



U.S. SOCCER

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy



I. APPLICATION

This Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (“MAAPP”) applies to any individual designated as “U.S. Soccer Program Participants (“USSPPs”), as defined in the chart below, for purposes of jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.¹ In addition, where noted, certain policies apply to adults at a facility operating under U.S. Soccer’s jurisdiction. When not at a facility operating under U.S. Soccer’s jurisdiction, application will entail communicating the policies to USSPP’s, establishing a reporting mechanism for violation of the policies, and investigating and enforcing violations of the policies.

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 • U.S. Soccer licensed coaches • 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

¹ This policy applies to all USSPPs. Accordingly, U.S. Soccer’s organization members are required to enforce this MAAPP. In accordance with our Policy 212-3, we can hold our members accountable to do so.

II. 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 SafeSport Trained Core offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport meets the requirements U.S. Soccer Policy 212-3. It consists of three modules: (1) Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education; (2) Mandatory Reporting, and (3) Emotional & Physical Misconduct.

U.S. Soccer’s MAAPP requires all USSPPs 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 a USSPP, whichever comes first.

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* Course through the Center’s online 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 members of U.S. Soccer;
 - 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, Massage Therapist, Administrator	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.

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 every 12 months, with parental consent. For training to minor athletes, the applicable program will track the training by description, date and how offered.	

Optional Training

1. USSPPs serving in a volunteer capacity who will **not** have regular contact with or authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor, should take the Center’s brief Volunteer Course (or *SafeSport Trained Core Course*) before engaging or interacting with any minor athlete(s).
2. U.S. Soccer may provide training in *addition to* the *SafeSport Trained Core Course*, although they cannot refer to this training as “SafeSport” training. **Training other than the *SafeSport Trained Core Course* or Refresher does not satisfy this policy.**
3. Parents of minor athletes are provided free online access to the Center’s parent course and are encouraged to take the training.

2. Access to Training and Accommodations

U.S. Soccer contributes financially to the Center and makes SafeSport training available to its members and Organization Members at *no additional cost*. The Center will work with U.S. Soccer and its 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 every 12 months. U.S. Soccer will track a description of the training and how the training was offered and provided to parents. However, U.S.

Soccer is not required to track individual course completions of parents. Further, the Center has made toolkits available to parents on its website. Parent training is available at safesporttrained.org.

4. Exemptions

The Center's online training courses contain information about various forms of abuse. The courses do not include graphic descriptions of abuse or show violent images or video. The content may be uncomfortable or trigger trauma for some participants.

1. Exemptions to the online training requirement may be requested by survivors of abuse and misconduct. Survivors of abuse can request an exemption by contacting U.S. Soccer at legal@ussoccer.org, or can choose to contact the Center directly to request an exemption at exemptions@safesport.org. All exemptions granted by the Center or U.S. Soccer in this category are considered indefinite and do not need to be re-requested every year.
2. Exemptions to the online training requirement for reasons other than survivor of abuse and misconduct are limited to cognitive or physical disability or language barrier. Requests for these exemptions must be made by the individual to U.S. Soccer. U.S. Soccer will determine whether to grant the exemption. If U.S. Soccer grants the exemption, it will track the exemption, and distribute it to the appropriate organization member, to ensure it is appropriately applied to the individual's membership status. U.S. Soccer will preserve documentation that the exemption was granted and for what duration.
3. The Center has several options available to assist individuals in completing the online training courses, including screen reader-compatible versions and course availability in several languages, including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Russian, German and Japanese. If none of the available options will fit the individual's needs, U.S. Soccer may determine whether to grant an exemption.

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 between a Minor Athlete and a USSPP 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 meetings and individual training sessions, manual therapy and therapeutic and recovery modalities, locker rooms and changing areas, electronic communications, transportation, and lodging and residential environments.

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”¹, 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.

¹ 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.

C. INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Sexual abuse often happens when children are alone with their abusers. This section provides policies for meetings to limit one-on-one interactions between children and adults, including mental health care professionals and licensed health care providers.

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:

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception Applies;
- The Emergency 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, licensed health care provider, or a student under the supervision of a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider, 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, although the Minor Athlete’s identity needs not be disclosed, 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. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. 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 Contact

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. MANUAL THERAPY AND THERAPUETIC AND RECOVERY MODALITIES

- All In-Program manual therapy and therapeutic and recover modalities of a Minor Athlete must:
- Be observable and interruptible; and
- Have another USSPP physically present for the modality or manual therapy; 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; and
- The provider must narrate the steps in the modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.
- 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 manual therapy, therapeutic modalities or recover modalities.

- Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw consent at any time.
- Any manual therapy, therapeutic or recovery 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 any manual therapy, therapeutic or recovery 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.
- 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 USSPP 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 U.S. Soccer’s Prohibited Conduct Policy.
 - 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 and U.S. Soccer.
 - USSPPs 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, the minor’s legal guardian, or another adult family member of the Minor Athlete 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, the minor’s legal guardian, or another adult family member of the Minor Athlete.
 - 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, the Minor Athletes’ parents/guardians, or another adult family member of the Minor Athlete.
 - 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’s Prohibited Conduct Policy.
 - 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.²

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.

² Where photos are team photos, generally no child is individually featured, but the request will nonetheless be considered in good faith.

- 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.³

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.

³ 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.

- **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.⁴

2. Isolated One-On-One Interactions / Monitoring

- At no time are unrelated USSPPs permitted to be alone with Minor Athletes 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;
 - The Emergency 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.

⁴ 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.

- The Federation must provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes to change clothes and/or undress at Federation sanctioned events.
- 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 remove their 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, except if:
 - The Close-In-Age Exception applies;
 - The shower is part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear; 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.

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;
- The Emergency 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.
- An USSPP meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the USSPP is accompanied by another USSPP or at least two minors who are at least 8 years of age. Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian is required for all transportation arranged and funded by U.S. Soccer at least annually.
- Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/ guardian can withdraw consent at any time.

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 AND RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

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, unless the USSPP meets the Close-in-Age exception.

2. Travel to Competition

- All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between a 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;
 - The Emergency Exception applies, and the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided 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.
- Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/ guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- Lodging arrangements covered under this policy include, but are not limited to hotel stays, rentals (i.e., Airbnb, VRBO, HomeToGo, etc.), and long-term residential environments, including lodging at training sites and billeting.²
- 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;
 - The Emergency Exception Applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”),

²U.S. Soccer recognizes that the practice of Billeting is covered by U.S. Center for SafeSport’s MAAPP. However, U.S. Soccer does not permit Billeting in its programs.

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.

- **Additionally**, written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian must be obtained for all lodging arrangements, even when an exception exists.
- Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/ guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- 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 Travel⁵

Absent circumstances requiring application of an exception including but not limited to, the Close-In-Age exception, 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.⁶

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).⁷

7. Coach and Staff Responsibilities

During team travel, coaches and staff members will help athletes, fellow coaches and staff members adhere to U.S. Soccer’s Prohibited Conduct Policy and this MAAPP.

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

⁵ 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.

⁶ Teams relying on parents to serve as chaperones and may be limited in providing this match in gender.

⁷ 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).

- 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. POLICY APPROVAL AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

U.S. Soccer's MAAPP must be approved by the Center as described below. The MAAPP may include the recommended components in Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP and the recommended policies in Part IV. Given the uniqueness of each sport, however, some recommended components or policies may not be feasible or appropriate for U.S. Soccer. Such concerns will be addressed with the Center during the Policy Approval and Submission Process described below. U.S. Soccer may choose to implement stricter standards than the model policies.

1. U.S. Soccer may adopt the mandatory minimum requirements of the MAAPP as-is or adapt it to fit its needs. Regardless, U.S. Soccer will submit its policies to the Center at compliance@safesport.org for review and approval by April 1, 2024. The Center will approve, with modifications, or deny the policies. If the Center denies the proposed policy, the mandatory components of Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP become the default policy until the Center approves the policy.
2. U.S. Soccer will require our LAO's to incorporate the mandatory components of Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP. U.S. Soccer may require that its LAOs implement its policies, which may be more stringent than the policies in Part III.
3. The mandatory components of Part III of the Center's Model MAAPP will serve as the default policy for U.S. Soccer should it fail to develop its own policy as required by this section.

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

V. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Adult Participant:**

Any adult (18 years of age or older) who is: a member or license holder of U.S. Soccer or an LAO; an employee or board member of U.S. Soccer or an LAO; within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Soccer or an LAO, or authorized, approved, or appointed by U.S. Soccer or an LAO 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 for the sport in which the athlete competes.

c. Organization Member:

An Organization Member is any organization that is a member of U.S. Soccer under U.S. Soccer Bylaw 202.

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 (determined by birth date) than the Minor Athlete. This exception *only* applies within the prevention policies and *not* regarding misconduct defined in 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 relationship outside of the sport program with a Minor Athlete and the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the exception. The consent must identify for which Required Prevention Policies the parent/guardian is allowing the one-on-one In-Program Contact.

i. Emergency Exception:

This exception applies to all Required Prevention Policies for situations where an Adult Participant must violate requirement(s) of the MAAPP due to an emergency. Adult Participants must carefully consider whether specific circumstances meet the threshold of “emergency.” Adult Participants should document emergency situations.

j. 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.

k. 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 U.S. Soccer, an LAO, or any other Amateur Organization Member where athletes under the age of 18 participate. ***For the avoidance of doubt, for purposes of U.S. Soccer’s safeguarding policies, “minor” expressly includes referees under the lesser of (1) the age of 18; or (2) the age of majority in the applicable state.***

l. 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.

m. 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.

n. 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.

o. Partial or Full Jurisdiction:

The Center’s jurisdiction includes any sanctioned event (including all travel and lodging in connection with the event) by U.S. Soccer, an LAO, or any facility that U.S. soccer or an 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.

p. Personal Care Assistant:

An Adult Participant who assists a parasport 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.

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 amateur athlete(s) who is a minor. 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. Residential Environment:

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

- **Billeting:**

A residential environment facilitated by an Adult Participant, U.S. Soccer, or an LAO, or sanctioned event staff in which a Minor Athlete is temporarily housed in a private home with an adult or family who is not related to or known by the Minor Athlete. This lodging arrangement is in conjunction with an activity related to sport.

v. USOPC:

The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee