



U.S. SOCCER

Safe Soccer Framework



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I. INTRODUCTION: PROMOTING SAFE SOCCER

U.S. Soccer’s mission is to make soccer the preeminent sport in the United States. We work toward this by supporting our members, impacting athletes, and serving fans. As part of this commitment, U.S. Soccer has developed the Safe Soccer Framework as a foundation from which all participants in the soccer community, be they athletes, coaches, referees, administrators, or volunteers, play an active role in creating an environment free from emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. The Safe Soccer Framework is a comprehensive program of policies and process, screening, education and training, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement designed to help participants detect and report abuse, respond to it, and prevent future occurrences:



This document explores each of these elements in detail and documents U.S. Soccer’s policies and processes designed to implement Public Law 115-126 *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017* (the “SafeSport Act”) as incorporated into the *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act* (the “Ted Stevens Act”), as well as the mandate issued by the U.S. Center for SafeSport in its Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies dated January 1, 2022.

Although immediately applicable to all U.S. Soccer-controlled programs, as detailed in Section I.B., below, U.S. Soccer recognizes that social norms continue to develop, as does the legal framework under which we operate. Accordingly, the Safe Soccer Framework will always be subject to modification, amendment, and further development by U.S. Soccer, in its discretion.

A. REPORTING CONCERNS

U.S. Soccer supports a culture of compliance, safety, and respect. As part of this Safe Soccer Framework, U.S. Soccer encourages open communication in which all participants feel comfortable reporting concerns, whether the concerns involve suspected abuse, other misconduct, or any other violation of the Safe Soccer Framework, including its Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (“MAAPP”). Participants are encouraged to raise concerns to coaches, referees, team administrators and U.S. Soccer staff. Participants may also report a concern through U.S. Soccer’s online reporting process at www.safesoccer.com. In addition, we encourage you to use the U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline to report concerns to give us the opportunity to address concerns that may arise in the soccer landscape:

www.ussoccer.com/integrity-hotline

or by calling **(312) 528-7004**

The identity of any individual submitting a report in good faith will be handled discreetly and confidentially to the fullest extent possible, unless doing so does not comply with applicable law or prevents a full and effective investigation of the report. To the greatest extent possible, all personnel responsible for responding to such reports will maintain the confidentiality of the individual and the matters relating to the report.

Our Integrity Hotline Reporting Resource and our online reporting process support anonymous reporting. That said, we encourage you to include your information so that we may have the best opportunity to follow-up with you and ensure we have addressed the concern you have raised.

In the event U.S. Soccer receives a report online or to the Integrity Hotline that implicates a reporting obligation (see “Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement ” on Page 15), we will make the report directly and/or work with you to make the report.

U.S. Soccer does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. No individual who makes a good faith report will be subject to retaliation, including harassment, or any adverse employment consequence, for making a report. Participants are also encouraged to report any suspected abuse, misconduct, or policy violation to the Center for SafeSport at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/> or by telephone at (833) 587-7233.

B. HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Sections I-V of this Handbook are incorporated by reference into U.S. Soccer’s Code of Conduct and its National Team Policies. They provide the guiding policies applicable to all U.S. Soccer-controlled programs implicating the safety of minor athletes, which includes:

- All Youth National Team programs
- Any Senior National Team with a roster that includes an athlete under the age of 18, and
- National-Level Referees
- U.S. Soccer Staff
- U.S. Soccer Board members

Section VI of this Handbook contains U.S. Soccer’s Athlete and Participant Safety Policy 212-3, requiring all Amateur Organization Members to comply with the Safe Sport Act’s reporting, training, and anti-retaliation requirements. Policy 212-3 also mandates that all Amateur Organization Members implement their own training and prevention policies that meet the requirements of the Center for SafeSport’s Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (“MAAPP”). Model policies that satisfy the Center’s MAAPP requirements can be found in Appendix A of this Handbook.

This Handbook is not an exclusive statement of all policies applicable to these programs, which may implement additional policies and procedures specific to their operations. In addition, although this Handbook focuses in many areas on concerns unique to Minor Athletes, the policies in this Handbook are applicable to and designed to protect athletes of all ages. This Handbook is not intended to, and does not, alter or amend the terms of employment for any at will employees who are Adult Participants.

The Safe Soccer Framework and all policies herein may be amended from time to time by vote of the U.S. Soccer Board of Directors.

Limited exceptions to the Safe Soccer Framework may be granted by U.S. Soccer on a case-by-case basis where appropriate, provided that such exceptions do not materially impact athlete safety.

C. A NOTE TO U.S. SOCCER AMATEUR ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

In order to serve and support our members, U.S. Soccer makes the Safe Soccer Framework Handbook available on its website and continues to work to increase awareness among its National Member Organizations and Local Affiliated Organizations regarding their obligations under the SafeSport Act. Specifically, the SafeSport Act requires applicable amateur sports organizations to:

- Comply with the SafeSport Act’s reporting requirements and prohibit retaliation by the applicable amateur sports organization against any individual who makes a report¹;
- Establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete who is a minor and an adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility under the jurisdiction of the applicable amateur sports organization; and
- Offer and provide consistent training to adults in regular contact with or authority over minor amateur athletes regarding prevention and reporting of child abuse and, subject to parental consent, to members who are minors.

The Appendix of this Handbook is designed to be used as a resource for U.S. Soccer organization members in developing their own policies, as it includes template policies developed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport to address requirements of the SafeSport Act and the MAAPP, many of which inform U.S. Soccer’s policies contained in this Handbook.

U.S. Soccer requires Local Affiliated Organizations and other Amateur Organization Members (as defined herein) to implement policies that comply with requirements of the Center’s MAAPP and the SafeSport Act. Model policies that meet the Center’s MAAPP requirements can be found in Appendix A of this Handbook. That said, **this Handbook should not be viewed as creating a legal standard of care or a model of best practice.** Although U.S. Soccer is the National Governing Body for soccer in all forms in the United States, it does not control the day-to-day operations of its organization members, who are independently organized, nor does it control National Member Organizations or Local Affiliated Organizations who operate individual clubs. More importantly, individual clubs range in size, structure, resources, operations and stakeholder needs and may have different levels of risk based on very different programs. Accordingly, each Amateur Organization Member and club is encouraged to conduct an independent assessment of its own practices and evaluate how best to implement its own risk management program as required by U.S. Soccer Bylaw 212 and Policy 212-3, the U.S. Soccer Athlete and Participant Safety Policy.

¹ For more information, see the section entitled “Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement” on Page 15).

D. WHO IS COVERED BY SECTIONS I-V OF THIS HANDBOOK/U.S. SOCCER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

All policies in Sections I-V of this Handbook apply to any individual designated as “U.S. Soccer Program Participants (“USSPPs”)², as defined in the chart below, for purposes of jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport. In addition, where noted, certain policies apply to adults at a facility operating under U.S. Soccer’s jurisdiction.

For purposes of enforcing Sections I-V of this Handbook, “USSPPs” are:

	Includes:	Does not Include:
U.S. Soccer Staff and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and interns of the U.S. Soccer • U.S. Soccer Board Members • Medical Staff • Scouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees of U.S. Soccer’s organization members
Athletes who directly register with U.S. Soccer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Team Players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players participating in any professional league sanctioned by U.S. Soccer (unless serving on the National Team); or • Players who register in the National Data Center through a National Member Organization or Local Affiliate Organization or a U.S. Soccer Organization Member unless they are National Team Players
Individuals who are authorized by U.S. Soccer to have regular contact with/authority over minor athletes/participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Level Referees (Grades 1-4) • Referees assigned by U.S. Soccer • National Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coaches ○ Administrators ○ Staff ○ Medical personnel ○ Volunteers • National Coaching Instructors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Members and their officials • Local Affiliated Organizations and their officials • Referee grades 5-15 (state, amateur and youth), unless assigned by U.S. Soccer

² The definition of “USSPPs” for purposes of determining who is covered by this Guide should not be confused with the definition of a “Covered Individual” obligated to report child abuse under the SafeSport Act. Please see the Section below entitled, “Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement” on page 15 for more information.

Applicability to U.S. Soccer Organization Members

Effective April 1, 2021 with the introduction of the *Amended SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements*, (the “**SafeSport Code**,” available on the Center’s web-site at: <https://www.safesport.org/policies-procedures>), the U.S. Center for SafeSport has extended the applicability of the SafeSport Code (and therefore its response and resolution jurisdiction) to all “**Participants**,” defined in the Safe Sport Code and in the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (“MAAPP”) as:

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

- A member or license holder of U.S. Soccer or an Local Affiliated Organization
- An employee or board member of U.S. Soccer or an Local Affiliated Organization
- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Soccer or an Local Affiliated Organization, and/or
- Authorized, approved, or appointed by U.S. Soccer or Local Affiliated Organization to have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes.

“**Local Affiliated Organization**” (“LAO”) is defined as “A regional, state or local club or organization that is directly affiliated with an NGB or that is affiliated with an NGB by its direct affiliation with a regional or state affiliate of said NGB. *LAO does not include a regional, state, or local club or organization that is only a member of a National Member Organization of an NGB.*” All State Association organization members of U.S. Soccer, as well as their club and league members, are considered LAOs.

The import of the changes summarized above is that only Organization Members of U.S. Soccer who are LAOs have “Participants,” and National Member Organizations (“NMOs”) of U.S. Soccer are not covered by the Response & Resolution jurisdiction at this time. Nonetheless, U.S. Soccer bylaws and Policy 212-3 provide requirements for such NMOs that are designed to further consistent implementation of the SafeSport Act.

Minor athletes who become adult athletes

All athletes turning 18 who still meet the threshold for regular contact or authority must complete the SafeSport Core training and must comply with the prevention policies herein.

E. STATEMENT ON YOUTH REFEREE SAFETY

The abuse and assault of referees is expressly prohibited by U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9, but a particular note is required regarding referees who are also minors.

Minor aged referees are trained game officials, and many are experienced players, but they are minor participants nonetheless and are therefore entitled to all protections extended to minor athletes by the Safe Soccer Framework.

Without limiting the foregoing, wherever a policy in this Handbook includes protections for minor athletes or other participants, they should also be read as protecting any referee under the age of 18.

F. THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “Center”) is an independent 501(c)(3) organization that receives funding from the U.S. federal government, the USOPC, the 55 NGBs (including U.S. Soccer), as well as a number of third-party individuals and organizations.

Pursuant to USOPC Policy, the U.S. Center for SafeSport maintains exclusive authority over: (a) actual or suspected sexual misconduct by U.S. Soccer Adult Participants (and those covered personnel of other NGBs); and (b) misconduct that is reasonably related to an underlying allegation of sexual misconduct by Adult Participants. Exclusive authority means: (y) only the Center will investigate and manage any related hearing involving sexual misconduct and (z) neither U.S. Soccer, the USOPC nor any Adult Participants will conduct its own investigation or arbitration with respect to possible sexual misconduct. In 2018, the SafeSport Act amended the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to codify this jurisdiction, authorizing the Center to “serve as the independent national safe sport organization and...exercise jurisdiction over the corporation, each national governing body, and each Paralympic sports organization with regard to safeguarding amateur athletes against abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, in sports.”

The SafeSport Act further authorizes the Center to:

“(A) serve as the independent national safe sport organization and be recognized worldwide as the independent national safe sport organization for the United States;

(B) exercise jurisdiction over the corporation and each national governing body with regard to safeguarding amateur athletes against abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, in sports;

(C) maintain an office for education and outreach that shall develop training, oversight practices, policies, and procedures to prevent the abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, of amateur athletes participating in amateur athletic activities through national governing bodies;

(D) maintain an office for response and resolution that shall establish mechanisms that allow for the reporting, investigation, and resolution, pursuant to subsection (c), of alleged sexual abuse in violation of the Center's policies and procedures;

(E) ensure that the mechanisms under subparagraph (D) provide fair notice and an opportunity to be heard and protect the privacy and safety of complainants;

(F) maintain an office for compliance and audit;

(G) publish and maintain a publicly accessible internet website that contains a comprehensive list of adults who are barred by the Center; and

(H) ensure that any action taken by the Center against an individual under the jurisdiction of the Center, including an investigation, the imposition of sanctions, and any other disciplinary action, is carried out in a manner than provides procedural due process to the individual...”

In addition to the U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline, reports may also be made to the Center for SafeSport, including on an anonymous basis, by visiting www.safesport.org and selecting the “Report a Concern” link, or by calling (833)587-7233.

II. FRAMEWORK POLICIES

A. PROHIBITED CONDUCT POLICY

This Policy applies to all U.S. Soccer Program Participants (“USSPPs”) as defined in the Section above entitled, “Who is Covered by sections I-V of this Handbook/U.S. Soccer Program Participants” on page 5, as well as conduct by any subcontractor, supplier, customer or third party and their employees in their dealings with U.S. Soccer employees. All definitions in this policy are taken from the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement the “**SafeSport Code**”), as may be amended from time to time. In the event of any conflict between this Policy and the SafeSport Code, the SafeSport Code will govern. The most recent SafeSport Code is always available at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/safesport-code/>.

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

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

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

1. Harassment

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

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

Prohibited conduct can also include jokes, kidding, or teasing about another person’s protected status. While harassing conduct is unlawful only if it affects tangible job benefits and/or interferes unreasonably with work performance and creates an abusive or hostile work

environment, this Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of law.

2. Sexual Harassment

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Racial, Religious, or National Origin Harassment

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

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

4. Child Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity with a child is prohibited. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force, or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

5. Sexual Misconduct

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

6. Emotional Misconduct

Emotional misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Emotional misconduct is a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

7. Physical Misconduct

Physical misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Physical misconduct is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building,

appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports but have no place in soccer.

8. Bullying

Intentional, persistent, and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership are prohibited. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

9. Hazing

Coercing, requiring, forcing, or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members are prohibited. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

10. Procedures for Complaints, Investigations and Corrective Action

All USSPPs are responsible to help ensure that we avoid misconduct. U.S. Soccer cannot act to eliminate misconduct unless it has notice of the conduct. USSPPs are charged with reporting any concerns regarding compliance with the Safe Soccer Framework in the manner provided in the Section entitled "Obligation of U.S. Soccer Program Participants to Report," on page 22. For the avoidance of doubt, in some instances, USSPPs will be required to report to law enforcement and/or the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Furthermore, U.S. Soccer employees are responsible to help assure that the work environment, on or off-premises, is free from harassment. All employees have an obligation to promptly report any allegedly harassing conduct they are the subject of, that they learn of, or that they witness. Our Policy provides for immediate notice of problems to the persons designated in this Policy so that we may address and resolve any problems as quickly as possible.

An employee must report the harassing conduct to either:

- The person to whom you report (supervisor or manager);
- Department Head;
- The Human Resources Department;
- The Legal Department;
- The Chief Executive Officer;
- Online at www.safesoccer.com; or

- The Integrity Hotline.

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

This Policy does not require reporting the misconduct to any individual who is creating the harassment or discrimination.

All USSPPs have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing any information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a violation of this Policy.

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

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

11. Training and Education

Employees, board members and other USSPPs over the age of 18 that have Regular Contact with or Authority over athletes must successfully complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport training on an annual basis, consistent with the Minimum Training Policy found at II.D. on page 19. The U.S. Center for SafeSport training can be accessed at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/training-and-education-services/>. Minor Athletes that directly register with U.S. Soccer must be offered training from the U.S. Center for SafeSport every year and, may take the training with parental consent. Additionally, parents of Minor Athletes must be offered, on an annual basis, parent training provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

12. Exclusive Jurisdiction Over Investigation/Adjudication of Sexual Abuse or Misconduct

The investigation and adjudication of matters involving allegations or reports of sexual abuse or misconduct by or against USSPPs, or other violations of this Prohibited Conduct Policy that involve prohibited conduct that is reasonably related to and accompanies an alleged violation involving sexual misconduct by USSPPs are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States Center for Safe Sport in accordance with the requirements of the USOPC and as set forth in the Center's Bylaws or other Center governing documents. Please see the Section V.A. entitled, "Exclusive Jurisdiction Over Investigation/Adjudication of Sexual Abuse or Misconduct" on page 40 for more information.

B. REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

On February 14, 2017, President Trump signed into law the *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017* (the “**SafeSport Act**”). Among other things, this comprehensive law amends the *Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990*, 34 U.S.C. § 20341, *et seq.*, and clarifies who is a mandatory reporter for cases of suspected child abuse. Specifically, the definition of mandatory reporter now includes any “adult who is authorized, by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or an amateur sports organization that participates in interstate or international amateur athletic competition, to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or such an amateur sports organization.” Consequently, U.S. Soccer urges all of its members to understand their reporting obligations under this important federal law.

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

The SafeSport Act also includes qualified immunity for good faith reports. U.S. Soccer urges all mandatory reporters to refrain from judging or evaluating the credibility of such allegations—leave that to law enforcement.

Failure to promptly report suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities may constitute a violation of federal law and, in any event, will be deemed a violation of U.S. Soccer’s Safe Soccer Framework.

The message is clear: if you suspect child abuse, report it to law enforcement immediately.

C. BACKGROUND SCREENING

1. Scope and Purpose

As noted by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, “Sound, practical and reasonable screening practices reduce the chances that an athlete will come in contact with potentially dangerous individuals.” Accordingly, and consistent with the goals of the PROTECT Act of 2003 and the SafeSport Act, U.S. Soccer requires background screening on all U.S. Soccer Program Participants, 18 and older (see the section entitled, “Who is Covered by sections I-V of this Handbook” on page 5).³ In addition, U.S. Soccer also performs background screening on volunteer Board members, officers and candidates for office and any U.S. Soccer referee registering directly through the U.S. Soccer Learning Center.

2. Mandatory Self-Disclosure

Any applicant who has been disqualified or declared by another sport organization to be temporarily or permanently ineligible is required to self-disclose this information at the time of application.⁴ Failure to disclose is a basis for discipline/disqualification.

3. Designated Background Screening Vendor

Since 2006, U.S. Soccer has used the National Center for Safety Initiatives (“NCSI”) as its designated background screening vendor. A private, woman-owned organization, NCSI is a full-service screening organization that applies the Recommended Guidelines established by the National Council on Youth Sports. NCSI’s process is state law compliant and includes appropriate written release from the applicant.

4. Scope of Background Screening

U.S. Soccer uses NCSI’s “Gold Standard” package, which includes:

- Social Security Number validation;
- Name and address history records;
- Two independent Multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
- Federal District Courts search for the district(s) where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable based on the name and address the Individual provides and the developed address history records;
- County Criminal Records for the county (or counties) where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable for each county searched based on the name and address the Individual provides and the developed address history records;

³ In addition, pursuant to USOPC/U.S. Center for SafeSport Policy, Athletes who directly register with U.S. Soccer must complete the background screening requirement by September 1, 2019.

⁴ Records of temporary or permanent ineligibility within the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movements are available through the [U.S. Center for SafeSport’s disciplinary records search](#).

- Two Sex Offender Registry database searches of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
- Motor Vehicle Records of at least a 3-year history in the state of licensure (if driving is required for position);
- Multiple National Watch Lists; and
- Comprehensive International Records search U.S. citizens who have lived outside of the United States for six consecutive months in any one country, during the past seven years.

As part of this process, NCSI automatically performs a limited recheck on active individuals 12 months after the initial background screening, looking at one national database and all available state sex offender registries.

5. Screening Results

NCSI will issue its findings to U.S. Soccer based on a "Red Light/Green Light" system. A "Green Light" or "meets the criteria" finding indicates the individual is suitable for the intended U.S. Soccer-related role with regard to the background check. A "Red Light" finding means that the individual "does not meet the criteria".

A reportable record or disclosure from the individual that contains a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding other than an adjudication of not guilty will be flagged as a "Red Light" or "does not meet the criteria":

- CRL-1. Any felony; and
 - Defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction, if range, alternate sentencing, or indeterminate sentencing with an outer range greater than one year.
- Any misdemeanor involving:
 - CRL-2. All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature including but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant;
 - CRL-3. Any drug related offenses;
 - CRL-4. Harm to a minor or vulnerable person, including, but not limited to offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor;
 - CRL-5. Violence against a person, force, or threat of force (including crimes involving a deadly weapon and domestic violence);
 - CRL-6. Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order, and/or threats;
 - CRL-7. Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief; and
 - CRL-8. Animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect.

The above criteria are contained within the guidelines developed by the NCYS and have been adopted by NCSI, consistent with the principles of the federal *PROTECT Act of 2003*.⁵

6. Background Screening Review Panel – Non-employees

Should a USSPP or other individual requiring background screening under this policy who does not have a conditional offer of employment (*e.g.*, either a current employee or another participant) receive a "Red Light" finding or an adverse action letter, the individual has the right to a hearing before a U.S. Soccer Safe Soccer Review Panel. *See* the section entitled, "Safe Soccer Review," on page 40.

7. U.S. Soccer Program Participants / Frequency

The following individuals shall undergo background checks prior to accepting an assignment, with a follow-up every two years thereafter:

U.S. Soccer Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All full- and part-time employees (including athletes) and all U.S. Soccer board members
Contracted professionals working on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All contracted physicians, trainers, massage therapists, nutritionists, scouts, Personal Care Assistants, and other certified professionals working directly with athletes
Referees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All national level and professional-level referees (licensed through U.S. Soccer) All referees assigned by U.S. Soccer (<i>e.g.</i>, National Team games) All referees registering directly through the U.S. Soccer Learning Center
Youth National Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All employees (coaches, team managers, administrators, trainers, etc.) who travel or attend training with any YNT team All athletes 18 years of age or older

8. Applicability to Applicants for Employment with U.S. Soccer

U.S. Soccer is an equal opportunity employer and refrains from conducting background screening on job applicants unless and until an offer of employment is made, with such offer conditioned upon completion of U.S. Soccer’s mandated background screening process described above. The background screening covers major criminal databases but does not search credit or financial history, in compliance with applicable state law.

In the event an individual with a conditional offer of employment from U.S. Soccer receives a “Red Light” result, U.S. Soccer will:

⁵ The *PROTECT Act of 2003*, Pub. L. 108–21, 117 Stat. 650, S. 151, enacted April 30, 2003, stands for “Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today,” and was designed to strengthen law enforcement tools to investigate, prosecute and punish violent crimes against children. The *PROTECT Act* encourages organizations to obtain national and State criminal history background checks on volunteers, employees and other individuals who work with children, the elderly or the disabled.

- Consider how long ago the applicable conviction occurred and whether it is directly related to the job;
- Notify the individual in writing, identify the conviction(s) that are the problem, provide the individual with a copy of his/her record, and tell the individual the deadline by which he/she must respond. The applicant's response may include submission of evidence challenging the accuracy of the conviction history report that is the basis for rescinding the offer, evidence of rehabilitation or mitigating circumstances, or both.
- Provide the applicant with five (5) business days to respond, unless, within the five (5) business days, the individual notifies the employer in writing that the individual disputes the accuracy of the background screening results and that the individual is taking specific steps to obtain evidence supporting that assertion, then the individual shall have five additional business days to respond to the notice.
- Consider information submitted by applicant before making a final decision.
- Any final decision to deny an applicant solely or in part because of the "Red Light" result will be provided in writing to the applicant along with any existing procedure for the applicant to challenge the decision or request reconsideration, the applicant's right to file a complaint, if applicable, under the relevant state law.⁶

Additionally, an employee, contractor or agent of U.S. Soccer may not assist a member or former member of U.S. Soccer in obtaining a new job, except in the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the employee, contractor, or agent knows that such member or former member engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor in violation of the law.

⁶ e.g., the California Fair Chance Act.

D. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017* requires amateur sports organizations to offer consistent training on prevention of child abuse to adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors, and subject to parental consent, to members who are minors, regarding prevention of child abuse. The “Core SafeSport Training” offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport meets the requirements of U.S. Soccer’s Athlete & Participant Safety Policy. It consists of three modules: (1) Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education; (2) Mandatory Reporting, and (3) Emotional & Physical Misconduct.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport’s MAAPP requires all Adult Participants to complete the abuse prevention training offered by the Center either before Regular Contact with amateur athletes who are minors, or within the first 45 days of beginning a role as an Adult Participant.

Training provides participants the necessary tools, vocabulary, and information to monitor our sport, minimize the opportunities for child physical or sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns.

Under the MAAPP, the Center’s training requirements are as follows:

Adult Participants Required to Complete Training

- a. The following Adult Participants must complete the *SafeSport Trained Core* either through the Center’s online training or the Center’s approved, in-person training:
 - i. Adult Participants who have regular contact with any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;
 - ii. Adult Participants who have authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;
 - iii. Adult Participants who are employees or board member of U.S. Soccer or an LAO.
 - iv. Adult Participants who have regular contact or authority over any athlete
- b. Adult Participants who are medical providers are required to take training under Section (a) can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the *SafeSport Trained Core*.

U.S. Soccer mandates the minimum training requirements provided in the chart below for its USSPPs and will track training completion for all USSPPs.

1. U.S. Soccer Program Participant SafeSport Training Minimum Requirements

	Core SafeSport Training	Refresher Course
U.S. Soccer Employees and Board Members, Contractors	Prior to beginning work and within 45 days of being appointed to Board	Refresher course every 365 days after core training until year five of training, in which core training is repeated.
Youth National Team Coach, Trainer, Athletic Trainer, Sport Scientist, Physician,	Prior to being approved with the Youth National Team	Refresher course every 365 days after core training until year five of training, in which core training is repeated.

Message Therapist, Administrator		
National Level Referees; referees registering in the U.S. Soccer Learning Center; Coaching Ed. instructors	Prior to being licensed	Refresher course every 365 days after core training until year five of training, in which core training is repeated.
YNT Referees	Prior to being assigned with YNT	Refresher course every 365 days after core training until year five of training, in which core training is repeated.
Chaperones/Vendors/ Consultants	Prior to contact with minor athletes	
Minor Athletes participating with U.S. Soccer (National Teams)	All minor athletes will be offered access to SafeSport training on an annual basis, with parental consent. The applicable program will track the training by description, date and how offered using U.S. Soccer-provided forms.	

2. Access to Training and Accommodations

U.S. Soccer contributes financially to the Center and makes SafeSport training available to its members and Amateur Organization Members at *no additional cost*. The Center will work with U.S. Soccer and its amateur Organization Members to provide training accommodations for persons with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency. U.S. Soccer will provide reasonable accommodations and track any exemptions for individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency.

3. Parent Training

In addition to the training discussed herein, U.S. Soccer will offer the Center for SafeSport’s Parent Training to all parents of Minor Athletes participating with U.S. Soccer on at least an annual basis. Further, the Center has made toolkits available to parents on its website. Parent training is available here: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/training-and-education-services/>.

4. Exemptions

Exemptions from the training required by this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis for victims/survivors of abuse. Requests may be made to U.S. Soccer or directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport at exemptions@safesport.org.

E. OBLIGATION OF U.S. SOCCER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO REPORT

In addition to the obligation to report to law enforcement pursuant to the SafeSport Act, (*see* the Section entitled “Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement ” on page 15, above), USSPPs 18 and older are charged with reporting to each of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and U.S. Soccer. Reports made to U.S. Soccer involving the Center’s jurisdiction will be promptly forwarded to the Center.

Without limiting the foregoing, **all National Team personnel** are obligated to report any suspected violation of the Safe Soccer Framework involving team personnel or athletes *of any age* to U.S. Soccer, either through U.S. Soccer staff in Chicago or the Integrity Hotline (*see* the Section entitled, “How to Report to the U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline,” below.)

The obligation to report is not always satisfied by making an initial report. USSPPs are required to report supplemental information of which he or she becomes aware that may be relevant to a pending investigation.

Importantly, civil or criminal statutes of limitations do not affect or negate the obligation of an USSPP to report possible sexual misconduct to the Center under the Safe Soccer Framework. Misconduct should be reported, regardless of when it occurred.

Individuals who are not USSPPs may nonetheless have an obligation to report suspected child abuse under applicable federal or state law (*see* the Section entitled “Reporting Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement ” on page 15, above). U.S. Soccer urges all organization members to act to report suspected child abuse—only together can we make soccer safer.

F. HOW TO REPORT TO THE U.S. SOCCER INTEGRITY HOTLINE

You may always raise a concern to coaches, referees, team administrators and U.S. Soccer staff. You may also report a concern through U.S. Soccer’s online reporting process at www.safesoccer.com. In addition, we encourage you to use the U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline by calling **(312) 528-7004**.⁷

Reports submitted online or to this Integrity Hotline will be handled as promptly and discreetly as possible, with facts made available only to those who need to investigate and resolve the matter. U.S. Soccer is committed to safeguarding the confidentiality of individuals who submit reports. In the event U.S. Soccer receives a report of suspected child abuse triggering a reporting obligation under the Safe Soccer Framework and applicable federal law, we will make the report directly and/or work with you to make the report.

⁷ Although you may always use the Integrity Hotline confidentially, in the event you make a report of suspected child abuse to law enforcement, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, or another authority, we encourage you not to make an anonymous report simply because an anonymous report will not provide you with evidence that you discharged your mandatory reporting obligation.

G. HOW TO REPORT TO THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

In addition to the U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline, reports may also be made to the Center for SafeSport, including on an anonymous basis, by visiting www.safesport.org and selecting the “Report a Concern” link, or by calling (833)587-7233.

Reports to the U.S. Center for SafeSport falling within the Center’s subject matter jurisdiction will be handled in accordance with the Safe Sport Code and the SafeSport Practices and Procedures available on www.safesport.org.

H. MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT: NO RETALIATION

U.S. Soccer takes all reports of potential violations of the Safe Sport Framework seriously and is committed to confidentiality and investigation of allegations. U.S. Soccer’s Legal Department may conduct or manage Code investigations. Employees who are being investigated for a potential Code violation will have fair notice and an opportunity to be heard prior to any final determination.

U.S. Soccer does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. No individual who makes such a good faith report will be subject to retaliation, including harassment, or any adverse employment consequence, as a result of making a report.

Violations of the Safe Soccer Framework by USSPPs will be handled as provided in the Section V entitled, “Administration of this Handbook” on page 40.

III. PREVENTION POLICIES: LIMITING ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ADULTS AND MINORS

Soccer is a team sport. Although appropriate physical contact and one-on-one interaction between minor athletes and coaches/trainers, etc. may be conducive to improving physical skills, U.S. Soccer believes prudent limitations on one-on-one interactions can reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct without negatively impacting player development or unnecessarily limiting one-on-one time with trusted adults that is healthy and valuable for a child. Part II of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's MAAPP requires U.S. Soccer to implement the following policies which cover one-on-one interactions, meetings and training sessions, athletic training modalities, massages and rubdowns, locker rooms and changing areas, electronic communications, transportation, and lodging. U.S. Soccer Policy 212-3, contained in this Handbook and in the U.S. Soccer Policy Manual, requires that all U.S. Soccer Amateur Organization Members implement these policies in compliance with the MAAPP.

A. ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES: AVOIDING GIFTS

Individuals who groom children will often provide special gifts or privileges, as one strategy to gain the child's trust and fill a need in their life, in advance of sexually abusing the child. Accordingly, U.S. Soccer discourages U.S. Soccer Program Participants, including employees and volunteers, from giving gifts or granting special privileges to athletes and prohibits any such gift or privilege when not available to the entire team.

B. APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

U.S. Soccer adheres to the following principles and guidelines with regard to physical contact with our athletes:

1. Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact

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

- the physical contact takes place in public
- there is no potential for, or actual, sexual contact during the physical contact
- the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult

a. Safety

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

- spotting an athlete so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment

- positioning an athlete’s body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination
- making athletes aware that they might be in harm’s way because of other athletes practicing around them or because of equipment in use.

b. Celebration

Sports are physical by definition and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement, and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief “side hugs”⁸, and
- congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, “jump-arounds” and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment

c. Consolation

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

- embracing a crying athlete (in a public place or circumstance)
- putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”)
- lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and “dusting them off” to encourage them to continue competing

d. Supervision Generally

No minor should be left alone at a training session or at any other time until they are picked up by their parent, older sibling, or other designated adult. It is recommended that the last adult in addition to the coach or athletic trainer wait at the site until the minor is picked up.

C. ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS / INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete’s concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, USSPPs are to observe the following guidelines when dealing with athletes/participants under the age of 18:

1. Interactions Should Be Observable and Interruptible

All one-on-one In-Program Contact between a USSPP and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, except when:

⁸ NOTE: this does *not* include “butt-pats” or “chest bumps.” This outdated means of celebration makes many athletes uncomfortable and is best replaced with a high-five or a fist bump.

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or
- A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to U.S. Soccer for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the U.S. Soccer’s education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with U.S. Soccer’s screening policy; or
- In other circumstances specifically addressed in this policy that allow for certain one-on-one interactions if U.S. Soccer receives parent/guardian consent.

2. Interactions are Monitored

When one-on-one interactions between USSPPs and Minor Athletes occur at our facilities or sanctioned events that are partially or fully under U.S. Soccer’s jurisdiction, USSPPs will monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one.

3. Meetings

- Meetings between USSPPs and Minor Athletes at our facilities may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that (if available) has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- If a mental health care professional meets with minors at our facilities, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy – provided that (1) the door remains unlocked, (2) another adult is present at the facility, (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to our organization. U.S. Soccer shall be notified that the provider will be meeting with the Minor Athlete.

4. Individual Training Sessions

An In-Program individual training session with a Minor Athlete (meaning not a team training, but training involving one athlete and one coach) may be necessary in order to further player development. Under these circumstances, the individual training session should be observable

and interruptible by others. Additionally, written parent/guardian permission is required in advance of the individual training session(s) and must be documented at least annually. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend the individual training. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe individual training sessions.

5. Out-of-Program Contacts

USSPPs are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in private settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home and individual transportation), unless: parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact, the Close-In-Age Exception or Dual Relationship Exception applies, or unless the USSPP is a PCA and meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

D. MASSAGE AND OTHER ATHLETIC TRAINING INTERACTIONS

- All In-Program athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of a Minor Athlete must:
 - Be observable and interruptible; and
 - Have another USSPP physically present for the athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown; and
 - Have documented consent as required below; and
 - Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered; and
 - Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing.
- Providers of athletic training modalities, massages, and rubdowns or U.S. Soccer, when applicable, must obtain consent at least annually from Minor Athletes' parents/guardians before providing any athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns.
- Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw consent at any time.
- Any massage or other athletic training therapy or modality must be provided by a non-coach licensed athletic trainer or other certified professional. Even if a coach is a licensed professional provider, the coach shall not perform a massage or athletic training therapy or modality on an athlete under any circumstances.
- Where possible without compromising an athlete's privacy, such activities should be performed in open/public areas (e.g., in a training room but not behind a screen) and, in any event, should be observable and interruptible.
- Icing and taping near the intimate areas of the body (i.e., "bathing suit areas") is not permitted by a non-licensed medical professional and, in any event, cannot be done without another USSPP present.
- The provider of any massage or other athletic training therapy should, if possible, narrate the steps in the activity before taking them, seeking assent of the minor athlete throughout the process.
- Icing and taping, though not limited to certified professionals, should, where possible without compromising an athlete's privacy, be performed in open/public areas (e.g., on the bench or in locker room with others present).

E. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic communications are an ever-changing aspect of the way we communicate today. The specific rules below may reference certain forms of electronic communication, and the specific application of principles may change with regard to a given app, platform or method of communication, but regardless of the means, **the following principles apply across all manner of electronic communication and must be used to guide adult behavior when communicating with Minor Athletes:**

1. **Content Must be Professional in Nature:** All electronic communications between a coach/team personnel and a Minor Athlete must be professional in nature (i.e., soccer-related) and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or team-oriented communication (i.e., motivation, instruction).
 - ⇒ Communication or conversation regarding illegal or age-inappropriate topics (drugs, alcohol use, sexually explicit language or imagery, or discussion of adult personal life, social activities, relationship, or family issues) is not permitted.
 - ⇒ All communications must comply with the Prohibited Conduct Policy provided in Section II.A, on page 10 of this Handbook.
 - ⇒ U.S. Soccer actively monitors relevant social media posts and reserves the right to remove posts that violate our policies and practices for appropriate behavior and/or to notify the applicable legal guardian of prohibited posts by any athlete.

2. **Communications Must be Open and Transparent:** The content of any electronic communication should be group-based and should always be readily available to share with the Minor Athlete's family, the applicable Club, and U.S. Soccer.
 - ⇒ Administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers may not use SnapChat (or any similar app that automatically deletes the content of a communication) to communicate with minor athletes. Only platforms that allow for open and transparent communication may be used to communicate with minor athletes.
 - ⇒ If a USSPP needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications, another USSPP or the minor's legal guardian must be copied, making the communication open and transparent.
 - ⇒ If a Minor Athlete communicates to the USSPP privately first, the USSPP should respond to the Minor Athlete with a copy to another USSPP or the minor's legal guardian.
 - ⇒ When a USSPP communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, the Adult Participant must copy or include another USSPP or the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians.
 - ⇒ Consider using group-focused platforms under team administrative control (e.g., but not limited to, Teamworks, etc.)

3. **Keep Imagery Public:** In posting imagery, adults are expected to be sensitive to the status of minors. This means any imagery posted to a team website or social media should be soccer-related, not private (e.g., taken in public view), and age appropriate.

- ⇒ Under no circumstances should imagery depict any conduct that would violate any of the U.S. Soccer Safe Soccer Framework.
- ⇒ Requests of parents/guardians of Minor Athletes to remove imagery in which their child is recognizable and individually featured will be honored to the extent practicable.⁹

The following sections apply the above principles to specific areas of electronic communication and should not be viewed as narrowing the above.

1. Prohibited Electronic Communications – Direct Messaging

- USSPPs are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications with amateur athletes who are minors, except under emergency circumstances, or when an exception under Section III.C.1 of this policy exists and consent by the athlete’s parent/guardian has been given.
- USSPPs are not permitted to “private message,” “instant message,” “direct message,” or send photos to a minor athlete privately, regardless of what platform is used.
- USSPPs are not permitted to maintain social media connections with minors; such adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from amateur athletes who are minors and existing social media connections with amateur athletes who are minors shall be discontinued. Instead, Minor Athletes and parents can “friend” the official organization’s team page and coaches can communicate to athletes through the site or through similar group-focused methods of communication.
- Minor Athletes and coaches employed by U.S. Soccer may use email to communicate *provided* the coach is using only his or her “@ussoccer.org” email account and further provided all email content between coach and athlete otherwise complies with this policy. When communicating with a minor athlete through email, another staff or volunteer member or parent must be copied.

2. Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor child not be contacted through electronic communication by the organization or by USSPPs. We will abide by any such request that their child not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.¹⁰

⁹ Where photos are team photos, generally no child is individually featured, but the request will nonetheless be considered in good faith.

¹⁰ In such an event, the legal guardian’s email will be substituted for the Minor Athlete’s email for purposes of National Team call-up communications, etc.

3. Social Media (including Texting, WhatsApp, GroupMe and Similar Apps)

- **Keep personal pages personal.** Administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers may not invite or allow minor athletes to join a personal social media page unless the Dual Relationship Exception applies. Athletes should be reminded that initiating a “friend” request to administrators/coaches/ staff/volunteers is not permitted.
 - Administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers are encouraged to set their social media pages to private settings.
 - Similarly, those who work with Minor Athletes are reminded that they set an example for the Minor Athletes. If a page is not private, U.S. Soccer expects administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers who work with Minor Athletes to refrain from posting inappropriate, off-color content or content that would violate the Prohibited Conduct Policy or otherwise commenting on posts that would.
- **Choose Apps that support group-based communication.** Apps such as TeamWorks™ and GroupMe™ often provide a helpful way to communicate, but again, individual messages should be avoided.
- **Respect reasonable “soccer” hours:** Real-time electronic communications (e.g., texting via SMS, apps, etc.) between coaches and athletes on a group basis is generally allowed between *8 am - 8 pm*, unless there is a specific safety- or soccer-related need to communicate.

F. LOCKER ROOMS/CHANGING AREAS

Athletes (especially minors) are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms and changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because athletes are less supervised than at many other times. The risk of athlete-to-athlete problems, such as child sexual abuse and bullying, harassment, and hazing, is present when coaches or staff members are not monitoring athletes. This is especially true in locker rooms. Adherence to a locker room and changing areas policy enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct.

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

1. Use of Cell Phones and Other Mobile Recording Devices Prohibited

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. As a result, **USE OF A DEVICE'S RECORDING CAPABILITIES IN THE LOCKER ROOMS, REST ROOMS, CHANGING AREAS OR SIMILAR SPACES IS PROHIBITED**. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by the Federation, everyone is fully clothed, parent/legal guardian consent has been obtained for any minor athlete, and two or more USSPPs are present.¹¹

2. Isolated One-On-One Interactions / Monitoring

- At no time are unrelated adults permitted to be alone with a minor in a locker room, rest room, or changing area during In-Program Contact except when:
 - A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to U.S. Soccer for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with U.S. Soccer’s education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with U.S. Soccer’s screening policy.
- The Federation must provide a private or semi-private place for minor athletes to change clothes and/or undress at Federation sanctioned events.

¹¹ For example, senior national teams comprised primarily of adults may allow the use of recording devices by members of the media or Federation communications department personnel with player consent, e.g., at the half, post-game, etc.

- If our organization is using a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, times will be designated for use by each respective group (e.g., adults, minors, etc.)
- Locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas at facilities under partial or full jurisdiction should be regularly and randomly monitored to ensure compliance with these policies.
- USSPPs will make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, we will check on the athlete's whereabouts.
- We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent. If this is necessary, parents should let a coach or administrator know about this in advance.

3. Undress

USSPPs must not change clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a Minor Athlete. USSPPs must not shower with Minor Athletes unless the USSPP meets the Close-In-Age Exception or the shower is part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear. Parents/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with USSPP(s) during In-Program Contact. U.S. Soccer and the USSPP(s) must abide by this request.

G. TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Soccer generally does not arrange for local travel for individual players from home to training/practice/competition.

- A USSPP cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:
 - A Dual Relationship exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”) and:
 - the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to U.S. Soccer for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - the Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - the Adult Participant PCA has complied with the U.S. Soccer’s screening policy; or
 - The USSPP has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian.
- Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/ guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- An USSPP meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the USSPP is accompanied by another USSPP or at least two minors. Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian is required for all transportation sanctioned by an U.S. Soccer at least annually.

We encourage parents/legal guardians to pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

H. LODGING

Team travel is travel that requires overnight stays away from home and occurs when a team/club sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the athletes.

1. U.S. Soccer Program Participant Requirements

U.S. Soccer Program Participants (“USSPPs”) who travel with a team (whether coach, trainer, referee, staff member, or volunteer/parent) must successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with U.S. Soccer’s screening policies and complete

the Core SafeSport Training. Additionally, all USSPPs that travel overnight with Minor Athletes are assumed to have authority over Minor Athletes and thus must comply with the Education and Training Policy in this Handbook.

2. Travel to Competition

- All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between an USSPP and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, and a USSPP cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s), except if:
 - A Dual Relationship Exists, and the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided the U.S. Soccer with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement;
 - The Close-in-Age Exception applies, and the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided the U.S. Soccer with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement; or
 - The Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided advance, written consent to U.S. Soccer for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete and for the lodging arrangement;
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with U.S. Soccer’s screening policy.
- Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually.
- Finally, any USSPP traveling to a competition involving an overnight stay or use of a hotel must agree to and sign the U.S. Soccer’s Team Travel/Lodging policy at least annually.

3. Travel Arrangements

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance by U.S. Soccer. Athletes typically will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. U.S. Soccer will also notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted.

For instance, depending on the ages in travel parties, we may ask hotels to block pay per view channels or clear mini-bar areas. Depending on the size of the group, we may also request an additional large room or suite so that our members and athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in individual hotel rooms, and we will reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize and/or to support appropriate athletic training appointments.

4. Hotel Rooms

- USSPP’s shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete unless:

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or
- A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to U.S. Soccer for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with U.S. Soccer’s education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with U.S. Soccer’s screening policy.
- No adult should enter the hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete unless necessary for the safety of the minor (e.g., in the event of emergency) or unless one of the exceptions above applies. Team meetings should never be conducted in a hotel room used for sleeping.

5. Meetings / Supervision

- Meetings will be conducted consistent with the U.S. Soccer’s policy for one-on-one interactions – i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible.
- Meetings may not be conducted in a hotel room used for sleeping.
- During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, the one-on-one interactions policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present.

6. Mixed-Gender and Mixed-Age Travel¹²

Athletes may only share a room with other athletes of the same age group (e.g., minors with minors, adults with adults). Athletes will also be further grouped by age (and gender, if applicable) for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone. We will make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same gender.¹³

Regardless of gender or age, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).¹⁴

¹² Generally speaking, U.S. Soccer does not operate mixed-gender teams. In the event of such a team in the future, however, athletes may only share a room with other athletes of the same gender.

¹³ Teams relying on parents to serve as chaperones and may be limited in providing this match in gender.

¹⁴ Similarly, and without limiting the impact of the note on page 7, in the event of Referee travel, an adult referee shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a youth/minor referee (unless the adult is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of that youth referee).

7. Coach and Staff Responsibilities

During team travel, coaches and staff members will help athletes, fellow coaches and staff members adhere to policy guidelines in this Handbook.

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

Coaches and staff will:

- prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/guardians of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14 to familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel
- conform to, and monitor for others' adherence, all policies during team travel
- encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/guardians
- ensure athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff, and chaperones
- not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching/staff duties (this applies 24/7 throughout a camp or travel trip)
- immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations to U.S. Soccer and the appropriate authorities

IV. PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

A. RECOGNIZE TO RECOVER™

www.recognizetorecover.org

Recognize to Recover™ is U.S. Soccer's education and awareness program aimed at promoting safe play and reducing injuries in soccer players of all ages. This first-of-its-kind, program was developed with the help of medical experts to provide coaches, players, parents and referees with information, guidance, and additional educational materials to improve the prevention and management of injuries. This comprehensive program addresses:

- Emergency Action Plan Criteria
- Cardiac Conditions Response
- Head and Brain Conditions / Concussion Management
- Environmental Conditions
- Injury Prevention
- Nutrition and Hydration

U.S. Soccer's National Team Program is required to follow Recognize to Recover™ guidelines and the Concussion Management Protocols available at:

www.recognizetorecover.org

www.ussoccerda.com/sports-medicine

We urge all members and Local Affiliated Organizations to adopt Recognize to Recover™ or a similar plan.

B. MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR COMPETITION

U.S. Soccer requires all members of National Team rosters to obtain appropriate medical clearance before participating at a given National Team camp.

Although U.S. Soccer does not control individual clubs and teams nationwide, we encourage all athletes to seek and obtain medical clearance from their personal physician at the start of each season, prior to attending practice, strength and conditioning sessions or competition.

1. Pre-Season Clearance

Annual physical check-ups by qualified physicians may identify medical concerns that could impact safety or performance and are helpful in understanding an athlete's current physical state of readiness for play. Physicians generally should be asked to review medical history,

height/weight, vision, pulse and blood pressure, physical examination, and where practicable, we encourage an orthopedic screening examination and concussion baseline testing. In addition to the foregoing, a physician may recommend additional testing based on an athlete's specific situation.

2. Clearance following Injury

The following applies to the U.S. Soccer National Team Program:

- If an injured player is sent to a Physician, the Physician will determine when the injury has healed enough that the athlete may return to participation.
- Once an athlete has been cleared for return to play by a physician, the team's Athletic Trainer ("AT") or licensed health care provider determines when the athlete is prepared to return to practice and game situations.
- Once an athlete has been cleared by the AT to participate in practice and/or games, it is the coaches' discretion as to when the athlete will resume participation.

C. TREATING MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE POLICY

U.S. Soccer requires that treating medical professionals (physicians, trainers, etc.) serving U.S. Soccer National Team programs comply with applicable regulations for licensure, registration and certification established by and consistent with state and federal laws and generally recognized professional and accrediting organizations.

U.S. Soccer also requires primary source verification of temporary permits, licenses, registrations, or certifications prior to beginning work. Individuals employed in those positions requiring licensure, registration, or certifications, as indicated in the job description are responsible for providing copies of their permit, license, registration or certifications and must possess the required licensure or certification at time of hire in order to perform their duties unless otherwise allowed by regulation (e.g., Athletic Training interns directly supervised by licensed ATs). Employees are responsible for complying with these requirements as well as maintaining their license in good standing, completing all continuing medical education requirements, as applicable, and ensuring timely renewals. Employees will be suspended if required documentation is not received prior to the expiration date and will not be permitted to work until their license, registration, or certification has been verified according to the procedures stated in this policy. Failure to produce documentation within ten working days after suspension may result in termination.

V. ADMINISTRATION OF THIS HANDBOOK

A. EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY OF THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

Pursuant to USOPC Policy and the SafeSport Act, the U.S. Center for SafeSport maintains exclusive authority over (a) actual or suspected sexual misconduct by a Participant; and (b) misconduct that is reasonably related to an underlying allegation of sexual misconduct. Exclusive authority means that (y) only the Center will investigate and manage any related hearing involving sexual misconduct and (z) neither U.S. Soccer, the USOPC nor any Participant will conduct its own investigation or arbitration with respect to possible sexual misconduct.

Where a report is made to U.S. Soccer, via the Integrity Hotline or otherwise, and the matter implicates the exclusive jurisdiction of the Center, U.S. Soccer will promptly report the matter to the Center.

The responsibility for administering the remainder of the Safe Soccer Framework, as it applies to Participants, rests with U.S. Soccer, with the oversight of the Chief Legal Officer and the Risk and Audit Committee of the Board of Directors.

B. SAFE SOCCER REVIEW

1. Review Panel

Should a U.S. Soccer Program Participant (“USSPP”) or other individual subject to U.S. Soccer’s background screening policy and who is not an individual with a conditional offer of employment (e.g., either a current employee or another U.S. Soccer participant) receive a “Red Light” finding (from background screening) or an adverse action letter,¹⁵ (e.g., based on an alleged violation of any provision of the Safe Soccer Framework that is deemed supported after a reasonable review by U.S. Soccer) for any conduct except as described in Section B.2. below, the individual has the right to a review by a U.S. Soccer Screening Process Review Panel.¹⁶ The Review Panel will consist of a disinterested, three-person panel selected from the standing U.S. Soccer Appeals Committee panel list.

Unless otherwise notified by the applicable U.S. Soccer program that a shorter period is required, the individual shall have five (5) business days from the date that the USSPP is notified of the finding to request a review. The request for review shall be in writing to legal@ussoccer.org and shall include all arguments the individual wishes to make as well as all written evidence that the individual wishes the Review Panel to consider. By requesting the review, the individual grants permission for his or her complete background check findings, training history, all materials

¹⁵ An adverse action letter may include a temporary or permanent disqualification, a suspension, a removal from future assignments, or other remedial action (e.g., probation) that impacts participation. Notwithstanding the foregoing, U.S. Soccer reserves the right to take any and all available employment action, subject to applicable law, and to require additional training (e.g., SafeSport-certified training) on the part of any participant at any time.

¹⁶ U.S. Soccer may create a different process for certain USSPPs such as athletes, with the approval of the USSPP or the USSPP’s representative.

submitted in the review request, and any other information to be provided to the Review Panel, the Chief Legal Officer, and the legal department for U.S. Soccer.

In addition to any evidence or argument provided by the individual, the Review Panel may consider any recommendation of the U.S. Soccer legal department. Such recommendation must be provided to the Review Panel in writing within five (5) business days from the date the appellant's completed request for review is received ("completed request" means having included all supporting documents). The legal department recommendation is to include all written evidence that the legal department wishes the Review Panel to consider.

Unless otherwise agreed to by the requesting individual, the Review Panel review shall be completed within 15 business days of receipt of the completed request for review and any legal department materials and may be conducted by email.

The Review Panel shall have the authority to determine if the individual should be permitted to participate in the applicable U.S. Soccer program, despite the individual's receipt of a "Red Light" finding or an adverse action letter.

2. Hearing Panel

If the Red Light finding is for a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding other than an adjudication of not guilty for:

- Any felony, unless dismissed;
- Any sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature including but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant;
- Harm to a minor or vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor,

or if the Review Panel assembled pursuant to Section B.1. above does *not* permit participation based on its email review, then the individual has the right to a hearing held by a U.S. Soccer Screening Process Hearing Panel. The Hearing Panel will consist of a disinterested, three-person panel selected from the standing U.S. Soccer Appeals Committee panel list.¹⁷

If the individual has *not* already received an email review under Section V.B.1. above, the individual shall have five (5) business days from the date the individual is notified of the Red Light finding to request a telephone hearing. The request for a telephone hearing shall be in writing to legal@ussoccer.org. The request shall include all written evidence that the individual wishes the Hearing Panel to consider. By requesting the hearing, the individual grants permission for his or her complete background check findings, training history, and other file information to be provided to the Hearing Panel, the Chief Legal Officer, and the legal department for U.S. Soccer.

¹⁷ Members who served on a Review Panel are permitted to serve on a Hearing Panel for the same matter, where necessary.

In addition to any evidence or argument provided by the individual, the Hearing Panel may consider any recommendation of the U.S. Soccer legal department. Such recommendation must be provided to the Hearing Panel in within five (5) business days from that date of the individual's completed request with all supporting documents for hearing and must include all written evidence that the legal department wishes the Hearing Panel to consider. Unless otherwise agreed to by the requesting individual, the review shall be completed within 15 business days of receipt the completed request (with all supporting documents) for a hearing.

If the individual *has* received an email review pursuant to Section V.B.1. above, but has not been approved to register based on email review, a Hearing Panel will be appointed according to the process described above, and the Hearing Panel shall consider the written evidence submitted in conjunction with the email review as well as any testimony given during the telephone hearing by the individual, his or her witnesses, or U.S. Soccer's legal department. The decision of the Hearing Panel shall be final and binding on all parties regarding the application.

C. GRIEVANCES

Parties continue to have the right to avail themselves of the grievances processes outlined in U.S. Soccer Bylaws 702 and 703, as applicable.

D. OTHER APPLICABLE U.S. SOCCER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

In addition to the Safe Soccer Framework, U.S. Soccer maintains Bylaws, Policies and additional policies and guidelines that may provide further guidance on other matters to address conduct not covered by the Safe Soccer Framework. Here is a list of many of these policies, which are subject to amendment from time to time at the discretion of U.S. Soccer, and none of which alter or amend any at-will employment relationship:

- U.S. Soccer Bylaws and Polices and USOPC Bylaws and Policies
- U.S. Soccer Code of Conduct
- U.S. Soccer Employee Handbook
- FIFA Code of Ethics
- Policy on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest

E. DEFINITIONS FOR CERTAIN TERMS USED IN THIS HANDBOOK

a. Adult Participant:

Any adult (18 years of age or older) who is: a member or license holder of U.S. Soccer, a PSO, LAO or USOPC; an employee or board member of U.S. Soccer or a PSO, LAO or USOPC; within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Soccer or a PSO, LAO or USOPC, or authorized, approved, or appointed by U.S. Soccer, a PSO, LAO or USOPC to have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes.

b. Amateur Athlete:

An athlete who meets the eligibility standards established by the National Governing Body or Paralympic sports organization for the sport in which the athlete competes.

c. Amateur Organization Member:

Each Organization Member that is an “**Applicable Entity**” under Title II of the Sports Act as amended by the SafeSport Act¹⁸ or other Organization Member with non-professional soccer programs.

d. 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. *See also* the Power Imbalance definition in the SafeSport Code.

e. Center:

The U.S. Center for SafeSport, an independent 501(c)(3) authorized pursuant to the Safe Sport Act, with jurisdiction over the USOPC and NGBs with regard to safeguarding amateur athletes against abuse, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, in sports, and which has been further tasked with certain duties in the areas of education and outreach, policy development, and response and resolution.

f. Core Center for SafeSport Training:

The Center’s online training or the Center’s in person PPT approved training.

g. Close-in-Age Exception:

An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant does not have authority over a Minor Athlete *and* is not more than four years older than the Minor Athlete. This exception *only* applies within the prevention policies and *not* regarding misconduct defined in

¹⁸ 36 U.S.C. § 220541 defines “Applicable Entity” to include any national governing body, amateur sports organization or other person sanctioned by a national governing body under section 220525, an amateur sports organization reporting under section 220530, or any officer, employee, agent, or member of the foregoing entities.

the SafeSport Code, or to the screening and training requirements imposed by the Center and U.S. Soccer.

h. Dual Relationships:

An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the exception.

i. In-Program Contact:

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

j. Minor Athlete:

Any athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of, an NGB, PSO, USOPC, or LAO, or any other Amateur Organization Member where athletes under the age of 18 participate. ***For the avoidance of doubt, for purposes of the Safe Soccer Framework, "minor" expressly includes referees under the lesser of (1) the age of 18; or (2) the age of majority in the applicable state.***

k. Local Affiliated Organization:

A regional, state, or local club or organization that is directly affiliated with an NGB or that is affiliated with an NGB by its direct affiliation with a regional or state affiliate of said NGB. LAO does not include a regional, state, or local club or organization that is only a member of a National Member Organization of an NGB. LAOs include all State Association members of U.S. Soccer, as well as their affiliated leagues and clubs.

l. National Governing Body (NGB):

A U.S. Olympic National Governing Body, Pan American Sport Organization, or Paralympic Sport Organization recognized by the United States Olympic Committee pursuant to the *Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act*, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501-220529. U.S. Soccer is a National Governing Body.

m. National Member Organization:

A national organization that is directly affiliated with an NGB, over which the NGB has jurisdiction (without respect to whether the NGB has disciplinary authority over individual members of that national organization) and is (a) an Amateur Sports Organization requesting sanction from an NGB, or (b) an Applicable Amateur Sports Organization under the Safe Sport Act.

n. Partial or Full Jurisdiction:

The Center’s jurisdiction includes any sanctioned event (including all travel and lodging in connection with the event) by the NGB, PSO, USOPC, or LAO, or any facility that the NGB, PSO, USOPC, or LAO owns, leases, or rents for practice, training, or competition. For clarity, U.S. Soccer has jurisdiction over its Organization Members, but does not have any jurisdiction over individuals registered with LAOs or other Organization Members.

o. Personal Care Assistant:

An Adult Participant who assists an athlete requiring help with activities of daily living (ADL) 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, PCAs must be authorized by the athlete’s parent/guardian.

p. Paralympic Sports Organization (PSO):

An amateur sports organization recognized and certified as an NGB by the USOPC.

q. Regular Contact:

Ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein an Adult Participant is in a role of direct and active engagement with any Minor Athlete(s). Examples include but are not limited to adult members within National Governing Bodies (NGB), Paralympic Sport Organizations, and United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) employees, volunteers, board members, medical staff, event staff (including contractors), officials, contractors and vendors who have regular contact with minors.

r. Refresher Training:

The Center’s online training courses or the Center’s in person PPT approved training designated as “refresher” courses.

s. The Safe Sport Act:

Public Law 115-126, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017.

t. The SafeSport Code

Amended SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements, (the “SafeSport Code,” available at: <https://www.safesport.org/policies-procedures>).

u. USOPC:

The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

VI. U.S. SOCCER POLICY 212-3: ATHLETE AND PARTICIPANT SAFETY POLICY

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

Consistent with U.S. Soccer Bylaw 212, Organization Members are required to, among other obligations, 1) comply with applicable law and, in particular, the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the “**Sports Act**”); 2) if the member recruits, trains, fields or funds soccer players, it must establish a risk management program to promote the safety and protect the welfare of participants; and 3) adopt policies prohibiting sexual abuse. Effective February 14, 2018, Public Law 115-126, the *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act* of 2017 (the “**SafeSport Act**”), amends the Sports Act, and requires applicable amateur sports organizations (as such term is defined in the SafeSport Act, 36 U.S.C. § 220530(b)) to:

- Comply with the SafeSport Act’s reporting requirements and prohibit retaliation by the applicable amateur sports organization against any individual who makes a report (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(1));
- Establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete who is a minor and an adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility under the jurisdiction of the applicable amateur sports organization (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(2));
- Offer and provide consistent training to adult members in regular contact with minor amateur athletes and, subject to parental consent, to members who are minors, regarding prevention and reporting of child abuse (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(3)); and
- Prohibit retaliation, by the applicable amateur sports organization, against any individual who makes a report of suspected child abuse. (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(4)).

The purpose of this policy is to require an Athlete and Participant Safety/Safe Soccer program as part of each Organization Member’s risk management program and set out standards for such a program.

Policy 212-3

B. POLICY:

Each Organization Member that is an “**Applicable Entity**” under Title II of the Sports Act as amended by the SafeSport Act¹⁹ or other Organization Member with non-professional soccer programs (collectively, “Amateur Organization Members”) in which adult members have regular contact with Minor Athletes must maintain, as part of that risk management program, an athlete and participant safety program that includes the six components listed below. In addition, any *other* Organization Member that does not have adult participants who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors must nonetheless maintain, as part of the risk management program required under Bylaw 212, policies that include at least a Prohibited Conduct Policy consistent with Paragraph 1, below, an Education and Training Policy consistent with Paragraph 3, below, and prevention policies that comply with the Center’s MAAPP and contain all the requirements and provisions of the model policies included in Appendix A of the Safe Soccer Framework.

To allow Amateur Organization Members adequate opportunity to ensure policy changes and compliance, the required policies must be issued by January 1, 2022, and procedures and communications regarding these requirements must be issued in a manner calculated to effect compliance on or before January 1, 2022, but are nonetheless urged to complete compliance as early as practicable.²⁰ Effective January 1, 2022, any Amateur Organization Member not in compliance with this Policy 212-3 will be subject to enforcement as provided in Section 6, below.

1. Prohibited Conduct Policy

Amateur Organization Members must implement and enforce a policy or code of conduct that prohibits misconduct including bullying, hazing, harassment (including sexual harassment), emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct, as those terms are defined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements (the “**SafeSport Code**”).²¹

This policy must apply to all activities under the Amateur Organization Member’s jurisdiction and at least to (1) Amateur Organization Member employees and board members; (2) the members of such Amateur Organization Member; (3) amateur athletes who are minors or referees who are minors (collectively, “**Minor Athletes**”); and (4) *any* adult individuals the Amateur Organization Member authorizes, approves or appoints to have Regular Contact (as defined in the Safe Soccer Framework) with or authority over Minor Athletes (collectively,

¹⁹ 36 U.S.C. § 220541 defines “Applicable Entity” to include any national governing body, amateur sports organization or other person sanctioned by a national governing body under section 220525, an amateur sports organization reporting under section 220530, or any officer, employee, agent, or member of the foregoing entities.

²⁰ These dates are applicable to U.S. Soccer’s Policy 212-3 and provide the date by which U.S. Soccer will enforce compliance with Policy 212-3. Organization Members are advised that the SafeSport Act became effective February 14, 2018.

²¹ The SafeSport Code is available at: <https://www.safesport.org/policies-procedures>.

“**Adult Participants**”). This policy must also prohibit retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct.

NOTE: Minor Athletes expressly includes referees and coaches who are minors. In addition, Participating Adults includes, but is not limited to, coaches and all SYRAs and any referee program-affiliated personnel, including without limitation assigners, having regular contact with Minor Athletes.

2. Appropriate Background Screening

All Amateur Organization Members with Minor Athletes must implement and enforce a policy that requires appropriate background screening of at least adult individuals authorized to have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes by the earlier of 1) prior to Regular Contact with a Minor Athlete; or 2) within the first 45 days of the individual taking on the role giving them access to Minor Athletes.

At a minimum, the policy should include screening against applicable sex offender registries in the relevant state and a check against the Amateur Organization Member’s suspension database, U.S. Soccer’s disqualification list, and the SafeSport disciplinary records available at: www.safesport.org²².

An Organization Member may decide that its background check requirements will not apply to certain or all people under 18 years of age, provided that it clearly publishes that fact in its policy documentation.

NOTE: Given the many options for background screening and the potential for varying cost impacts on organizations of all sizes, the U.S. Soccer Board is referring to the Youth Task Force the issue of background screening for additional discussions and expects further policy development in this area.

3. Education & Training

Amateur Organization Members must implement and enforce a policy (1) requiring education and training designed to meet the Amateur Organization Member’s obligations under the this Policy, the SafeSport Act, and the MAAPP for (a) Amateur Organization Member employees and board members and (b) Adult Participants who have Regular Contact with or authority over amateur athletes who are minors, in each case as a condition to participation, and (2) subject to parental consent, offer and provide training to Minor Athletes. The Policy should require the following:

a. Initial Training for Adults: Core Center for SafeSport Training

The following Adult Participants must complete the SafeSport Trained Core either through the Center’s online training or the Center’s approved, in-person training:

- i. Adult Participants who have Regular Contact with any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;
- ii. Adult Participants who have authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;

²² Please note that many, if not all, of these references and resources for background screening are publicly available at no cost.

iii. Adult Participants who are employees or board members of an Amateur Organization Member.

Adult Participants who are medical providers required to take training under Section (a) can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the SafeSport Trained Core.

These policies must require Adult Participants to complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Core SafeSport Training (i.e., the Center's online training or the Center's approved in-person training), and as applicable, follow-up refresher course training, with any new Adult Participants to receive initial training upon the earlier of:

- Before Regular Contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor begins, and
- Within the first 45 days of either initial membership or upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy.

Each Amateur Organization Member must track whether its Adult Participants have completed the training required by Section 3.

b. Refresher Course(s) for Adults

The above listed Adult Participants must complete a refresher course on an annual basis, beginning the calendar year after completing the SafeSport Trained Core. Every four years, Adult Participants will complete the SafeSport Trained Core training. Adult Participants who are medical providers can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the SafeSport Trained Core and are required to take the refresher courses on an annual basis.

c. Training for Minor Athletes

Amateur Organization Members with Minor Athletes must – subject to parental consent – offer and provide the U.S. Center for SafeSport's minor athlete training regarding the prevention of child abuse to any Minor Athletes on an annual basis. The Center's minor athlete training can be found at www.athletesafety.org. Amateur Organization Members with Minor Athletes must track:

- A description of the training(s);
- The date the training(s) was offered and given, and
- A description of how the training(s) was offered and given.

d. Training for Parents

Amateur Organization Members with Minor Athletes must offer and provide the U.S. Center for SafeSport's parent training to parents of Minor Athletes on an annual basis. The U.S. Center for SafeSport's parent course is located at www.athletesafety.org.

4. Reporting

Amateur Organization Members must maintain a procedure for reporting misconduct, including violation of the SafeSport Code or the MAAPP, to the Amateur Organization Member and, to the extent required by the SafeSport Act, mandate reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities and/or the Center for SafeSport. The procedure should be clear that reporting may be made anonymously, and that no direct fees or other cost is involved in making a report. Each Amateur Organization Member must also maintain a policy prohibiting retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct.

5. Limiting One-on-One Interactions – Required Policies

All Amateur Organization Members are required to establish policies to limit one-on-one interactions between Minor Athletes and any Adult Participant who is not their legal guardian (“Prevention Policies”). These policies must comply with all requirements of the Center’s MAAPP and must contain all the required elements of the model policies included as Appendix A to the Safe Soccer Framework. The policies must address the topics below by January 1, 2022, and require full compliance with MAAPP policy requirements by the same date:

- One-on-One Interactions, including meetings and individual training sessions
- Athletic training modalities, massages and rubdowns
- Locker rooms and changing areas
- Electronic communications
- Transportation and Lodging

a. Minor Athletes Who Become Adult Athletes

All athletes turning 18 who still meet the threshold for Regular Contact or authority must complete the SafeSport Core training, and must comply with the Prevention Policies herein, absent the Close-In-Age exception which may apply to the enforcement of Prevention Policies only.

b. Implementation

The mandatory components set forth in the model policies contained in Appendix A of the Safe Soccer Framework set a minimum standard and comply with the Center’s MAAPP requirements. In implementing the required policies, an Amateur Organization Members may choose to implement a policy that is stricter than the model policy, if it includes or is stricter than the mandatory component.

6. Enforcement

a. By Organization Members

Each Amateur Organization Member must enforce its Athlete & Participant Safety Policy and Prevention Policies, consistent with the SafeSport Act and the Center’s MAAPP. Specifically, violations of the policy must be subject to an appropriate grievance process that is materially free of bias and conflicts of interest, to address allegations of misconduct following the report or

complaint of misconduct. This grievance process must include the opportunity for review by a disinterested individual or body and a right to appeal a final decision rendered by an Amateur Organization Member's process pursuant to U.S. Soccer Bylaw 704.

b. By U.S. Soccer

Pursuant to Bylaw 212, U.S. Soccer reserves the right to, either directly or through a contracted third-party service provider, survey, audit, require certifications of compliance with, and otherwise review compliance by its Amateur Organization Members with this policy. Failure of any Amateur Organization Member to issue and implement the policies required by this Policy 212-3 will constitute a violation of Bylaw 212 Section 1.

VII. APPENDIX A – MEMBER TOOLKIT:

Template Policies for U.S. Soccer Members, Local Affiliated Organizations, and other Amateur Organization Members

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, you reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport has created a series of template policies for use by all NGB Amateur Organization Members who are required to comply with the SafeSport Act. Pursuant to the Center’s MAAPP and U.S. Soccer Policy 212-3, we require all U.S. Soccer Amateur Organization Members to review the attached template policies alongside U.S. Soccer’s Policies, conduct their own assessment of their respective practices, and implement policies and practices that both meet MAAPP requirements and best meet the needs of their individual organization.

A. ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, you reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships.

The following is a model one-on-one policy, provided to assist Amateur Organization Members in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by an Amateur Organization Member must include the Mandatory Components.

Mandatory Components

Amateur Organization Member policies must include components a through d.

This policy shall apply to all In-Program Contact between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes.

a. Observable and interruptible

- One-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible.
- Isolated, one-on-one interactions between Minor Athletes and Adult Participants are prohibited, except under emergency circumstances, unless:
 - A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Amateur Organization Member for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's screening policy.

b. Meetings and Training Sessions

Adult Participants must follow the one-on-one interaction policy in all meetings and training sessions where Minor Athletes are present.

c. Meetings with mental health care professionals

If a mental health care professional meets with a Minor Athlete at a sanctioned event or a facility, which is partially or fully under our jurisdiction, the meeting must be observable and interruptible except if: (1) the door remains unlocked, (2) another adult is present at the facility, (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, although the minor's identity need not be disclosed; (4) the organization is notified that the provide will be meeting with a Minor Athlete, and (4) written legal guardian consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to our organization.

d. Individual training sessions

One-on-one, In-Program, individual training sessions must be observable and interruptible except if:

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Amateur Organization Member for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's screening policy.

The Adult Participant providing the individual training must obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian at least annually, which may be withdrawn at any time. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.

Recommended Components

e. Monitoring

When one-on-one interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes occur at a facility partially or fully under the organization's jurisdiction, another Adult Participant will monitor each meeting or training session. Monitoring includes reviewing the parent/guardian consent form, knowing that the meeting or training session is occurring, knowing the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and dropping in on the meeting or training session.

f. Parent Training

Parents/guardians receive the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to have a meeting or training session with an Adult Participant subject to these policies.

B. ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES, MESSAGES AND RUBDOWNS

The following is a model massages and rubdowns policy, provided to assist Amateur Organization Members in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by an Amateur Organization Member must include the Mandatory Components.

Mandatory components

Amateur Organization Members must include components a through c.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to all In-Program training athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of Minor Athletes.

b. Licensed, certified professional

- Any athletic training modality, massage or rubdown performed by an Adult on a minor athlete at our facilities or a training or competition venue is prohibited unless such Adult is a licensed massage therapist.
- Any athletic training modality, massage or rubdown performed at our facilities or a training or competition venue by a licensed professional must be observable and interruptible. Any massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room.
- Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.

c. Written consent

Written consent by a legal guardian shall be obtained at least annually before providing any athletic modality, massage, or rubdown on a minor athlete. This consent may be withdrawn at any time. Parents must be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

Recommended Components

d. Parent training

Parents/guardians receive the U.S. Center for SafeSport education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their

Minor Athlete to receive an athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown.

- e. The provider should narrate the steps in the massage, rubdown, or athletic training modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.

C. LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

The following is a model locker room and changing area policy provided to assist Amateur Organization Members in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by an Amateur Organization Member must include the Mandatory Components.

Mandatory Components

Amateur Organization Members must include components a through f.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) All In-Program Contact between Adult Participants and Minor Athlete(s) in a locker room, changing area, or similar space
- 2) Staff and board members of an Amateur Organization Member

b. Use of recording devices

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras in locker rooms, rest rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under our organization's jurisdiction is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that: parent/legal guardian consent has been obtained, such exceptions are approved by the Amateur Organization Member, everyone is fully clothed, and two or more Adult Participants are present.

c. Isolated one-on-one interactions

- All one-on-one, In-Program contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete in a locker room, rest room, or changing area must be observable and interruptible, except if:
 - A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-In-Age Exception applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Amateur Organization Member for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and

- The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member’s education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member’s screening policy.
- If our organization is using a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, we will designate times for use by Adult Participants, if any.

d. Undress

Under no circumstances shall an Adult Participant shower with Minor Athletes or otherwise be undressed (disrobed or partially or fully unclothed where private body parts are exposed) in front of minor athletes unless: a Dual Relationship exists, the Close-In-Age Exception applies, or a minor athlete requires a Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”) and the PCA requirements set forth in above have been fulfilled.

e. Monitoring

Our organization regularly and randomly monitors the use of locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas at facilities under our jurisdiction to ensure compliance with these policies. Our organization will provide a private or semi-private place for minor athletes to change clothes or undress at sanctioned events that include locker rooms and/or changing areas for athlete use.

f. Non-exclusive facility

If our organization uses a facility not under its jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Adult Participants are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth here.

Recommended Components

- g. Adults make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, we will check on the athlete’s whereabouts.
- h. We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a

same-sex parent. If this is necessary, parents should let a coach or administrator know about this in advance.

D. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS²³

The following is a model electronic communications policy, provided to assist Amateur Organization Members in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by an Amateur Organization Member must include the Mandatory Components.

Mandatory components

Amateur Organization Members must include components a through f.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adult Participants who have regular contact with Minor Athletes
- 2) Staff and board members at an Amateur Organization Member

b. Content

All electronic communication originating from Adult Participants to Minor Athletes must be open and transparent, and professional in nature.

c. Open and transparent: All electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be open and transparent except if:

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or
- A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Amateur Organization Member for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Organization's screening policy.

²³ Electronic communications include, but are not limited to phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching, texting and social media.

d. Open and transparent means:

- If an Adult Participant needs to communicate directly with a Minor Athlete via electronic communications, another Adult Participant or the minor's legal guardian will be copied.
- If a Minor Athlete communicates to the Adult Participant privately first, the Adult Participant should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Adult Participant or the minor's legal guardian.
- An Adult Participant communicating electronically to the entire team will copy another Adult Participant.
- Minor Athletes may "friend" the organization's official page.
- Only platforms that allow for open and transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

e. Prohibited electronic communications

- Adult Participants are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications with amateur athletes who are minors, except under the exceptions above.
- Adult Participants are not permitted to "private message," "instant message," "direct message", or send photos via Snapchat or Instagram to a minor athlete privately, except under the exceptions above.
- Adult Participants are not permitted to maintain social media connections with minors; such adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from Minor Athletes and existing social media connections with Minor Athletes shall be discontinued, except under the exceptions above.

f. Prohibited electronic communications

Legal guardians may request in writing that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the organization or by the organization's Adult Participants. The organization will abide by any such request that their child not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

Recommended components

g. Hours

Electronic communications will only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

h. Monitoring

- The organization monitors its social media pages and removes any posts that violate the organization's policies and practices for appropriate behavior.
- The organization will inform the legal guardian of a minor athlete of any prohibited posts, as well as the organization's administrator.

i. Social Media Connections

- Adult Participants are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with minor athletes and should discontinue existing social media connections with minor athletes.

E. TRANSPORTATION

The following is a model transportation, provided to assist Amateur Organization Members in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by an Amateur Organization Member must include the Mandatory Components.

Mandatory Components

Amateur Organization Members must include components a through d. "Transportation" consists of travel to training, practice, and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

- a. An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:
 - A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Amateur Organization Member for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's screening policy.
 - The Adult Participant has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.
- b. Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- c. Adult Participants may transport Minor Athletes if accompanied by at least one other Adult Participant or at least two minors.
- d. Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian is required for all transportation arranged by the Amateur Organization Member.

Recommended Components

e. Shared or Carpool Travel Arrangement

We encourage parents/legal guardians to pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

f. Parent Training

Parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor to travel alone with an Adult Participant.

F. LODGING

The following is a model lodging policy, provided to assist Amateur Organization Members in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by an Amateur Organization Member must include the Mandatory Components.

Mandatory Components

Amateur Organization Members must include components a through e. "Lodging" is team travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises, and that requires an overnight stay or use of a hotel.

a. Hotel Rooms and Other Sleeping Arrangements: All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, and an Adult Participant cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s), except if:

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or
- A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Amateur Organization Member for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with the Amateur Organization Member's screening policy.
- The Adult Participant has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.

b. Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually

c. Monitoring or Room Checks During In-Program Travel: If the Amateur Organization Member, club, or team performs room checks

during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present for the room checks.

d. Additional Requirements for Lodging Authorized or Funded by the Amateur Organization Member

- Any Participating Adult traveling with the organization must agree to and sign the organization's Lodging policy at least annually.
- Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athletes are assumed to have authority of Minor Athletes and thus must comply with the Amateur Organization Member's education and training policy.

e. Meetings

- Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the organization's policy for one-on-one interactions – i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible.
- Meetings shall not be conducted in a hotel room.

Recommended Components

f. Adult Participants who travel with the organization must successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with the organization's policies.

g. Parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor to travel alone with a Participating Adult.

VIII. APPENDIX B – ADULT PARTICIPANT CHART

<u>ADULT PARTICIPANT</u>	<u>REGULAR CONTACT</u>	<u>AUTHORITY</u>
U.S. Soccer employees	X	X
U.S. Soccer board members		X
U.S. Soccer medical staff including doctors and athletic trainers	X	X
U.S. Soccer scouts	X	X
National team players having regular contact with minor athletes	X	
National Team coaches	X	X
U.S. Soccer licensed referees and coaches	X	X
Any other U.S. Soccer independent contractors or volunteers having regular contact with minor athletes	X	
LAO employees		X
LAO board members		X
LAO coaches	X	X
LAO adult athletes having regular contact with minor athletes	X	
LAO medical staff including doctors and athletic trainers	X	X
Any LAO independent contractors or volunteers having regular contact with minor athletes	X	