social Media**

Adult Participants are prohibited from having Minor Athletes joined to or connected through their personal Facebook page, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, or any other social media platform, unless an exception exists. If an Adult Participant has an existing social media connection with a Minor Athlete, it must be discontinued.

This prohibition does not apply to public fan/celebrity social media pages. Further, to facilitate communication, an official organization or team page may be set up and Minor Athletes and parents/guardians may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page and Adult Participants can communicate to the Minor Athletes through that site.

Member Clubs and Adult Participants should not publicly share, post, or distribute photos or videos of Minor Athlete(s) without obtaining the consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.

# MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

## Exceptions to the Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy

The prohibitions on social media or electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete do not apply if any of the following exceptions apply:

- Dual Relationship Exception;
- Close-in-Age Exception; or
- Emergency Exception.

## Parental Requests to Discontinue All Electronic Communications

Member Clubs and Adult Participants must comply immediately with a request in writing from a Minor Athlete's parent/ guardian that their child may not be contacted through any form of electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

## Photography/Videography

Photographs or videos of Athletes may only be taken in public view and must observe generally accepted standards of decency.

Member Clubs and Adult Participants should not publicly share, post, or distribute photos or videos of Athletes without obtaining the consent of the adult Athlete or Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.

## Locker Rooms/Changing Areas

Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program Contact with Minor Athlete(s) in a locker room, changing area, or similar space where Minor Athlete(s) are present is Observable and Interruptible, unless an exception exists.

Exceptions: Close-in-Age Exception, Dual Relationship Exception, Adult Personal Care Assistant<sup>6</sup> Exception, and Emergency Exception.

## Conduct in Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

- No Adult Participant or Minor Athlete may use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in locker rooms, changing areas, or any other area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing.
- Adult Participants must not remove their clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals

to a Minor Athlete in a locker room or changing area.

- Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes unless the Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age Exception.
- Parents/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with Adult Participant(s) during In-Program Contact. USA Gymnastics, Member Clubs, and the Adult Participant(s) must abide by this request.
- Media is not permitted to interview, photograph, or record Athletes in a locker room, changing area, or similar space.

## Availability and Monitoring of Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

USA Gymnastics, Member Clubs, and Event Directors of USA Gymnastics-sanctioned events must provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes to change clothes or undress at sanctioned events or facilities partially or fully under the jurisdiction of USA Gymnastics or Member Clubs.

Examples of private and semi-private places include: a single or family restroom; a restroom stall with a door; or an area created by a partition or drapery.

USA Gymnastics, Member Clubs, and Event Directors of USA Gymnastics-sanctioned events must regularly and randomly monitor designated locker rooms or changing areas. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- Making regular and random sweeps of the designated locker rooms and changing areas.
- Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use.

While it is not always possible, if the monitor(s) are inside the locker room or changing area, it is strongly recommended that there be two monitors to help avoid allegations of impropriety by a monitor alone in the locker room.

Member Clubs and Event Directors must communicate the availability of designated changing areas and may encourage Athletes to arrive dressed for training/competition.

<sup>6</sup> Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants are permitted to be with and assist Minor Athlete(s) in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces where other Minor Athletes are present, if they meet the requirements of the definition.

# MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

## Gifts

Adult Participants who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception or have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete may not give personal gifts to a Minor Athlete.

Gifts that are equally distributed to all Athletes in a group or team or align with a reward system set by the Member Club administration and serve a legitimate motivational or educational purpose are permitted.

## Manual Therapy and Therapeutic and Recovery Modalities

Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program Contact during manual therapy and therapeutic modalities and recovery modalities with Minor Athletes meet the following requirements:

- Be Observable and Interruptible, subject only to the Emergency Exception;
- Have another Adult Participant physically present for the modality or manual therapy and in full sight of the treatment at all times;
- Have documented consent as explained below;
- Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered;
- Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing;
- The professional or provider must narrate the steps in the modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process; and
- Coaches and club owners, regardless of whether they are licensed massage therapists, may not massage Minor Athletes.

## Consent

- Providers of manual therapy, therapeutic modalities, or recovery modalities, or USA Gymnastics or Member Clubs, when applicable, must obtain written consent at least annually from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian before providing any manual therapy, therapeutic modalities, or recovery modalities.
- Athletes and/or their parent/guardian may withdraw consent at any time.

## Physical Contact Boundaries

Some physical contact between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes may occur for safety, teaching a skill (such as spotting), consolation, celebration (high fives, fist bumps, brief side hugs), or tending to an injury. Physical contact, however, must always remain professional and consensual.

Examples of **prohibited** forms of physical contact between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes, include, but are not limited to:

- Having a Minor Athlete sit in the lap of an Adult Participant (such as a coach, staff member, or volunteer).
- Cuddling, tickling, pulling hair, wrestling, pinching, and maintaining prolonged physical contact.
- Any contact that is contrary to an expressed desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.



# TYPES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

# VII.

USA Gymnastics will not tolerate any form of misconduct (including sexual, physical, and emotional misconduct, bullying, hazing, and harassment) by its Participants. It is a violation of this Policy for a Participant to violate any provision of this Policy or the SafeSport Code. USA Gymnastics incorporates by reference the definitions of Prohibited Conduct in the SafeSport Code and MAAPP. In the event of a discrepancy between the SafeSport Code or Center for SafeSport's MAAPP, the SafeSport Code or Center for SafeSport's MAAPP definition should take precedence.

Participants are responsible for knowing the information in this Policy and in the SafeSport Code, which may change from time to time, and by virtue of being a Participant have expressly agreed to be bound by this Policy and the SafeSport Code. Participation in USA Gymnastics-sanctioned activities is a privilege not a right and such participation may be limited, conditioned, suspended, terminated, or denied if a Participant's conduct is or was inconsistent with the SafeSport Code, this Policy, and/or the best interest of sport and those who participate in it.

## Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct involves any form of sexual activity or interaction where Consent is not given or cannot be given. Sexual Misconduct offenses include but are not limited to:

- Sexual or Gender-related Harassment;
- Nonconsensual Sexual Contact (or attempts to commit the same);
- Nonconsensual Sexual Intercourse (or attempts to commit the same);
- Sexual Exploitation;
- Exposing a Minor to Sexual Content/Imagery;
- Sexual Bullying Behavior;
- Sexual Hazing;
- Other Inappropriate Conduct of a Sexual Nature;
- Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape).

### Examples of Sexual Misconduct:

- Sexual relations between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete
- Intentionally exposing a Minor Athlete to imagery of a sexual nature
- Intentionally exposing or inducing another to expose breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a

Minor Athlete, or to an Adult Participant where there is a Power Imbalance

- Comments, innuendo, and discussions of a sexual nature made to a Minor Athlete
- Engaging in an intimate or romantic relationship where a Power Imbalance exists
- Inappropriate physical contact with a Participant where a Power Imbalance exists (such as touching or slapping the buttocks or genitals of a Participant; excessively touching or hugging a Participant; or kissing a Participant)

Minors **cannot** Consent to conduct of a sexual nature. While the legal age of Consent varies under state and federal law, the age of capacity under the Code is 18. Ignorance of a Minor's age is not a defense.

Members may not engage in intimate relationships with an Athlete they currently coach or train, regardless of that Athlete's age.

## Grooming

Sexual misconduct and abuse of a Minor Athlete is often preceded by grooming behaviors. Grooming is a process where a person engages in a pattern of behaviors to build trust and emotional connections with a child (and often the child's family) with the intention of exploiting or sexually abusing the child. Grooming can occur in a variety of settings, including in-person, online, or by phone.

### Possible Signs of Grooming behavior:

- Failing to respect boundaries through physical touch (such as hugging, touching, or tickling) or to listen when someone tells them "no"
- Attempting to be a Minor Athlete's friend rather than an adult role model
- Spending time alone with and/or isolating the Minor Athlete from others outside their role in the Minor Athlete's life
- Directly contacting the Minor Athlete without copying the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian or another Adult Participant
- Communicating with a Minor Athlete about their personal problems, relationships, or sexual topics
- Encouraging a Minor Athlete to keep secrets, especially about time spent with them
- Giving a Minor Athlete gifts without occasion or reason

All suspected grooming behavior shall be immediately reported to the Center for SafeSport [here](#).



# TYPES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

## Physical Misconduct

Physical misconduct is any intentional contact or non-contact behavior that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to gymnastics that causes, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to another person.

### Examples of Physical Misconduct

Contact offenses include but are not limited to:

- punching, hitting, beating, biting, striking, strangling, or slapping another;
- intentionally hitting another with objects, such as sporting equipment; and
- criminal conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault).

Non-contact offenses include but are not limited to:

- isolating a person in a confined space, such as locking an Athlete in a small space;
- painful stances or positions for no athletic purpose;
- withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate nutrition, hydration, medical attention, or sleep;
- encouraging or knowingly permitting an Athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) without the clearance of a medical professional;
- failure to adhere to written restrictions placed on an Athlete by a treating physician, athletic trainer, or other licensed health care provider (e.g., doctor's notes/orders);
- physical conditioning that is against professionally acceptable standards for the age and/or physical development of the Athlete;
- providing alcohol to a Participant under age 21; and
- providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to a Participant.

### Exclusion

Physical Misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement (e.g., methods that are reasonably designed to coach, teach, demonstrate, or improve a gymnastics skill), physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Athlete performance.

## Emotional Misconduct

Emotional Misconduct involves a pattern of deliberate non-contact behavior by a Participant within a context that is reasonably related to gymnastics and has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a Participant. These behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, acts that deny attention or support, criminal conduct, and/or stalking. Emotional Misconduct is determined by the objective behaviors, not whether harm is intended or results from the behavior.

### Examples of Emotional Misconduct

- Repeatedly and excessively verbally assaulting or attacking someone personally in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose
- Mocking or making critical comments about a person's body shape, size, or physical appearance
- Verbally attacking a person based on race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or disability
- Repeated or severe physically aggressive behaviors by a Participant, including but not limited to throwing sport equipment, water bottles, or chairs at or in the presence of others or punching walls, windows, or other objects
- Ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time, including routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Participant from training
- Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect)
- Stalking, which occurs (as further defined in the SafeSport Code) when a person engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person and knows or should know that the course of conduct would cause a reasonable person to (i) fear for their safety, (ii) fear for the safety of a third person, or (iii) experience substantial emotional distress. Stalking may also include cyberstalking.

While a single verbal act or physical act may be inappropriate, such single incidents typically do not constitute Emotional Misconduct, which requires a pattern of deliberate and harmful behaviors over time.

### Exclusion

Emotional Misconduct does not include professionally accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athletic

# TYPES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

performance. Emotional Misconduct also does not include conduct reasonably accepted as part of the sport of gymnastics and/or conduct reasonably accepted as part of Participant's participation.

## Bullying

Bullying is any repeated or severe behavior(s) that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to gymnastics and that is aggressive, directed at a Minor, and intended or reasonably likely to hurt, control, or diminish the Minor emotionally, physically, or sexually. Bullying-like behaviors directed at adults are addressed under other forms of misconduct, such as Hazing or Harassment.

### Examples of Bullying

- Repeated or severe hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, strangling, slapping, spitting at, or throwing objects (such as sporting equipment) at another person
- Repeated or severe ridiculing, taunting, name-calling
- Intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm
- Repeated or severe use of 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 others to do the same
- Bullying behavior includes any conduct described as bullying under federal or state law

### Exclusion

Conduct may not rise to the level of Bullying behavior if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Bullying does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Athlete performance.

## Harassment

Harassment is any repeated and/or severe conduct that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to gymnastics and that:

- causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance;

- offends or degrades;
- creates a hostile environment (as defined in the SafeSport Code);
- reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or
- any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Whether conduct is harassing depends on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, and duration of the behavior.

### Exclusion

Conduct may not rise to the level of Harassment if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Harassment does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Athlete performance.

## Hazing

Hazing is any conduct that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to gymnastics and 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 or being socially accepted by a group, team, or organization. Purported Consent by the person subjected to Hazing is not a defense, regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.

### Examples of Hazing:

- Tying, taping, or physically restraining an Athlete or Participant
- Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault
- Requiring or forcing the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Sleep deprivation or the withholding of water and/or food
- Requiring social actions or public displays (e.g., public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule

# TYPES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- Actual or simulated conduct of a sexual nature
- Criminal acts that constitute hazing under federal or state law

## Exclusion

Conduct may not rise to the level of Hazing if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views and/or positions. Hazing does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athletic performance.

## Abuse of Process, Failure to Report & Other Misconduct

### Aiding and Abetting

Aiding and Abetting occurs when one aids, assists, facilitates, promotes, or encourages the commission of conduct prohibited by the SafeSport Code or this Policy, including without limitation knowingly:

- allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by USA Gymnastics or the Center for SafeSport to be in any way associated with or employed by USA Gymnastics or a Member Club;
- allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by USA Gymnastics or by the Center to coach or instruct Participants;
- allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by USA Gymnastics or by the Center to have ownership interest in a Member Club;
- providing any coaching-related advice or service to an Athlete who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by USA Gymnastics or the Center; and
- allowing any person to violate the terms of their suspension or any other sanctions imposed by USA Gymnastics or the Center for SafeSport.

In addition, a Participant also violates this Policy and the SafeSport Code if someone acts on behalf of the Participant to engage in Aiding and Abetting, or if the guardian, family member, or advisor of a Participant, including Minor Athletes, engages in Aiding or Abetting.

### Misconduct Related to Reporting

- Failure to Report. An Adult Participant who fails to report actual or reasonably suspected Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse to the Center and, when appropriate, to law enforcement may be subject to disciplinary action by the Center and may also be subject to federal or state penalties. Other Prohibited Conduct must be reported to either USA Gymnastics or the Center.
- Intentionally Filing a False Allegation. A Participant who knowingly or intentionally files a false allegation that a Participant engaged in Prohibited Conduct violates this Policy, the SafeSport Code, and may violate state criminal law and civil defamation laws. An allegation is false if the event or allegation reported did not occur, and the person making the report knows or reasonably should know that it did not occur. A false allegation is different from an unsubstantiated allegation; an unsubstantiated allegation means there was insufficient supporting evidence to determine whether an allegation is true or false.

### Abuse of Process

A Participant, or someone acting on behalf of a Participant, violates this Policy and the SafeSport Code by directly or indirectly abusing or interfering with the Center's or USA Gymnastics' process by:

- falsifying, distorting, or misrepresenting information, the resolution process, or an outcome;
- destroying or concealing information;
- attempting to discourage an individual's proper participation in or use of the Center's (or USA Gymnastics') processes before, during, or following proceedings (including up to, through, and after any review by an arbitrator);
- publicly disclosing a Claimant's (person who experienced misconduct by another) identifying information<sup>7</sup>;
- failing to comply with a temporary measure, Athlete safety plan, or other sanction;
- distributing or otherwise publicizing materials created or produced during an investigation or arbitration as a part of these policies or procedures, except as required by law or as expressly permitted by the Center or USA Gymnastics;
- influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit abuse of process; or
- having another individual take any part of or complete any Center-required training for them.

<sup>7</sup> A Claimant may waive confidentiality by choosing to publicly disclose their own identifying information at any time.

# TYPES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

## Retaliation

USA Gymnastics has zero tolerance for retaliation against individuals who make good-faith reports of potential violations or who cooperate with investigations of those reports.

Retaliation occurs when a Participant, or someone acting on behalf of a Participant, knowingly takes or threatens to take an adverse action against a good-faith reporter for reporting a violation of this Policy or the SafeSport Code or engaging in a process regarding a reported violation of this Policy or the SafeSport Code with the Center for SafeSport, USA Gymnastics, the USOPC, the Attorney General, federal or state law enforcement authorities, the EEOC, or Congress. Retaliation may occur before, during, or after an individual reports alleged misconduct or engages in the process.

Adverse actions include, but are not limited to threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other action or conduct (such as removal from a Member Club or competition) with the potential effect of dissuading any reasonable person from reporting Prohibited Conduct or engaging in activity related to reporting or the investigative or adjudicative process.

USA Gymnastics employees found to have retaliated against a protected person (defined under the Sports Act as an "amateur athlete, coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official") will be immediately terminated or suspended without pay. See 36 U.S.C. § 220501.

Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no underlying violation occurred. Retaliation does not include good-faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of a Policy violation.

## Willful Tolerance

A Participant violates this Policy and the SafeSport Code by willfully tolerating any form of Prohibited Misconduct when there is a Power Imbalance between that Participant and the individual(s) who are being subjected to the Prohibited Conduct.

## No Interference

USA Gymnastics and Member Clubs shall not interfere in, attempt to interfere in, or attempt to influence the outcome of any Center for SafeSport investigation.

## Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies

It is a violation of this Policy for a Participant to violate any provision of the MAAPP or Prevention Policies adopted by USAG.

## Other Improper Conduct

Any individual who is a USA Gymnastics employee, contractor, or agent is prohibited from assisting a Member or former Member in obtaining a new job if the individual knows that the Member or former Member violated the SafeSport Code related to child abuse or sexual misconduct or was convicted of a crime involving child abuse or sexual misconduct with a minor in violation of applicable law or policies and procedures of the Center for SafeSport. 36 U.S.C. 220507.

## CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS

[response.resolution@usagym.org](mailto:response.resolution@usagym.org)

Safety and Response Helpline: 833.844.7233

Member Services: 800.345.4719

## **Additional Resources**

**U.S. Center for SafeSport searchable database**

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/centralized-disciplinary-database>

**Persons declared permanently ineligible by USA Gymnastics**

<https://usagym.org/safety/ineligible/>

**Persons restricted by the Center or USA Gymnastics Interim measures**

<https://usagym.org/safety/suspended-restricted-persons/>

**Sexual offender registries may be found here**

<https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/sex-offender-registry>

## Appendix A

### WHERE DO THE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY EXCEPTIONS APPLY?

There are certain relationships and situations in which one-on-one interactions may be allowed or necessary. USA Gymnastics recognizes the following four exceptions approved by the U.S. Center for SafeSport to its Abuse Prevention Policies:

- Emergency Exception
- Dual Relationship Exception
- Close-in-Age Exception
- Personal Care Assistant Exception

The table below summarizes which exceptions may or may not apply to each Abuse Prevention Policy. Please see the 2025 Safety & Response Policy for further explanation of the exceptions, the requirements for each, and the applicable Abuse Prevention Policy.

Abuse Prevention Policy	Close-in-Age Exception	Personal Care Assistant Exception	Dual Relationship Exception	Emergency Exception	Page # in Policy
Individual Training Sessions	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	<a href="#">Page 16</a>
Meetings w/ Licensed Health Care Professional	No	No	No	Yes	<a href="#">Page 17</a>
Manual Therapy/ Recovery Modalities	No	No	No	Yes	<a href="#">Page 21</a>
Locker Room (One-on-One Interactions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<a href="#">Page 20</a>
Locker Room (Shower)	Yes	No (can assist when needed)	No	Yes	<a href="#">Page 20</a>
Electronic Communication	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	<a href="#">Page 19</a>
Transportation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<a href="#">Page 18</a>
Lodging	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<a href="#">Page 18</a>

## Appendix B

# PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS AT SANCTIONED EVENTS

The following chart identifies the requirements of those persons whom Event Directors or Member Clubs contract with or hire to provide photography, videography, and/or medical care at a sanctioned event.

Note: This does not apply to members of the media. Media personnel are required to adhere to the USA Gymnastics Professional Journalism Policies, which can be found [here](#).

Status/Role	SafeSport Course	Background Screening	USAG Exclusion List Check	USAG Membership	Current License
Independent Photographer/Videographer	X	X	X	X	
Third Party Photography/Videography Vendor Owner or Manager	X	X	X	X	
Third Party Photographers		X	X		
Independent Medical Providers	X	X	X	X	X
Third Party Medical Vendors	X	X	X		X

### Photographers/Videographers

If an Event Director contracts with a photographer or videographer at a sanctioned event, the following requirements must be met:

- The Event Director must notify clubs, parents, and athletes of intent to photograph. Parents/guardians have the right to request that photographs not be taken, and all such requests must be honored.
- The Event Director must ensure the photographer/videographer is not on USAG's Exclusion Lists as ineligible, permanently ineligible, or suspended from all contact.
- The Event Director must provide the photographer/videographer with the USAG Event Mandate, which outlines the Abuse Prevention Policies and duty to report, prior to entry to the Event.
- The Event Director must identify the photographer/videographer on the USAG Safety & Response Event Checklist submitted with the sanction report forms within 72 hours of the conclusion of a USA Gymnastics sanctioned event.
- The Event Director and/or host club should have a written agreement directly with the photographer/videographer or the photographer/videographer company, and that written agreement should explain the photographer/videographer's role and the expectations for the Event.
- If the photographer/videographer is an Independent Photographer/Videographer (not affiliated with a photography/videography company), the photographer/videographer must be:
  - an active USAG member (Photography Membership);
  - background screened; and
  - SafeSport trained.
- If the photographer/videographer is a Third-Party Photographer/Videographer (affiliated with a photography company contracted for services by the Event Director):
  - At least one owner or managing director of the photography/videography company must have a USA Gymnastics Membership, which requires completion of a USA Gymnastics background screening and U110: SafeSport Core Course.
  - All photographer/videographer staff assigned to the Event by the Third-Party Photography company must have successfully passed a background check screening consistent with USA Gymnastics Criminal Background Screening Policy and show proof of identification at check-in. Note: If a Third-Party Photographer will have Regular Contact with and/or Authority Over Minor Athletes at the Event, they must also complete SafeSport Training.

*\* Event Directors must deny entry to the Event to any photographer/videographer who does not meet the above requirements.*

## Appendix B

# PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS AT SANCTIONED EVENTS

### Photography/Videography by Spectators Attending a Local/Invitational Sanctioned Event

USA Gymnastics does not set rules and regulations regarding photography/videography equipment used by spectators at non-premier USA Gymnastics events (e.g., local/invitational sanctioned events). Event Directors have the authority to set photography/videography policies depending on the individual circumstances of each USA Gymnastics-sanctioned event for which they serve as the Event Director.

### Medical Personnel at a Sanctioned Events

When an Event Director contracts with medical personnel at a sanctioned event, the following requirements must be met:

1. The Event Director must ensure medical personnel is not on USAG's Exclusion Lists as ineligible, permanently ineligible, or suspended from all contact.
2. The Event Director must provide medical personnel with the USAG Event Mandate, which outlines the Abuse Prevention Policies and duty to report, prior to entry to the Event.
3. The Event Director must identify medical personnel on the USAG Safety & Response Event Checklist submitted with the sanction report forms within 72 hours of the conclusion of a USA Gymnastics sanctioned event.
4. The Event Director and/or host club should have a written agreement directly with the medical personnel or the third-party vendor (such as a hospital or medical group), and that written agreement should explain medical personnels' role and the expectations for the Event.
5. If a medical provider is an Independent Medical Provider (contracting individually with the Event Director for medical services and not through a hospital or medical group), the medical provider must be:
  - a. an active USAG Medical member (free of cost);
  - b. background screened;
  - c. SafeSport trained (SafeSport for Licensed Health Care Professionals); and
  - d. hold a current medical license for their profession.
6. If a medical provider is a Third-Party Medical Provider (affiliated with an organizations/licensed business that has contracted with an Event Director to provide medical services), the medical provider must:
  - a. have successfully passed a background check screening through their employer consistent with USA Gymnastics Criminal Background Screening Policy;
  - b. be SafeSport trained (SafeSport for Licensed Health Care Professionals); and
  - c. hold a current medical license for their profession.

*\* Event Directors must deny entry to the Event to any medical provider who does not meet the above requirements.*

*<sup>8</sup> Note: Athletic trainers hired through third party websites such as Go 4 Ellis, are considered independent medical providers and must adhere to the standards for independent medical providers.*



## Appendix C

# USA GYMNASTICS SAFETY & RESPONSE PROTOCOL FOR SANCTIONED EVENTS

In accordance with the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the 2025 USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy, events sanctioned or organized by USA Gymnastics must adhere to the USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Protocol for Sanctioned and Premier Events available here.

The USAG Safety & Response Protocol for Sanctioned and Premier Events sets policies and procedures for the following:

1. Meet Reservation System
2. Regular Contact and/or Authority Over Minor Athletes List
3. Permanently Ineligible and Suspended Members Check
4. Safety & Response Policy Communication
5. Locker Rooms and Changing Areas Protocol
6. Required Signage
7. Photography and Medical Staff SafeSport Check Requirements
8. Misconduct at a Competition or Event
9. Post Event Documentation

USA Gymnastics may update event policies at any time and unless otherwise stated, changes are effective immediately upon publication. USA Gymnastics reserves the right to audit sanctioned events for purposes of verifying compliance with USA Gymnastics Safety & Response Policy including abuse prevention policies.

## Appendix D

# USA GYMNASTICS COMPLIANCE WITH THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

USA Gymnastics has adopted the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) and produced a policy consistent with the MAAPP as approved by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. All Member Clubs will be required to adopt and implement these policies in full at all sanctioned events and facilities under USA Gymnastics jurisdiction. All USA Gymnastics sanctioned competitions will adopt these policies in full.

To monitor compliance of SafeSport Trained Core Course (U-110), U.S. Center for SafeSport Refresher and the Background Screening Policy, USA Gymnastics will send updated notifications to remind the Member of necessary annual requirements and if expired, place the member in a pending status until all requirements are completed or updated.

USA Gymnastics has an established communication plan to notify individuals of the requirement:

- Monthly reminders to individuals of either their need to renew or obtain the certification.
- Dedicated section in each monthly newsletter that remind professionals and clubs of the requirement of the courses.
- Notification to the parents of 17-year-old members who will reach 18 during the season, with instruction on how to register and enroll their child for the course. Please note, the U.S. Center for SafeSport requires parental consent to anyone under the age of 18.

USA Gymnastics will offer the Center's "Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport," and the age-appropriate athlete course annually upon registration of athlete membership. Additionally, USA Gymnastics will notify parents throughout the year through newsletters, social media, and Member Club Safety Champion.

### Required Prevention Policies and Implementation

USA Gymnastics will develop Minor Athlete abuse prevention policies to limit one-on-one interactions between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant.

These policies must contain the mandatory components of the Center's model policies. These model policies cover:

- a. Individual Training Sessions
- b. Meetings
- c. Therapeutic and Recovery Modalities and Manual Therapy
- d. Locker Rooms and Changing Areas
- e. Electronic Communications & Social Media
- f. Transportation
- g. Lodging and Residential Environments

USA Gymnastics & Member Clubs must implement these policies for all In-Program Contact.

- a. At sanctioned events and facilities partially or fully under its jurisdiction, the organization must take steps to ensure the policies are implemented and followed.
- b. For In-Program Contact that occurs outside a USA Gymnastics sanctioned event or facilities, implementing these policies means:
  - i. Communicating the policies to individuals under its jurisdiction;
  - ii. Establishing a reporting mechanism for violations of the policies;
  - iii. Investigating and enforcing violations of the policies

USA Gymnastics policies must be approved by the Center as described below. The policies may include the recommended components in Part III and the recommended policies in Part IV of the Center's Model MAAPP.

USA Gymnastics will have a reporting mechanism to accept reports that an Adult Participant is violating the minor athlete abuse prevention policies. USA Gymnastics will appropriately investigate and resolve any reports received, unless the violation is reported to the Center for SafeSport and it exercises jurisdiction over the report. This requirement is in addition to requirements to report abuse under the SafeSport Code.

### Policy Submission Process

USAG adapted the MAAPP to fit its needs and submitted its policies to the Center at [compliance@safesport.org](mailto:compliance@safesport.org) for review and approval by April 1, 2024. The Center approved the policies set forth in this document.

Any changes made to USAG's MAAPP after the policy is approved must be submitted to the Center for approval. The previously approved MAAPP will remain in effect until written approval is provided to USAG from the Center.

## **FIND USA GYMNASTICS ON THE WEB**

 [usagym.org](https://usagym.org) • [usagym.org/safety](https://usagym.org/safety)

## **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

 Facebook: [USA Gymnastics](#) • [Member Services](#)

## **CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS**

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