



SafeSport

# PROGRAM HANDBOOK



U.S. CENTER FOR  
**SAFESPORT**

CHAMPION RESPECT. END ABUSE.

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## Introduction

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The safety of its Participants is of paramount importance to USA Hockey. This includes both on-ice and off-ice safety; the SafeSport Program and this Handbook address primarily off-ice safety in USA Hockey's programs.

USA Hockey has long had systems in place to protect its Participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct that can be harmful to youth hockey players and other Participants. These include without limitation Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Hazing, Screening, and Locker Room Supervision Policies, in addition to Codes of Conduct applicable to administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players and spectators. This SafeSport Handbook, which was first adopted in 2012, brings together USA Hockey's various policies to protect its Participants from all types of misconduct and abuse.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the "USCSS") opened in March 2017, and USA Hockey and its members first came under the jurisdiction of the USCSS on April 1, 2017 at the commencement of USA Hockey's 2017-18 playing season. The USCSS is an independent nonprofit committed to ending all forms of abuse in sport, including bullying, harassment, hazing, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual misconduct and abuse. On February 14, 2018, the United States government enacted the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017 (the "SafeSport Authorization Act"). Pursuant to the SafeSport Authorization Act, the USCSS has adopted Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies, dated January 23, 2019 (the "MAAPP"), which include policies that the SafeSport Authorization Act requires be adopted by all national governing bodies ("NGBs") recognized by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (the "USOPC"). The USCSS has also adopted the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (the "USCSS Code"), which includes information, policies and procedures that must be complied with by the USOPC, all NGBs recognized by the USOPC, and all programs recognized by a national governing body.

As the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey has adopted this SafeSport Program Handbook to comply with the requirements of the SafeSport Authorization Act, the USOPC and the USCSS, including adoption of provisions from the MAAPP and the USCSS Code. This SafeSport Handbook also includes such other policies, procedures and requirements that USA Hockey considers important to its mission to provide a safe environment within USA Hockey programs. To the extent necessary to comply with the requirements of the SafeSport Authorization Act, the USOPC and the USCSS, USA Hockey's SafeSport Handbook shall be interpreted to comply with such requirements, and shall be deemed to incorporate by reference any requirements not expressly included in this SafeSport Handbook. To the extent of any conflict between the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook and either the MAAPP or USCSS Code, the MAAPP or USCSS Code shall govern.

Each USA Hockey Affiliate, and each USA Hockey Member Program, as a condition of sanctioning by USA Hockey or any Affiliate, must agree to and must comply with the SafeSport Program Policies herein and all requirements of this SafeSport Program Handbook.

USA Hockey's SafeSport Handbook includes the various **Policies** that apply to all USA Hockey Member Programs. It further includes the available resources and required **Training** of USA Hockey and its Member Programs' employees, volunteers, administrators, coaches, parents and players on recognizing and reducing circumstances for potential abuse to occur; information on USA Hockey's **Screening and Background Check**

**Policy**; the availability and procedures for any person to **Report** suspected abuse or misconduct (including protections from any retaliation or repercussions for such reporting); the procedures and means by which USA Hockey, its Affiliates and Member Programs should **Respond** to allegations of abuse and misconduct; and how USA Hockey, its Affiliates and Member Programs will **Monitor and Supervise** this program to help ensure its effectiveness.

Conduct that is prohibited or regulated by the USA Hockey Playing Rules (e.g., rough play, punching an opponent, “intent to injure” incidents, yelling at a referee or opponent, etc.), and complaints related to officiating, are not intended to be covered by the SafeSport Program policies and is instead to be addressed and/or penalized under the Playing Rules.

The SafeSport Program addresses the conduct of Participants, but is not intended to address the conduct of persons who are not Participants. Complaints about the conduct of non-Participants (e.g., conflicts, disputes or arguments between parents and/or other adults) should be directed to the program or team to which they are affiliated.

As described more fully herein, each USA Hockey Affiliate shall have an Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator whose duties will include monitoring the training of Member Program administrators and others within the Affiliate, serving as the Affiliate’s initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, investigating or overseeing the investigation of reports of allegations of violations of SafeSport policies, recommending and (if authorized by the Affiliate) issuing disciplinary measures, compiling information on disciplinary issues within the Affiliate and reporting such information to USA Hockey on a regular basis.

As the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey has delegated the jurisdiction and authority to the USCSS to (1) investigate all reports or allegations (a) that a Participant has engaged in conduct defined in the USCSS Code to be within the USCSS’ exclusive jurisdiction, including without limitation allegations or reports of sexual abuse or misconduct and of any allegations of violations of USA Hockey’s SafeSport Policies that are reasonably related to and accompany a report of allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct (as referenced in Section 1 under Sexual Misconduct Policy), and (b) over other violations defined in the USCSS Code to be within the USCSS’ discretionary jurisdiction and where the USCSS exercises such jurisdiction, (2) issue any interim suspension or measures pending conclusion of the investigation, (3) make recommendations of sanctions or disciplinary action as a result of such investigation, and (4) adjudicate such matters.

Through the USA Hockey SafeSport Program, USA Hockey is committed to creating the safest possible environment for participation in hockey.

Questions about the USA Hockey SafeSport Program, or reports concerning possible violations of the SafeSport Program Policies, may be directed to USA Hockey’s SafeSport Compliance Team by emailing [SafeSport@usahockey.org](mailto:SafeSport@usahockey.org), or calling 800-888-4656.

## COMPONENTS OF THE SAFESPORT PROGRAM

USA Hockey's SafeSport Program involves several component pieces:



## DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

The following terms and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed to them below wherever used in this SafeSport Handbook:

**“Adult”** or **“adult”** shall mean and refer to an individual 18 years of age or older.

**“Affiliate”** shall mean and refer to those Affiliate Associations described in USA Hockey Bylaw 3.

**“Applicable Adult”** shall mean and refer to:

- a) Adult members of USA Hockey who have regular contact with minor Participants;
- b) Any adult authorized by USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program to have regular contact with or authority over minor Participants; and
- c) Adult staff and board members of USA Hockey, an Affiliate or a Member Program.

Additionally, with respect to the One-on-One Interactions Policy, the Locker Room Policy, and the Athletic Training Modalities Policy, an Applicable Adult shall also include all adult members of USA Hockey while at a Facility.

*Provided, that,* an Applicable Adult shall not refer to an adult in an interaction between a minor Participant and that Participant’s legal guardian.

**“Child Abuse”** has the meaning set forth in Section 203 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. § 20341) or any applicable state law.

**“Claimant”** means and refers to the person who is alleged to have experienced conduct that constitutes a violation of the policies set forth herein or in the USCSS Code.

**“Criminal Charge or Disposition”** means that a Participant (a) is or has been subject to any disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty, including, but not limited to: an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation, a plea to the charge or a lesser included offense, a plea of no contest, any plea analogous to an Alford or Kennedy plea, the disposition of the proceeding through a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, deferred prosecution, disposition of supervision, conditional dismissal, juvenile delinquency adjudication, or similar arrangement; (b) is subject to a pending criminal charge(s) or warrant(s) for arrest. Criminal Charges may be evaluated by the USCSS based upon the original charges, amended charges, or those to which a plea was entered.

**“Facility”** shall mean and refer to any facility (including rinks, off-ice facilities or other locations used by a team or hockey organization), when at such time the Facility is either owned or being leased, rented or used by USA Hockey, an Affiliate or a Member Program.

**“Knows or should know”** is used in certain sections of this Handbook with reference to a responsible adult that has knowledge of certain prohibited activities or conduct or, had that adult been properly performing their responsibilities, would have had knowledge of the prohibited activities or conduct.

**“MAAPP”** means and refers to the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies issued by the USCSS dated January 23, 2019, as they may be amended by the USCSS from time to time.

**“Member Program(s)”** means and includes (individually and collectively, as the context requires) all Affiliates of USA Hockey (as defined in the USA Hockey Annual Guide) and all local hockey programs, organizations or leagues that are sanctioned by USA Hockey or an Affiliate of USA Hockey.

**“Minor”** or **“minor”** means and refers to an individual who is, or is believed by the Respondent to be, under the age of 18.

**“NGB”** means and refers to a National Governing Body for a sport as designated by the USOPC under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.



**“Parent”** and **“legal guardian”** shall each mean and refer to a parent and/or legal guardian, as appropriate.

**“Participant”** or **“participant”** means and includes, with respect to USA Hockey, any person who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of an alleged violation:

- (i) Registered with USA Hockey as a Registered Participant Member (players and coaches), Referee, or in the Manager/ Volunteer category;
- (ii) Serving as a member of USA Hockey’s Board of Directors, on a national level council, committee or section, or in any other similar positions appointed by USA Hockey;
- (iii) A coach, official or staff person (e.g., trainers, physicians, equipment managers) for any USA Hockey team, camp or national level program;
- (iv) An employee of USA Hockey, a USA Hockey Affiliate or Member Program; and/or
- (v) Authorized, elected or appointed by USA Hockey, a USA Hockey Affiliate or Member Program including board members of an Affiliate or local program to a position of authority over Minor athletes or to have regular contact with Minor athletes (even if not registered with USA Hockey).

**“Respondent”** shall mean and refer to a Participant who is alleged to have violated any of the policies set forth herein or in the USCSS Code.

**“SafeSport Authorization Act”** means and refers to the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017.

**“USCSS”** shall mean and refer to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

**“USCSS Code”** shall mean and refer to the policies and procedures adopted by the USCSS for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement’s sport National Governing Bodies, which may be found at <https://www.safesport.org>.

**“USOPC”** shall mean and refer to the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee.





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## SECTION I

# USA Hockey SafeSport Policies

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USA Hockey is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional, and social development and ensuring it promotes an environment free from abuse and misconduct. As part of this program USA Hockey has implemented policies below addressing certain types of abuse and misconduct, certain policies intended to reduce potential misconduct, to monitor and govern the areas where potential abuse and misconduct might occur, and certain policies pertaining to the procedures and interactions with the USCSS.

**The Policies below address the following types of abuse and misconduct and set forth boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct:**

- Sexual Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct
- Emotional Misconduct
- Bullying
- Threats
- Harassment
- Hazing

**The Policies below are implemented to incorporate protections to reduce the risks of potential abuse:**

- One-on-One Interactions Policy
- Locker Room Policy
- Athletic Training Modalities Policy
- Social Media & Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Policy
- Billeting Policy

In addition, the USCSS Code includes policies prohibiting misconduct with respect to violations of the USCSS's policies on Aiding and Abetting, Misconduct Related to Reporting to the USCSS and Misconduct Related to the USCSS's Process.

In addition to violation of the policies set forth herein, it shall be a violation of the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook and USCSS Code for a Participant to have a Criminal Charge or Disposition.

All USA Hockey Participants shall familiarize themselves with each form of misconduct and the policies herein and in the USCSS Code, and shall refrain from engaging in misconduct and/or violating any of these policies.

In the event that any of USA Hockey's or any of its Member Programs' adult Participants observe inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse, or any other type of abuse or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each such person to immediately report their observations to the appropriate person as described in Section IV of this Handbook. USA Hockey, all Affiliates, all Member Programs, and all adult Participants are required to promptly report any alleged violations of the Sexual Misconduct Policy to the USCSS and to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, and are requested and strongly encouraged to promptly report any alleged violations of the Sexual Misconduct Policy to USA Hockey as set forth in Section IV below. In the event USA Hockey receives a report of a violation of the Sexual Misconduct Policy that has not been reported to the USCSS, USA Hockey will make such report.

**In addition to reporting within USA Hockey and the USCSS, such persons must also report suspected Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct to appropriate law enforcement authorities when required under USA Hockey's SafeSport Handbook, the USCSS Code, and/or under applicable law. Employees and volunteers should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities or the USCSS.**

USA Hockey has **ZERO TOLERANCE** for abuse and misconduct. How USA Hockey and its Member Programs respond to an allegation of abuse or misconduct is described in Section V of this Handbook.

### **Jurisdiction of the USCSS**

- A. USCSS Exclusive Jurisdiction. The USCSS shall have exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations that a Participant has violated the Sexual Misconduct Policy, including without limitation child sexual abuse and any misconduct that is reasonably related to an underlying allegation of Sexual Misconduct, Criminal Charges or Dispositions involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct; Misconduct Related to Reporting, where the underlying allegation involves Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct; Aiding and Abetting, when it relates to the Center's process; Misconduct Related to the Center's Process; and Other Inappropriate Conduct.
- B. USCSS Discretionary Jurisdiction. The USCSS shall have discretionary jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations that a Participant engaged in any other violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook or the USCSS Code, including any Criminal Charges or Dispositions not involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct.
- C. USCSS Notice of Exercise of Jurisdiction and Adoption of Previous Measures. Upon the USCSS's issuance of a Notice of Exercise of Jurisdiction, any temporary measures (including a summary suspension) previously imposed by USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program will be automatically and immediately adopted by the Center as its own, will be applicable throughout the USCSS's jurisdiction, and will remain in effect unless and until the USCSS modifies those measures.
- D. USA Hockey Jurisdiction.
  - i. USA Hockey (including through USA Hockey Affiliates and/or Member Programs) retains the authority and jurisdiction to investigate and address any allegations of violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook and/or USCSS Code that are not within the USCSS's exclusive jurisdiction, provided that, in the event that the USCSS exercises jurisdiction of a matter within its discretionary jurisdiction, then USA Hockey, USA Hockey Affiliates and/or Member Programs shall no longer exercise jurisdiction over the matter.
  - ii. Prior to the USCSS expressly exercising jurisdiction over particular allegations regarding a particular Participant, USA Hockey, USA Hockey Affiliates and/or Member Programs may implement necessary and/or appropriate measures, up to and including a suspension, to address any allegations of misconduct. If, and when, the USCSS expressly exercises jurisdiction over particular allegations regarding a particular Participant, USA Hockey, USA Hockey Affiliates and Member Programs cannot issue – in response to those allegations – a suspension or other restriction that may deny or threaten to deny a Respondent's opportunity to participate in sport. USA Hockey, or an Affiliate or Member

Program in consultation with USA Hockey, may implement any necessary safety plan(s) or interim measure(s) to address the safety of other Participants.

Each USA Hockey Affiliate, and each USA Hockey Member Program, as a condition of sanctioning by USA Hockey or any Affiliate, must agree to and must comply with the SafeSport Program Policies herein and all requirements of this SafeSport Program Handbook.

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND CHILD ABUSE

### U.S. Center for SafeSport

The USA Hockey Board of Directors has determined that USA Hockey's policies prohibiting Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse shall be the same as the applicable policies of the USCSS, and all persons within the jurisdiction of USA Hockey shall comply with the Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse policies of the USCSS. All capitalized terms not defined herein shall have the meaning set forth in the USCSS Code.

As the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey has adopted the policies prohibiting Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse as set forth in the USCSS Code, which may be found at <https://www.safesport.org>. Any violation of the Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse policies of the USCSS by a Participant shall subject such person to appropriate disciplinary action by the USCSS and/or USA Hockey, including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

### Reporting Obligations

Pursuant to the SafeSport Authorization Act, any adult who is authorized by USA Hockey, a member of USA Hockey, or any Member Program, to interact with a Minor or amateur athlete at a Facility or at any event sanctioned USA Hockey or a Member Program, is considered a mandatory reporter. If an Adult Participant reasonably suspects that an incident(s) of Sexual Misconduct has occurred, they **must** immediately report the incident(s) to both the USCSS and to applicable law enforcement authorities. An adult Participant's failure to report may subject such person to disciplinary action by the USCSS and/or USA Hockey.

USA Hockey may not be aware of a report made to the USCSS or law enforcement and may not know the circumstances or allegations being made regarding a member of USA Hockey. Accordingly, in addition to any legal obligation of an entity or person to report Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse to the USCSS and law enforcement authorities, all adult Participants are requested and strongly encouraged to promptly report any alleged violations of this Sexual Misconduct Policy to USA Hockey as set forth in Section IV below so that USA Hockey is aware of the allegations and can take immediate action when appropriate to protect USA Hockey Participants.

The duty to report to USCSS and USA Hockey and USCSS's jurisdiction to investigate shall not supersede any local, state, or federal reporting requirements or jurisdiction, and shall not affect or impair the ability of any person that reports to the USCSS from also reporting to the appropriate local, state or federal authorities.

### Prohibited Conduct and Jurisdiction

The USCSS shall have authority and jurisdiction over the investigation and resolution of any allegations of violations by any Participant of the Sexual Misconduct policies set forth in the USCSS Code, which prohibit sexual behavior involving minors by an adult Participant and in some cases between minors, including without limitation (as such terms are defined in the USCSS Code):

- Sexual or Gender-related Harassment;
- Non-consensual Sexual Contact;
- Non-consensual Sexual Intercourse;
- Sexual Exploitation;
- Bullying or Hazing or Other Inappropriate Conduct of a sexual nature, including:

- an adult Participant engaging in an intimate or romantic relationship where an imbalance of power exists,
- an adult Participant intentionally exposing a minor to content or imagery of a sexual nature, including but not limited to pornography, sexual comment(s), sexual gestures, and/or sexual situation(s).
- an adult Participant intentionally exposing private areas, or inducing another to do so, to an adult where there is an imbalance of power, or to a minor, or
- an adult Participant engaging in inappropriate physical contact with a Participant where an imbalance of power exists.

The USCSS shall also have exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations that a Participant has a Criminal Charge or Disposition involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct.

The USCSS shall also have authority and exclusive jurisdiction over any conduct described in the USCSS Code as Aiding and Abetting when it relates to the Center’s Process, Misconduct Related to Reporting where the underlying allegation involves Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct (including failing to report to the USCSS and intentionally filing a false allegation), and Misconduct Related to the USCSS’s Process (including an abuse of process and retaliation). The behaviors or conduct prohibited by the USCSS Code may be found at <https://www.safesport.org>.

The USCSS shall also have authority and jurisdiction over the investigation and resolution of reports or allegations of the USA Hockey SafeSport policies other than Sexual Misconduct (e.g., Physical Misconduct, Bullying, Locker Room Policy, etc.) where such conduct is reasonably related to and accompanies a report or allegations involving Sexual Misconduct.

Notwithstanding the jurisdiction of the USCSS as set forth above, prior to the USCSS expressly exercising such jurisdiction, USA Hockey and Member Programs retain the authority to address any allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct on an interim/temporary basis, including through the issuance of a summary suspension over such Participant. Upon the USCSS’s issuance of a Notice of Exercise of Jurisdiction, any temporary suspension, discipline, or other measures previously imposed by USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program will be automatically and immediately adopted by the USCSS as its own, will be applicable throughout the USCSS’s jurisdiction, and will remain in effect unless and until the USCSS modifies those measures. Once the USCSS exercises jurisdiction over particular allegations regarding a particular Participant, neither USA Hockey nor any Member Program may issue a new suspension in response to those allegations. However, USA Hockey and Member Programs may still put in place any necessary safety plan(s) or interim measure(s) short of those measures that may deny or threaten to deny a Participant’s opportunity to participate.

## PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no Physical Misconduct of any Participant involved in any of its Member Programs by any other Participant.

Physical Misconduct is any intentional contact or non-contact behavior by a Participant that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey and that causes, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to another person. Examples of Physical Misconduct may include, without limitation:

- a. *Contact violations.* Punching, beating, biting, striking, strangling or slapping another; intentionally hitting another with objects, such as sporting equipment; encouraging or knowingly permitting a hockey player or referee to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional. The activity known as “Locker Boxing” (fighting with helmet and gloves) is not accepted as part of hockey and constitutes Physical Misconduct that can produce head trauma in children and young adults and is prohibited in any USA Hockey Member Program.

- b. *Non-contact violations.* Isolating a person in a confined space, such as locking a Participant in a small space; forcing a Participant to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface); withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep; providing alcohol to a person under the legal drinking age; providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to another.
- c. *Criminal Conduct.* Physical Misconduct includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).
- d. *Exclusion.* Physical Misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement (i.e., methods that are reasonably designed to coach, teach, demonstrate or improve a hockey skill), physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athletic performance. In hockey, for example, Physical Misconduct does not include, in addition to other permitted physical conduct, appropriately shooting pucks at a goaltender, demonstrating checking and other hockey skills, and communicating with or directing participants during the course of a game or practice by touching or moving them in a non-threatening, non-sexual manner. Physical Misconduct also does not include conduct reasonably accepted as part of ice hockey and/or conduct reasonably accepted as part of Participant's participation in ice hockey.

Physical Misconduct also does not include conduct between opponents that occurs during or in connection with a game that is covered by the USA Hockey Playing Rules. Such conduct should be addressed under the Playing Rules.

Any conduct defined as Physical Misconduct in the USCSS Code that is not expressly included in the definition of Physical Misconduct above, is prohibited and shall be a violation of this Policy. Any Participant who engages in any act of Physical Misconduct that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

## EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no Emotional Misconduct of any Participant involved in any of its Member Programs by any other Participant.

Emotional Misconduct is any conduct by a Participant that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey and includes (a) Verbal Acts, (b) Physical Acts (c) Acts that Deny Attention or Support, (d) Criminal Conduct and/or (e) Stalking. Emotional Misconduct is determined by the objective behaviors, not whether harm is intended or results from the behavior.

- a. *Verbal Acts.* Repeatedly and excessively verbally assaulting or attacking someone personally in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- b. *Physical Acts.* Repeated and/or severe physically aggressive behaviors by a Participant, including but not limited to, throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of others, punching walls, windows or other objects.
- c. *Acts that Deny Attention or Support.* Ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time, including routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Participant from practice.
- d. *Criminal Conduct.* Emotional Misconduct includes any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).
- e. *Stalking.* Stalking occurs (as further defined in the USCSS Code) when a person engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person, and knows or should know, that the course of conduct would cause a reasonable person to (i) fear for their safety, (ii) fear for the safety of a third person, or (iii) experience substantial emotional distress. Stalking may also include cyber-stalking.
- f. *Exclusion.* Emotional Misconduct does not include professionally accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline

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

While a single Verbal Act or Physical Act may be inappropriate and justify a review and/or disciplinary or other action by USA Hockey or any of its Member Programs, such single incidents would typically not constitute Emotional Misconduct.

Emotional Misconduct also does not include conduct between opponents or officials that occurs during or in connection with a game that is covered by the USA Hockey Playing Rules. Such conduct should be addressed under the Playing Rules.

Any conduct defined as Emotional Misconduct in the USCSS Code that is not expressly included in the definition of Emotional Misconduct above, is prohibited and shall be a violation of this Policy. A Participant who engages in Emotional Misconduct that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

**Note:** *Bullying, harassment, and hazing often involve some form of emotional misconduct.*

## BULLYING

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no Bullying of any Participant involved in any of its Member Programs by any other Participant. The hockey environment should be conducive to the enjoyment of hockey and free from any type of bullying behavior.

Bullying is any repeated and/or severe behavior(s) that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey and that is (a) aggressive (b) directed at a Minor, and (c) intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish the Minor emotionally, physically or sexually. Bullying-like behaviors directed at adults are addressed under other forms of misconduct, such as Hazing and/or Harassment. Examples of Bullying behavior may include, without limitation, repeated and/or severe:

- a. *Physical.* Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, strangling, spitting or slapping, or throwing objects (such as sporting equipment) at another person.
- b. *Verbal.* Ridiculing, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.
- c. *Social, including cyberbullying.* Use of rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; using electronic communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate someone; socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same.
- d. *Sexual.* Ridiculing or taunting based on gender or sexual orientation (real or perceived), gender traits or behavior, or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.
- e. *Criminal Conduct.* Bullying behavior includes any conduct described as bullying under federal or state law.
- f. *Exclusion.* Conduct may not rise to the level of Bullying behavior if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views and/or positions. Bullying does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athletic performance.

Bullying also does not include rough play or conduct between opponents that occurs during or in connection with a game that is covered by the USA Hockey Playing Rules. Such conduct should be addressed under the Playing Rules.



Any conduct defined as Bullying in the USCSS Code that is not expressly included in the definition of Bullying above, is prohibited and shall be a violation of this Policy.

While other team members are often the perpetrators of Bullying, it is a violation of this Policy if an adult Participant knows or should know of the bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene or report on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).

A USA Hockey Participant who engages in any act of Bullying that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the Bullying behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

## THREATS

It is the policy of USA Hockey that threats by a Participant to harm another Participant are not acceptable in USA Hockey programs.

A threat to harm others includes any written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted expression of intent to physically injure or harm someone else. A threat may be communicated directly to the intended victim or communicated to a third party. Threatening behavior by a Participant is prohibited in any manner in connection with any USA Hockey sanctioned activities or events.

It is a violation of this Policy if an Adult Participant knows or should know of the threatening behavior but takes no action to intervene or report on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).

Any USA Hockey Participant who engages in any act of threatening behavior that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the threatening behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

## HARASSMENT

It is the policy of USA Hockey that harassing behavior of any Participant shall be prohibited in USA Hockey and Member Programs by any other Participant. The purpose of this Policy is to describe the types of conduct and behaviors that are considered Harassment subject to this Policy, and for which Participants may be subject to disciplinary action.

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

- a. causes fear, humiliation or annoyance;
- b. offends or degrades;
- c. creates a hostile environment;
- d. reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability;  
or
- e. any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

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

Conduct may not rise to the level of Harassment if it is rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from

conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views and/or positions. Harassment does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athletic performance.

Any conduct defined as Harassment in the USCSS Code that is not expressly included in the definition of Harassment above, is prohibited and shall be a violation of this Policy.

Conduct that constitutes Harassment may occur during a hockey game. Such instances should be addressed under the USA Hockey Playing Rules, including through supplementary discipline under Playing Rule 410.

While other team members are often the perpetrators of Harassment, it is a violation of this Policy if an Adult Participant knows or should know of the Harassment but takes no action to intervene or report on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).

A USA Hockey Participant who engages in any act of harassing behavior that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the harassing behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

## HAZING

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no Hazing of any Participant involved in any of USA Hockey's Member Programs by any other Participant.

Hazing is any conduct that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey and that subjects another person, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, humiliate, degrade or intimidate the person as a condition of joining or being socially accepted by a group, team, or organization. Purported consent by the person subject to Hazing is not a defense, regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate. Examples of Hazing include:

- a. *Contact acts.* Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining another person; beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault. The activity known as "Locker Boxing" (fighting with helmet and gloves) is also a form of Hazing that can produce head trauma in children and young adults and is prohibited in any USA Hockey Member Program.
- b. *Non-contact acts.* Requiring or forcing the consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances, including participation in binge drinking and drinking games; personal servitude; requiring social actions (e.g., wearing inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g., public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; excessive training requirements demanded of only particular individuals on a team that serve no reasonable or productive training purpose; sleep deprivation; otherwise unnecessary schedule disruptions; withholding of water and/or food; restrictions on personal hygiene.
- c. *Sexualized acts.* Actual or simulated conduct of a sexual nature.
- d. *Criminal acts.* Any act or conduct that constitutes hazing under applicable federal or state law.
- e. *Exclusions.* Conduct may not rise to the level of Hazing if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views and/or positions. Hazing does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved athletic performance. In ice hockey, for example, activities that do not constitute Hazing include directing or allowing a younger player to pick up pucks or move nets after practice or bring or fill water bottles, or giving older players first preference in team assignments, responsibilities, accommodations, facilities, or equipment.

Any conduct defined as Hazing in the USCSS Code that is not expressly included in the definition of Hazing above, is prohibited and shall be a violation of this Policy.

While other team members are often the perpetrators of Hazing toward their teammates, it is a violation of this Policy if an Adult Participant knows or should know of the Hazing but takes no action to intervene or report on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A USA Hockey Participant who engages in Hazing that occurs within a context that is reasonably related to hockey is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited, to suspension, permanent suspension and/ or referral to law enforcement authorities.

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS POLICY

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. USA Hockey requires that Applicable Adults shall not engage in any prohibited one-on-one interactions with any minor Participants. By reducing such interactions between minors and adults, USA Hockey seeks to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in its programs.

- a. *Observable and interruptible.* One-on-one interactions between a minor Participant and an Applicable Adult at a Facility are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult and the other adult is made aware of the interaction. One-on-one interactions between minor Participants and an Applicable Adult at a Facility are prohibited, except for meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers as described below, and under emergency circumstances.
- b. *Meetings.* Meetings between Applicable Adults and minor Participants at a Facility may only occur if another adult is present and is advised the meeting is taking place, 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 at a Facility, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- c. *Meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers.* If a mental health care professional and/or health care provider meets with minor Participants at a Facility, 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 in advance by the mental health care professional and/or health care provider, with a copy provided to the Member Program.
- d. *Individual training sessions.* Individual training sessions between Applicable Adults and minor Participants are permitted at a Facility if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. It is the responsibility of the Applicable Adult to obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session if the individual training session is not observable and interruptible by another adult. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.
- e. *Out-of-program contacts.* Coaches are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor Participants in settings outside of the program that are not observable and interruptible (including, but not limited to, one's home and individual transportation). All other Applicable Adults are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor Participants in settings outside of the program that are not observable and interruptible (including, but not limited to, one's home and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided in advance. Nonetheless, such arrangements may raise risks of actual or perceived misconduct, and are strongly discouraged.

## LOCKER ROOM POLICY

Youth players are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms, changing areas and restrooms due to various stages of dress/undress and because players are often less supervised than at other times. Athlete-to-athlete problems, such as sexual abuse, bullying, harassment or hazing, often occur when a coach or other responsible adult is not in a position to observe – this is especially true in locker rooms. Adherence to a locker room policy enhances privacy and significantly reduces the likelihood of misconduct. Proper supervision of the locker room areas also helps ensure that players that may have suffered an injury during a game or practice have an adult present to confer with regarding such injury.

### Locker Room Supervision

USA Hockey is concerned with locker room activities between minor Participants; minor Participants and adult Participants; adults being alone with individual minor Participants in locker rooms; and with non-official or non-related adults having unsupervised access to minor Participants at team events.

***It is the policy of USA Hockey that all USA Hockey Member Programs must have at least one responsible screened and trained adult (which may include coaches, managers or other volunteers) present at all times and monitoring the locker room during all team events*** to assure that only Participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room and to supervise the conduct in the locker room. While it is not always possible, two locker room monitors are preferable.

Preferred locker room monitoring includes having locker room monitors inside the locker room while Participants are in the locker room; at a minimum, locker room monitors must be in the immediate vicinity outside the locker room (near the door within arm's length and so that the monitor can sufficiently hear inside the locker room) ***who also regularly and frequently enters the locker room to monitor activity inside***. The responsible adult(s) who monitors and supervises the locker room shall have completed SafeSport Training in compliance with [Section II](#) and completed a background check in compliance with [Section III](#) of this Handbook. If the monitor(s) are inside, then it is strongly recommended that there be two monitors, as having a second monitor may help prevent allegations of impropriety by a monitor alone in the locker room. A Member Program or team may impose or follow stricter monitoring requirements. ***All Member Programs are responsible to work with their teams and coaches to adequately ensure that locker room monitors are in place at all appropriate times.***

Further, responsible adults must also secure the locker room appropriately during times when minor Participants are on the ice. If a minor Participant goes to a locker room during practice or a game, and does not return in a timely fashion, then an Applicable Adult (or if possible two) should check on the minor Participant's whereabouts.

It shall be permissible for a Member Program or team to prohibit parents from a locker room. However, in doing so the team shall be required to have properly screened adults monitoring and supervising the locker room as required above. With younger players, it is generally appropriate to allow parents to assist the player with getting equipment on and off before and after games or practices and they should be allowed in the locker room to do so.

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, which includes voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras, increase the risk for some forms of abuse or misconduct. As a result, the use of any device's recording capabilities in the locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a Facility is prohibited. Notwithstanding the foregoing, exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by the Member Program, two or more Applicable Adults are present, and where all persons in the locker room are appropriately dressed and have been advised that photographs or recordings are being taken.

Coaches sometimes may need to use the team locker room to get dressed before or after practices. Coaches must always have at least a base layer of clothing at all times while changing, or must use a private area to

change into acceptable clothing. Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Applicable Adult intentionally expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a minor Participant.

***Except for players on the same team,*** at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor Participant in a locker room or changing area when at a Facility, except under emergency circumstances. Any individual meetings between a minor Participant and a coach or other adult in a locker room shall require that a second responsible adult is present.

If a team is using a Facility that requires shared use of a locker room or changing area, the Member Program must designate separate times for use by Applicable Adults, if any.

All Member Programs shall publish locker room policies to the parents of all minor Participants that are specific to the Facilities they regularly use. The Member Program's policies shall include the program's (a) practices for supervising and monitoring locker rooms and changing areas; (b) permission or lack of permission for parents to be in the locker rooms; (c) prohibited conduct, including at least all forms of abuse and misconduct prohibited by USA Hockey; and (d) specific policies regarding the use of mobile electronic devices and phones and prohibiting the use of a device's recording capabilities. A sample locker room policy form may be found at [www.usahockey.com/safesport](http://www.usahockey.com/safesport).

For each team, the coach and/or team administrators shall be responsible for compliance with the locker room supervision requirements of this Policy. A coach and/or team administrator that fails to take appropriate steps to ensure the Locker Room Policy is adhered to, and any USA Hockey Participant or parent of a Participant who otherwise violates this Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action; moreover, an Affiliate may impose fines or other sanctions against any Member Program whose teams do not comply with this Locker Room Policy.

### **Co-Ed Locker Rooms**

As a team sport in which youth teams can often include players of different genders, special circumstances may exist that can increase the chance of abuse or misconduct. If the team consists of players of different genders, the privacy rights of all players must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. It is not acceptable under USA Hockey's Sexual Misconduct Policy for persons to be observing the opposite gender while they dress or undress. There are a variety of ways to comply with the above tenets, and what works may depend on the locker rooms that are available at a particular Facility. Although there are likely other acceptable ways to accommodate teams of different genders, below are some other options for compliance with USA Hockey's Co-ed Locker Room Policy:

- a. ***Minimum Attire.*** Have a minimum attire policy if sharing one locker room. All players should be required to arrive at the rink wearing their hockey base layers or shorts and t-shirts (in good condition - no holes or tears in clothing) under their street clothes. All members of the team must have this minimum attire before entering a co-ed locker room so that no player of one gender has the opportunity to see players of the opposite gender in a state of dress/undress. If a player is not wearing the required minimum attire, that player can be directed to a restroom or private area to change into his/her minimum attire before entering the locker room.
- b. ***Separate Locker Rooms.*** A second option is for the program to have players of different genders change/dress in separate, supervised locker rooms. Then approximately ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes before each game/practice everyone is to be ready in gear in one designated locker room so the coach can address the entire team. If a player (whether boy or girl) is not fully dressed by the time the coach arrives, then that player must go to a separate locker room or bathroom to finish dressing. The onus is on the players being properly dressed when the coaches actually begin preparing the team for the practice or game.
- c. ***Alternate Use of One Locker Room.*** Another option is the alternate use of a single locker room. Players of one gender dress in the locker room while players of the opposite gender wait outside. When the one group is ready (this may mean dressed in gear but not skates and helmets), then the players switch places and the players in gear wait for players of opposite gender to get dressed. No coaching is to

be done until all the players are together in the locker room. Taking turns is a means of reasonable accommodation; neither gender group should be favored, nor should one group be the group who always has to wait to change.

Where possible, when players of different genders are together in the locker room, there should be at least two adults in the locker room that have been properly screened in compliance with USA Hockey Screening Policy. USA Hockey would consider it acceptable to have one locker room monitor immediately outside the locker room and regularly checking in on the locker room, but two locker room monitors is always preferable. If there are two monitors, then they can monitor from inside the locker room. Having only one person inside a locker room can expose that person to allegations, so a second person can help protect one another from allegations.

The USA Hockey SafeSport website ([www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram](http://www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram)) contains sample approaches that may be used by a Member Program depending on the facilities available at a particular arena.

### **Officials Locker Rooms**

Officials locker rooms in hockey arenas are usually set apart from the team locker rooms. For a given game, there may be 2, 3 or 4 officials, and there may also be officials sharing the officials' locker room that are present for the game prior or game following. There may be officials of different genders, or there may be Minor age officials working with adult officials. Additionally, officiating supervisors or assignors may be present in some or all of these situations. Officials should never assume that other officials are comfortable with the same locker room situation as they are.

If separate dressing rooms are not available, then the following protocol shall be followed:

1. Prior to the game, officials of one gender enters the dressing room to get dressed while the other official(s) steps out.
2. Once dressed, the first official(s) steps out and allows the other official(s) to enter the dressing room to get dressed.
3. Once both dressed, both genders can be in the dressing room to conduct pre-game meeting.

The same procedure must be followed after the game.

In situations with Minor officials working with or sharing locker rooms with adult officials, the adult officials should take precautions to minimize and avoid extended unobserved time alone with minors. This can be addressed by:

- a. Inviting the parent into the locker room;
- b. Asking another official to wait in the locker room before leaving; and/or
- c. Leaving the locker room door open.

Supervisors and assignors of officials must always avoid any one-on-one interactions with any official (regardless of age or gender) unless such interactions occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.

## **ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES**

Due to the nature of the contact between an athlete and a person performing a massage, rubdown, taping or other athletic training modalities, the potential for abuse or misconduct can occur. This Policy must be adopted by every USA Hockey Member Program where any massage, rubdown, taping or other athletic training modalities are permitted on a Participant.

Any massage or rubdown, taping or other athletic training modality must be conducted in an open and interruptible location. Any massage of a minor Participant must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor Participant and the person performing the massage, rubdown or athletic training modality in the room.

Prior to any massage or rubdown of a minor Participant, the person performing the massage or rubdown shall obtain the written consent of the minor Participant's legal guardian. The consent must specify if it is for a specific treatment or for ongoing treatments over a period of time, and the nature of the treatment. If requested, parents must be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

As part of USA Hockey's emphasis on safety, communications involving any Participant, and especially minor Participants, should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning travel, practice or game schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, administrators, players and their families is crucial. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to minor Participants. The improper use of social media, mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce these risks.

All electronic communication originating from Applicable Adults to minor Participants must be professional in nature. Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor Participants needs to communicate directly with a minor Participant via electronic communications (including social media), the Minor's parent must be copied. If a minor Participant communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult should respond to the minor Participant with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor's legal guardian. When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor Participants communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult **must** copy another adult.

Pursuant to these requirements, all electronic communication between coach and player must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Coaches, players and all team personnel must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication. All content between coaches and players should be readily available to share with the public or families of the player or coach. If the player is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication must also copy or include the player's parents.

### Social Media

Social media makes it easy to share ideas and experiences. USA Hockey recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other electronic communications can be especially concerning where minor Participants are involved. Coaches are prohibited from having minor Participants joined to or connected through their personal Facebook page, Instagram or any other similar social media application. To facilitate communication, an official organization or team page may be set up and players and parents may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page and coaches can communicate to the team through that site. All electronic communication of any kind between coach (and any Applicable Adult) and a minor Participant, including use of social media, must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team oriented motivational purposes.

### Email, Text Messaging and Similar Electronic Communications

Coaches, team managers and players may use email and text messaging to communicate. All email and text message content between coaches/team managers and minor Participants must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Emails and text messages from a coach to any minor Participant **must** include a copy to the player's parents. Where possible, a coach should be provided and use the organization web site email center (the coach's return email address will contain "@organization.com") for all communications with the team, players, and player's parents, where applicable.

## **Web-Based Conferencing and Similar Communications**

Coaches, team managers, and others may use web-based conferencing software (i.e. Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams) to meet with, train, or otherwise communicate with minor Participants. All web-based conferencing of any kind between a coach (or any Applicable Adult) and a minor Participant must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of training, communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes. Any invitation to such communication to any minor Participant must include the player's parents or legal guardians and must adhere to all of the requirements found elsewhere in this Handbook as if the virtual meeting were being held in person, including the One on One Interactions Policy and the minimum attire policy (found within the Locker Room Policy). Virtual lessons or live stream videos should be observable and interruptible by another adult, such as another coach or parent. Coaches, team managers, and players may send pre-recorded technique or training videos, but must copy at least one other Applicable Adult.

## **Social Media and Group Chats Among Players**

Minor hockey players often create group chats through texting or other social media applications. Such group chats are concerning because Minors may engage in bullying behavior, sexual misconduct, harassment, threats, discriminatory and other inappropriate conduct that may violate policies of USA Hockey. Group chats among Minor hockey players should be supervised by an adult to mitigate these risks.

## **Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery with Athlete**

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor Participant that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults in the program, the Member Program, team, coaches and administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

## **Abuse and Misconduct**

Social media and other means of electronic communication can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other Participant of a USA Hockey Member Program will not be tolerated and are considered violations of USA Hockey's SafeSport Program.

A USA Hockey Participant who violates this Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

## **TRAVEL POLICY**

A significant portion of some USA Hockey participation involves overnight travel for youth teams to games and tournaments. Minor Participants are most vulnerable to abuse or misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a greater risk of misconduct between or among minor Participants. During travel, players may be away from their families and support networks, and the setting – unfamiliar locker rooms, automobiles, and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar. A travel policy provides guidelines so that care is taken to minimize one-on-one interactions between minors and adults while traveling. Further, the policy directs how minor Participants will be supervised between and during travel to and from practice and competitions. Adherence to travel policies helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct. The travel policy should address "Local Travel" which is generally transportation and travel to and from local practices, games and events, and "Organization/Team Travel," which generally includes travel away from the home area and may include overnight stays in a hotel for games or tournaments. Different policies should apply to these two types of travel.

Each USA Hockey Member Program must have a team travel policy applicable to youth teams that is published and provided to all players, parents, coaches and other adults that are travelling with the team. It is strongly



recommended that a signature by each adult (including parents) acknowledging receipt of and agreeing to the travel policy be obtained by the Member Program/team. A sample local and overnight travel policy form for a Member Program may be found at [www.usahockey.com/safesport](http://www.usahockey.com/safesport).

### **Elements of all travel policies must include:**

#### **Local Travel**

- The Member Program, team and their administrators should avoid sponsoring, coordinating, or arranging for local travel, and the parents of a minor player should be responsible for making all local travel arrangements.
- Coaches who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor Participant, absent emergency circumstances, and must have at least two minor Participants or another adult present at all times. All other Applicable Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor Participant, absent emergency circumstances, and must have at least two minor Participants or another adult present at all times. An unrelated minor Participant may ride in a vehicle with an Applicable Adult (other than a coach) who is not a parent/legal guardian **ONLY** if agreed to in writing by the minor Participant's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.
- The restrictions on Applicable Adults riding in a car with minors shall not apply to players on the same team riding in a car together, unless the situation involves an adult age player and a minor 14 years of age or younger.
- Where an Applicable Adult is involved in an unrelated minor Participant's local travel, efforts should be made to ensure that the adult personnel are not alone with the unrelated player, by, for example, picking up or dropping off the players in groups.
- Applicable Adults who are also a player's parent or guardian may provide shared transportation for any player(s) if they pick up their own player first and drop off their own player last.
- It is recognized that in some limited instances an emergency will make it unavoidable for an employee, coach or volunteer to drive alone with an unrelated minor player. However, efforts should be made to minimize these occurrences and to mitigate any circumstances that could lead to allegations of abuse or misconduct. Except under emergency circumstances, an Applicable Adult shall obtain written consent from a minor's parent/legal guardian prior to driving alone with an unrelated Minor Participant.

#### **Organization/Team Travel**

- Coaches shall not travel alone with an unrelated minor Participant. Except in rare circumstances where there are no other reasonable travel options available, Applicable Adults other than coaches shall not travel alone with an unrelated minor Participant, and in all such circumstances the Applicable Adult shall obtain the written permission of the minor Participant's parents in advance of such travel.
- Regardless of gender, Coaches shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor Participant unless the Coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of, or is otherwise related to the minor Participant. Regardless of gender, all other Applicable Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor Participant unless the Applicable Adult is the parent, guardian or sibling of or is otherwise related to the minor Participant, or if the minor Participant's parent(s) provides written consent to such an arrangement in advance. However, it shall be permissible if the parent or guardian of the minor Participant is also sharing the same hotel room (e.g., two adults, one or both of whom is a coach, and their children, share a hotel room).
- It is strongly recommended that organizations and teams incorporate a written and signed parent consent for any minor Participant that will travel without his or her parents.
- Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the players. No Participant will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place and on record, including valid drivers' licenses, automobile liability insurance as required by applicable state law, vehicle in safe working order and compliance with all state laws. All chaperones shall complete applicable SafeSport Training and shall have been screened in compliance with the USA

Hockey Screening Policy and all drivers arranged by the team shall have been screened and the screen shall include a check of appropriate Department of Motor Vehicle records.

- The Member Program or team shall provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones (for example, a recommended number would include at least one coach or adult chaperone for every five to eight players). If a team is composed of both male and female players, then it is recommended that chaperones are arranged of the same gender.
- Minor Participants should share rooms with other Participants of the same gender, with the appropriate number of players assigned per room depending on accommodations.
- Regular monitoring and curfew checks should be made of each room by **at least** two properly screened adults. All Applicable Adults, including coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones, travelling with a team shall be familiar with the SafeSport Program Handbook to monitor compliance with all SafeSport Policies.
- The team personnel shall ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels.
- Meetings shall be conducted consistent with USA Hockey's One-on-One Interactions Policy (i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible). Individual meetings between a player and coach may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms.
- All players shall be permitted to make regular check in phone calls to parents. Team personnel shall allow for any unscheduled check in phone calls initiated by either the player or parents.
- Family members who wish to stay in the team hotel shall be permitted and encouraged to do so.
- The team shall make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental requests when a child is away from home without a parent.
- Specific travel itineraries will be distributed to parents when they are available and will include a detailed itinerary as well as contact information for all team personnel and chaperones.
- If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, reasonable attempts to notify the player's parents will be made before any action is taken.
- No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.
- In all cases involving travel, parents have the right to transport their minor player and have the minor player stay in their hotel room.

Upon proof of a violation of USA Hockey's policies regarding travel, the offending Member Program, team or person will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## BILLETING POLICY

It is recognized that some youth and junior hockey players do leave home to play hockey in a location away from their parents. In those circumstances, the organization or team typically arranges for the player to live with a host or billet family. Having youth players live outside their homes increases risk for abuse and misconduct to occur. All organizations and teams that arrange for players to live with billet families shall have written policies and procedures in place to govern the arrangement. All billeting policies and procedures shall be provided to the player's parents in advance of placing the player with the billet and shall meet the following requirements:

- Billet families and the player and player's parents shall all sign an agreement with the Member Program and/or team that they will comply with the terms and conditions of the Billet Policy, the USCSS Code and the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook.
- As required by the jurisdiction where the player is billeted, the player's parents shall sign and provide a power of attorney and/or guardianship (as necessary by applicable state law) to the billet family adults to allow for them to make emergency medical and schooling decisions.
- Each Member Program or team shall have a billet coordinator who shall be responsible for overseeing compliance with the Billeting Policy, the USCSS Code and all USA Hockey SafeSport Policies.

- **No more than two players** may be housed with any one billet family (at the Junior level, there may be exceptions to the number of players permitted in one billet home if approved by the USA Hockey Junior Council).
- Owners, coaches, team/program management and staff are not allowed to host or billet players.
- Minors must be placed with a billet family and may not reside in an apartment or home solely with other players.
- All adults living in the household of the billet family must be registered with USA Hockey, screened in accordance with the USA Hockey Screening Policy, and must complete the SafeSport Training in compliance with Section II. Proof that these requirements have been met must be received by the team's billet coordinator prior to the player moving in with the family.
- It is strongly recommended that all billet families be two-parent homes. However, single parent billet families may be acceptable, but the organization or team shall take additional reasonable steps to regularly monitor the billeting arrangement and its compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies.
- The Member Program or team shall have a mandatory curfew for all billeted players. The host family may have an earlier curfew.
- Players must agree to comply with the house rules of the billet families, including curfews, chores/cleaning, telephone usage, etc. Complaints about unusual rules shall be addressed with the Member Program/team billet coordinator.
- Players shall not stay overnight at any other home except with the permission of the player's parents and advance notification to the billet family and Member Program or team billet coordinator.
- Players are not to drive billet family vehicles without automobile liability insurance as required by applicable state law, and documentation and approval of the billet family.
- The Member Program's/team's billeting policy shall include requirements that the billet family maintain appropriate homeowners/renters insurance.
- Players living with a billet family shall be permitted to make regular check-in phone calls to parents. Team personnel and billets shall allow for any unscheduled check-in phone calls between the player and parents.

## VIOLATION OF USCSS POLICIES

It is a violation of the USCSS Code for a Participant to violate the USCSS's policies on Aiding and Abetting, Misconduct Related to Reporting to the USCSS, and Misconduct Related to the USCSS's Process, and Willful Tolerance, all as described below and further defined in the USCSS Code.

- A. *Aiding and Abetting*. Aiding and Abetting occurs when one aids, assists, facilitates, promotes, or encourages the commission of a violation of the USCSS Code by a Participant violation of the USCSS Code, including without limitation, knowingly:
1. Allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by the USCSS to be in any way associated with or employed by USA Hockey, a USA Hockey Affiliate or a USA Hockey Member Program;
  2. Allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by the USCSS to coach or instruct Participants;
  3. Allowing any person who has been identified as ineligible by the USCSS to have ownership interest in a USA Hockey Member Program or its related entities;
  4. Providing any coaching-related advice or service to an athlete who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by the USCSS;
  5. Allowing any person to violate the terms of their suspension or any other sanctions imposed by the USCSS.

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

B. Misconduct Related to Reporting to the USCSS.

1. *Failure to Report.* An adult Participant who fails to report actual or suspected Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse to the USCSS and, when appropriate, to law enforcement may be subject to disciplinary action under the USCSS's resolution procedures and may also be subject to federal or state penalties.
2. *Intentionally Filing a False Allegation.* In addition to constituting misconduct, filing a knowingly false allegation that a Participant violated the USCSS Code may violate state criminal law and civil defamation laws. Any person making a knowingly false allegation in a matter over which the USCSS exercises jurisdiction shall be subject to disciplinary action by the USCSS.

C. Misconduct Related to the USCSS's Process. Abuse of Process and Retaliation, as defined below, constitute a violation of the USCSS Code and may give rise to a sanction. In addition, a Participant also violates the Code if someone acts on behalf of the Participant and engages in Abuse of Process or Retaliation, including a Participant's advisor, or the guardian, or family member of a Minor Participant. In such a case, the Participant and/or, if the party acting on behalf of the Participant is also a Participant, that person, may be sanctioned.

1. *Abuse of Process.* A Participant, or someone acting on behalf of a Participant, violates the USCSS Code by directly or indirectly abusing or interfering with the USCSS's process by: (a) falsifying, distorting, or misrepresenting information, the resolution process, or an outcome; (b) destroying or concealing information; (c) attempting to discourage an individual's proper participation in or use of, the USCSS's processes; (d) harassing or intimidating (verbally or physically) any person involved in the USCSS's processes before, during, and/or following proceedings (including up to, through, and after any review by an arbitrator); (e) publicly disclosing a Claimant's identifying information; (f) failing to comply with a temporary measure or other sanction; (g) distributing or otherwise publicizing materials created or produced during an investigation or arbitration as a part of the USCSS policies or procedures, except as required by law or as expressly permitted by the USCSS; or (h) influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit abuse of process.
2. *Retaliation.* Retaliation against anyone for engaging in the USCSS's processes is prohibited, including taking an adverse action against any person for making a good faith report of a possible USCSS Code violation or for participating in any process under the USCSS Code. Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging or participating in the USCSS's processes when the action is reasonably related to the report or engagement with the USCSS. Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred. Retaliation does not include good-faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of a USCSS Code violation.

D. Willful Tolerance. Willful Tolerance occurs when a Participant willfully tolerates any violation of the USCSS Code by a Participant when there is a power imbalance between the violating Participant and the individual(s) being subjected to the violation.



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## SECTION II

# Education and Awareness Training

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Education is a key component of any abuse and misconduct prevention strategy. Awareness training provides relevant Participants with information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns. It is also a strong public statement that the organization places a priority on the safety of its participants.

USA Hockey's policies and procedures require employees and/or volunteers to report abuse, misconduct, and violations of its safety policies (see [Section IV](#), Reporting of Concerns of Abuse). Employees and/or volunteers should have a basic understanding of sexual abuse and the strategies that offenders use to groom their victims. Using a combination of attention, affection and gifts, offenders select a victim, win their trust (and the trust of child's caregiver or "gatekeeper"), manipulate the victim into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing abuse.

The training that must be completed by all persons subject to this Policy shall be the training produced and provided by the USCSS. No other training shall satisfy the training requirements hereunder. The USCSS shall provide its "Core Center for SafeSport Training" and its "Refresher Course." The Core Center for SafeSport Training is taken online and generally takes approximately 90-120 minutes to complete. The Refresher Course is only available after a person has completed the Core Center for SafeSport Training. The Refresher Course is also taken online and generally takes 30 minutes or less to complete. There is no cost to members of USA Hockey to complete either training course.

It is the policy of USA Hockey that those Participants who (1) have regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants (e.g., coaches, team managers, chaperones, etc.), (2) are responsible for enforcing child abuse and misconduct policies, (3) are adults authorized by USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program to have regular contact with or authority over minor Participants, including all persons that are in managerial or supervisory roles of a USA Hockey Member Program that includes Minor hockey players (including all members of such organization's board of directors and owners and administrators of a USA Hockey Member Program), (4) are new and current employees and/or volunteers of USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program, or (5) are hockey players seventeen (17) years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and that play on a team in a classification that allows minor age players, shall complete appropriate training as required herein.

USA Hockey's policy is that the training shall be required for the following categories of Participants as set forth in more detail below (note that USA Hockey may modify these requirements from time to time as it deems appropriate):

- All USA Hockey staff and all members of the USA Hockey Board of Directors, and USA Hockey councils, committees and sections

- Local Program Administrators
  - Coaches
  - Officials
  - Other Volunteers/Employees
  - Players Seventeen (17) or Over on or before December 31 of playing season in age classifications with Minor-Age Players
- A. USA Hockey Staff and National Volunteers. All USA Hockey staff and all members of the USA Hockey Board of Directors, and USA Hockey councils, committees and sections shall be required to complete the applicable SafeSport Training. New staff or volunteers shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to having regular contact with minor athletes, or if they do not have regular contact with minors, not more than 45 days after beginning such role, and shall complete the Refresher Course each subsequent season.
- B. Local Program Administrators. Local programs registering youth players and the program’s leaders, administrators, board members, etc. are the representatives that are primarily and directly responsible for administering and supervising USA Hockey programs at the local level. Although these representatives may not have regular contact with minor Participants, these representatives must be fully versed in USA Hockey’s SafeSport Program and possess the information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for child physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns. Each Member Program registering teams in classifications that may include Minor Participants shall require that those persons in managerial or supervisory roles of such program, including members of such organization’s board of directors and owners and administrators of a USA Hockey sanctioned program, have completed the appropriate SafeSport Training. New administrators shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to having regular contact with minor athletes, or if they do not have regular contact with minors, not more than 45 days after beginning such role, and shall complete the Refresher Course each subsequent season. Upon completion of the applicable SafeSport Training, each person taking the training will be able to print a certificate of completion. For persons that have registered with USA Hockey, USA Hockey will keep a record of those that have completed the training.

On or before September 30 of each playing season, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator for each Affiliate shall confirm with each Member Program and certify to the Affiliate and USA Hockey that those persons in managerial or supervisory roles of each Member Program registering teams in classifications that may include Minor Participants in that Affiliate have completed the training.

- C. Coaches. Coaches are the adults that typically have the most on- and off-ice contact with Minor hockey players. All adult coaches of teams in classifications that may include Minor Participants shall complete the SafeSport Training program prior to the coach’s participation (on-ice or off-ice) in a USA Hockey program. All coaches shall be required to complete the proper SafeSport training program every season (any training taken after April 1 shall be considered effective for the next playing season). New coaches shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice) in their first year of coaching and shall complete the Refresher Course prior to participation each subsequent season.
- D. Officials. Officials also have regular contact with Minor age hockey players as well as with other officials that are Minors. All officials who are or will be seventeen (17) years old or older as of December 31 of that registration season shall complete the SafeSport Training program as a condition of completing their certification requirements every season. New officials required to take SafeSport Training season shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to being certified to officiate and shall complete the Refresher Course as a condition of completing their certification requirements each subsequent season.
- E. Other Volunteers/Employees. All volunteers and employees in USA Hockey Member Programs that will have regular contact with or supervision over Minor Participants, and all persons in a supervisory position of a USA Hockey Member Program registering teams in classifications that may include Minor Participants,

shall be required to complete the SafeSport Training as a condition of being appointed to such position. Volunteers and employees that have less than regular, routine or frequent access to minor Participants are strongly encouraged to complete the SafeSport Training. New volunteers and employees shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training before regular contact with Minor Participants begins and shall complete the Refresher Course each subsequent season.

Affiliates and USA Hockey Member Programs shall assess which categories of volunteers and employees within such programs (e.g., team managers, trainers, specialty coaches, off-ice trainers, locker room monitors, travel chaperones, etc.) will have regular contact with or supervision over Minor Participants and which, consequently, shall be required to complete the SafeSport Training Program as a condition of being appointed to such position. Member Programs should plan early so that volunteers have adequate time to complete the training before assuming duties and before regular contact with minor Participants begins.

Any Member Program may require and enforce policies that its volunteers and employees that do not have regular contact with or authority over minors have registered with USA Hockey and completed the SafeSport Training Program. Any volunteer or employee required or desiring to take the SafeSport Training shall register with USA Hockey as Volunteers in the Manager/Volunteer Member category (**at no charge**) and may complete the training through a link on the SafeSport webpage or registration confirmation email.

Upon completion of the applicable SafeSport Training, each person taking the training will be able to print a certificate of completion. For persons that have registered with USA Hockey, USA Hockey will keep a record of those that have completed the training.

- F. Parents. Parent education is one of the keys to keeping a program safe from abuse and misconduct. Parents can assist by helping avoid situations in which misconduct can occur, by being aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and by reporting suspected abuse. Parents will be made aware of USA Hockey's SafeSport Program through emails and other communications describing the SafeSport Program and additional materials and training (including the SafeSport online training) that is available at [www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram](http://www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram). USA Hockey will also produce posters, brochures and other educational materials to publicize the program and the means of reporting suspected abuse or misconduct. Additionally, USA Hockey will notify all parents about the availability of SafeSport "parent" training videos or other materials that is available to all parents (**please note that the parent training course does not satisfy the training requirement for coaches, officials or other volunteers or administrators**).
- G. Players Seventeen (17) and Over in Age Classifications that Allow Minor Age Players. All players seventeen (17) years of age or older on or before December 31 of that playing season, and that play on a team in a classification that allows minor age players, shall be required to complete SafeSport Training before being added to such team and prior to participation (on-ice or off-ice). This requirement shall apply to all teams in the age classifications Youth, Girls, High School, Junior Hockey, Flex Hockey and Disabled Hockey programs that allow both Minor age and adult age players. Players required to complete the training shall complete the Core Center for SafeSport Training prior to being added to a team and shall complete the Refresher Course each subsequent season in which they are on a team in the above classifications.
- H. Minor Age Players. Subject to parental consent, USA Hockey shall offer and give training to Minor Participants regarding prevention and reporting of child abuse. The training shall be produced by the USCSS, and the offer of training shall be accomplished by USA Hockey notifying parents of Minor Participants of the availability of the training for Minor participants, and how the parents can consent to the training and access the training for their child. The notification to minor Participants shall occur in various ways each year, including through emails directly to the email address used in registration, posting on the USA Hockey website, newsletters, social media and other appropriate communication tools. USA Hockey shall maintain records that it has offered and given training to Minor Participants in conformance with the requirements of the USCSS.

- I. *Persons with Special Needs.* Persons with special needs that are otherwise required to complete SafeSport Training may request accommodation or waiver of the SafeSport Training requirements by request to USA Hockey. A form and instructions for making such request is available at [www.usahockey.com/safesporttraining](http://www.usahockey.com/safesporttraining).

Certain jurisdictions in the United States have mandatory training and testing that may apply to those that work or volunteer with Minor athletes. If state mandated training and testing is required, then each Member Program shall also comply with that state's training requirements. Such state-mandated training shall not satisfy the USCSS and USA Hockey training requirements herein.





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## SECTION III

# Screening and Background Check Program

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### **Purposes of a Screening Policy**

- Protect USA Hockey participants from known offenders so that such known offenders do not have access to USA Hockey members.
- Deter offenders that have not been caught from joining USA Hockey programs because the program has a known policy against abuse.
- Protect USA Hockey's reputation as a sport where participants are safe from abuse.
- Help protect USA Hockey, USA Hockey Member Programs and their respective employees and volunteers from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.

USA Hockey has had a screening policy in place since 1993. USA Hockey was one of the first national sports organizations to implement a screening policy and has been considered a leader in requiring screening of its employees and volunteers. USA Hockey's policy includes set criteria for which a person may be disqualified and prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer of USA Hockey. Under the policy, USA Hockey will not authorize or sanction any employee or volunteer who has regular, routine or frequent access to children unless and until that person consents to be screened and passes a criminal background screen conducted by the Affiliate or USA Hockey.

### **USA Hockey Screening Policy**

Beginning in the 2020-21 season, pursuant to new requirements from the USOPC, USA Hockey has implemented a National Background Screening Program to replace the background screening programs that had been managed by each respective USA Hockey Affiliate and Junior League.

USA Hockey requires that all officials, coaches, volunteers, and other individuals 18 years of age or older who will have regular contact with, or authority over, minor Participants complete a background screen as follows.

#### **At the National Level:**

- All members of the USA Hockey Board of Directors, and each member of a USA Hockey council, committee or section shall be screened upon their election or appointment to the position and then shall be re-screened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All USA Hockey employees shall be screened as a condition of their employment and then shall be re-screened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All coaches, instructors and other staff for any USA Hockey national or district camp, national team, select team, and officiating camps shall be screened as a condition of being selected for such position or shall have been screened by USA Hockey within the past two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.

- All national and district tournament site host volunteers that will have direct access to minor participants shall be screened as a condition of being selected for such position or shall have been screened by USA Hockey within the past two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All participants in the USA Hockey Junior Officiating Development Program shall be screened as a condition of being selected for such position or shall have been screened by USA Hockey within the past two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.

#### **At the Affiliate, Junior and College Levels:**

- All coaches eighteen (18) years of age or older who will have regular contact with, or authority over, minor athletes are required to submit to a background screen before any such contact with minor athletes and shall be rescreened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All officials eighteen (18) years of age or older who will have regular contact with, or authority over, minor athletes are required to submit to a background screen before any such contact with minor athletes and shall be rescreened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All board members or officers of any affiliate or local program eighteen (18) years of age or older, regardless of whether the individual will have regular contact with, or authority over, minor athletes are required to submit to a background screen before entering into such role and shall be rescreened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All volunteers, billets, and anyone else eighteen (18) years of age or older who will have regular contact with, or authority over, minor athletes are required to submit to a background screen before any such contact with minor athletes, and shall be rescreened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.
- All employees who are eighteen (18) years of age or older who will have regular contact with, or authority over, minor athletes are required to submit to a background screen before any such contact with minor athletes, and shall be rescreened every two (2) years, with a supplemental screen every other year.

For purposes of defining those persons who have “regular contact” with minors, USA Hockey considers all of the following persons to have regular contact with minor Participants: (i) members of the Affiliate Board of Directors, (ii) Member Program administrators, including board members, hockey directors and other program staff who have regular contact with or authority over minor Participants, (iii) coaches, (iv) team managers, (v) officials/referees, (vi) locker room monitors, (vii) team drivers (unless professional transportation companies are used), (viii) travel chaperones, and (ix) other persons whose position with a USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program allows them to have frequent or routine contact with minor Participants.

Conversely, USA Hockey does not consider persons serving solely in the following roles to have “regular contact” with or authority minor Participants (not an exhaustive list): (i) scorekeepers, (ii) penalty box operators, (iii) concession stand workers, (iv) arena entry/ticket takers.

As a condition of its affiliation with USA Hockey, each Affiliate, junior league, and the ACHA shall require that all Member Programs have the required volunteers and employees screened through the USA Hockey National Background Screen Program prior to participation or any access to minor participants.

Each Affiliate shall have an Affiliate Screening Coordinator (who may also be the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator) that is responsible for monitoring and reporting on compliance with the screening policy by the Affiliate and all of the Affiliate’s Member Programs.

Pursuant to the USOPC requirements, the USA Hockey National Background Screen Program vendor will search (at a minimum) the following components:

- A. Full Background Checks. All full background check screens will include at least the following search components:
  1. Social Security Number validation;
  2. Name and address history records;

3. Two independent Multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
  4. Federal District Courts search for each name used and district where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable;
  5. County Criminal Records for each name used and county 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;
  6. National Sex Offender Registry database search of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
  7. Multiple National Watch Lists;
  8. SafeSport Disciplinary Records;
  9. 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;
  10. Motor Vehicle Records of at least a 3-year history in the state of licensure; (if driving is required for position);
- B. Supplemental Background Checks. All supplemental off-year background check screens will be conducted using at least the following search components:
1. Multi-Jurisdictional criminal database covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico
  2. Sex Offender Registry database searches of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; and
  3. SafeSport Disciplinary Records.

Pursuant to the USOPC requirements, the following are the **minimum criteria** that will be searched for by the USA Hockey National Background Screen Program screening vendor and which may serve as a basis under which a person may be disqualified or deemed ineligible to serve USA Hockey as an employee or volunteer:

1. Any felony, defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one (1) year in jail or prison, regardless of how it's characterized by jurisdiction;
2. Any misdemeanor involving:
  - All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include 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;
  - Any drug related offenses;
  - 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;
  - Violence against a person, force, or threat of force (including crimes involving a deadly weapon and domestic violence);
  - Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order, and/or threats;
  - Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief;
  - Animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect; and
  - Any DUI/DWI in the last two (2) years or two (2) or more DUIs/DWIs in the last five (5) years; and/or
3. If the applicant is currently listed, or has ever been listed, on a sex offender registry or a similar database.

In addition to the **minimum criteria** above, the following additional criteria (which are unlikely to be found in a criminal record search) shall also serve as a basis under which a person may be disqualified or prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer in any USA Hockey Member Program:

1. An expunged or sealed conviction for any of the minimum criteria above.

2. Being adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children.
  3. Being subject to any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order or protection.
  4. Had their parental rights terminated.
  5. A history with another organization (volunteer, employment, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors.
  6. Resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position, whether paid or unpaid, due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors.
  7. Ever been convicted of or have a pending charge of a lesser crime involving controlled substances or alcohol.
  8. Has a history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to children in USA Hockey.
- B. USA Hockey’s screening policy will include such consents and notifications to be obtained by the screening vendor as are required by applicable state and federal law, including without limitation compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
- C. USA Hockey’s Screening Policy shall have adequate security for the safekeeping, privacy and production of documents and information in connection with its screening of all applicants.
- D. While USA Hockey is responsible for managing and directly supervising the screening program, the Affiliates and Member Programs within each Affiliate must monitor and supervise their programs so that screening is completed before any employee or volunteer has regular, access to or authority over youth participants. This will require more planning by the Member Program to screen adequate numbers of employees and/or volunteers to operate their program.
- E. Some states have specific laws requiring background screening for certain participants in youth sports, including minimum requirements for such screens. Each Affiliate and/or Member Program or their participants may be subject to additional state law screening requirements beyond those set forth in the USA Hockey Background Screening Policy. Whenever reasonably possible, the USA Hockey National Background Screen Program will incorporate and apply those additional state law requirements into its background screening process.

### **USA Hockey National Background Screening Policy Review Procedure**

The USA Hockey National Background Screening Policy Review Procedure is to be used by USA Hockey to review applicants seeking participation in USA Hockey programs in positions that require a background check be conducted prior to the applicant being eligible for such position. Pursuant to the requirements of the USOPC, the USA Hockey Bylaws and the USA Hockey SafeSport Program, USA Hockey, through the National Background Screening Policy Review Procedure, may deny or place limitations on any applicant’s participation in any USA Hockey sanctioned events or programs if it finds that permitting an applicant with negative background check results is inconsistent with the stated purpose of USA Hockey’s bylaws, policies, and/or the USA Hockey SafeSport Program. The National Background Screening Policy Review Procedure details the hearing and appellate process for those applicants who were either denied eligibility or who were granted eligibility with conditions or restrictions and who wish to contest those determinations.

The entire USA Hockey National Background Screening Policy Review Procedure, along with additional resources on USA Hockey’s National Background Screen Program, can be found on the USA Hockey website at <https://www.usahockey.com/backgroundscreen>.



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## SECTION IV

# Reporting of Concerns of Abuse

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An effective reporting policy that results in reports of suspected abuse and misconduct, and does not in any way deter victims or witnesses from reporting abuse and misconduct, is a key element to preventing abuse and misconduct. Potential abusers will avoid involvement in a program where there is a likelihood that suspected abuse will be reported. When sport stakeholders are untrained about how and when to report suspected abuse, they may feel ill-prepared, powerless and lost when it comes to responding to and reporting misconduct. By providing this guidance on when and how to report suspected misconduct, USA Hockey seeks to remove barriers to disclosing misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse.

### **In This Policy on Reporting Concerns of Abuse is:**

- The **Reporting Policy**, which describes who must report violations or suspicions of potential or actual abuse or misconduct, including the obligations to report allegations of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct to the USCSS.
- The **Reporting Procedure**, which describes:
  - to whom reports are made (including the importance of certain reports being made to law enforcement authorities and/or the USCSS)
  - how to make reports to USA Hockey and/or the Affiliate and/or the USCSS
  - confidentiality of reports
  - USA Hockey’s policy on anonymous reports
  - USA Hockey’s policy on protecting those that made reports (“whistleblower” protection)
  - USA Hockey’s policy prohibiting reports made in bad faith
- **How Reports are Handled**, including:
  - further reporting to law enforcement authorities when appropriate;
  - circumstances in which immediate suspension or termination is appropriate; and
  - circumstances where referral of the report to the applicable Member Program, Affiliate or USA Hockey to address, rectify and impose discipline where appropriate.
- **Notification** to parents of other Minor Participants.

### REPORTING POLICY

Accordingly, it is the policy of USA Hockey that every adult Participant of any USA Hockey Member Program must report (1) actual or perceived violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook, (2) any violations of the Sexual Misconduct, Physical Misconduct, Emotional Misconduct, Bullying, Threats or Harassment, or Hazing Policies, and (3) suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse as set forth below.

## **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse**

**Pursuant to the SafeSport Authorization Act, any adult that is authorized by USA Hockey, a member of USA Hockey, or any Member Program, to interact with a Minor or amateur athlete at a Facility or at any event sanctioned USA Hockey or a Member Program, is considered a mandatory reporter. If an Adult Participant reasonably suspects that an incident(s) of Sexual Misconduct has occurred, they *must* immediately report the incident(s) to the USCSS and to applicable law enforcement authorities.**

Any report of misconduct or suspicion of child physical or sexual abuse received by USA Hockey will be taken seriously and handled appropriately. If USA Hockey receives a report of physical or sexual misconduct involving a minor, USA Hockey will make a report to the proper authorities.

Further, in addition to any legal obligation to report Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct to law enforcement authorities and the USCSS, all adult Participants are requested and strongly encouraged to promptly report any alleged violations of the Sexual Misconduct Policy to USA Hockey so that USA Hockey is aware of the allegations and can take immediate action when appropriate. An adult Participant's failure to report as set forth above may subject such person to disciplinary action by the USCSS and/or USA Hockey.

**In some cases, an employee or volunteer may be hesitant about reporting suspected abuse because they are unsure about the credibility of the person making the allegation, are unsure about the credibility or validity of the facts on which the allegations are based, or are concerned about the potential consequences of a false report. It is critical that adult Participants and others considering reporting should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for or prior to reporting their concerns.**

## **Concerns About Potential “Grooming” Behaviors**

Because sexual abusers “groom” children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that an employee, volunteer, parent or Participant may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected sexual grooming behavior should be directed to USA Hockey, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator and/or appropriate law enforcement authorities, and if appropriate or required, to the USCSS.

USA Hockey also strongly encourages parents, players and other hockey Participants to communicate violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook and/or allegations and suspicions of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct to USA Hockey or the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator immediately.

## **Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse**

Approximately 1/3 of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. If you have any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, report it to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and to USA Hockey or the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator immediately, and if appropriate or required, to the USCSS.

## **Reporting Other Misconduct and Policy Violations**

If any staff member, volunteer or other Participant of USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program receives an allegation or observes misconduct or other inappropriate behavior that may violate SafeSport Policies other than Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse, reports of such allegations should be made immediately to USA Hockey as set forth below or to the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator. Reports that are required to be made to USA Hockey and/or the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator include allegations of violations of:

- Physical Misconduct Policy
- Emotional Misconduct Policy
- Bullying Policy

- Threats
- Harassment Policy
- Hazing Policy
- One-on-One Interactions Policy
- Locker Room Policy
- Athletic Training Modalities Policy
- Social Media & Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Policy
- Billeting Policy

USA Hockey will address such reports as provided in this USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook and any requirements of the USCSS or applicable law.

## REPORTING PROCEDURE

### To Whom To Report

As referenced above, the SafeSport Authorization Act requires that any adult authorized by USA Hockey, a member of USA Hockey, or any Member Program, to interact with a Minor or amateur athlete at a Facility or at any event sanctioned USA Hockey or a Member Program, is considered a mandatory reporter and if any such person learns of facts that give reason to suspect that a child has suffered an incident of Child Abuse, including sexual abuse, that person shall as soon as possible make a report of the suspected abuse to the USCSS and to applicable law enforcement authorities.

Applicable state law may have additional legal duties to report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. A compilation of state law information on when a person must make a report to law enforcement authorities can be found at:

1. [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
2. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandate/>
3. [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/)

In addition to reporting allegations of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct to law enforcement and the USCSS, all adult Participants are requested and strongly encouraged to promptly report any alleged violations of the Sexual Misconduct Policy to USA Hockey so that USA Hockey is aware of the allegations and can take immediate action when appropriate. Upon receipt of any report of allegations of violations by a Participant of the Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse Policies, USA Hockey shall promptly report such information to the USCSS.

All reports of violations of any of the USA Hockey SafeSport policies or any violations of this SafeSport Program Handbook shall be made to USA Hockey and/or to the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator.

In some instances, a Claimant may feel more comfortable reporting to their Member Program administrator. Any reports to a Member Program administrator shall be forwarded by that administrator to USA Hockey. Depending on the circumstances, USA Hockey or the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator may refer that report to the Member Program administrator for initial action, investigation and/or discipline.

### How to Report to USCSS

Reports to the USCSS may be reported by (1) completing an online report to the USCSS at <https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern>, or by (2) calling **720-524-5640**. Reports to the USCSS shall be handled according to the USCSS Code.

## How to Report to USA Hockey

Reports to USA Hockey may be made by: (1) clicking on the “Report to USA Hockey” link on the USA Hockey SafeSport Program webpage ([www.usahockey.com/safesport](http://www.usahockey.com/safesport)), (2) emailing to [SafeSport@usahockey.org](mailto:SafeSport@usahockey.org), or (3) calling **800-888-4656**. Reports to USA Hockey are initially handled by the USA Hockey General Counsel and the USA Hockey SafeSport and Legal Administrator.

The USA Hockey SafeSport Program webpage contains contact information for each Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator, and reports may also be directed to the SafeSport Coordinator for the applicable Affiliate.

USA Hockey and its Affiliates will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report, including an anonymous, in-person, verbal or written report. If reporting by email or use of the Reporting Form on the SafeSport Program webpage, **it is strongly encouraged that the following information be included:**

1. the name(s) and contact information of the Claimant(s).
2. the type of misconduct alleged.
3. the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.
4. the date(s) the misconduct was committed.
5. the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct.
6. a summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred.

## Confidentiality

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, USA Hockey and all USA Hockey Member Programs shall on request from the Claimant to keep the Claimant’s name confidential, not make public the names of potential Claimants, the Respondent, or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

## Anonymous Reporting

Anonymous reporting may make it difficult for USA Hockey or the Affiliate to investigate or properly address misconduct or abuse. Additionally, a Respondent to an anonymous report will have an opportunity to contest allegations, and without testimony or other evidence on the record in that hearing, a finding that a Respondent has violated SafeSport Policies will be difficult to prove. However, USA Hockey recognizes it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend or family member to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made without the formality of completing a Report Form:

- by completing the Reporting Form without including their name.
- by expressing concerns verbally to USA Hockey, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator or to their Member Program administrator.
- through email to USA Hockey at [SafeSport@usahockey.org](mailto:SafeSport@usahockey.org) or to the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator.

## “Whistleblower” Protection

Regardless of outcome, it is the policy of USA Hockey and all USA Hockey Member Programs to support the Claimant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. Neither USA Hockey nor any USA Hockey Member Program will encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual, group or organization to retaliate, punish, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith or otherwise participates in an investigation (e.g., a witness). Such actions against a Claimant or witness will be considered a violation of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program and grounds for disciplinary action, and may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

## Bad-Faith Allegations

A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violation that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program and grounds for disciplinary



action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Any person or organization that may have a conflict of interest because they are named in a complaint, are a witness to an allegation, are closely affiliated with the person accused of misconduct, or who may have other potential bias, are considered to have a conflict of interest in the investigation or outcome of the complaint, and shall be recused from participating in an investigation or other disciplinary process. The investigation and hearing process shall be handled by persons that are reasonably disinterested and impartial to the matter and all other persons and the program involved.

## **HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED**

### **Suspicious or Allegations of Child Physical or Sexual Abuse**

#### ***Reporting to Law Enforcement and/or Child Protective Services***

An independent investigation can harm youth and/or interfere with the legal investigative process. Accordingly, USA Hockey, its Member Programs and their administrators, employees and/or volunteers shall not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of allegations of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct as a condition for or prior to reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. As necessary, however, a person receiving a report may ask a few clarifying questions of the minor or person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities.

In addition to the requirements of the SafeSport Authorization Act making any adult that is authorized by USA Hockey, a member of USA Hockey, or any Member Program, to interact with a Minor or amateur athlete at a Facility or at any event sanctioned USA Hockey or a Member Program a mandatory report of suspicions of child abuse or child sexual abuse, most states have mandatory reporting laws making persons holding certain positions required by law to report suspicions of sexual or physical abuse of a minor. For mandatory reporting laws, see:

1. [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
2. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/mandate/>
3. [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/)

#### ***Reporting to the USCSS***

In the event that USA Hockey or any USA Hockey Affiliate or Member Program receives a report involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct, USA Hockey, its Affiliates and Member Programs shall immediately report and refer such matter to the USCSS.

#### ***Immediate Suspension or Termination***

When an allegation of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct is made against an employee, volunteer, independent contractor and/or other Participant, USA Hockey and its Member Programs may immediately suspend the Respondent (i.e., a “summary suspension”), may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program, and/or may take other protective actions until the allegation has been investigated by the USCSS and/or USA Hockey. This shall apply whether or not the allegation involves an incident during a hockey program or event. Upon the USCSS’s issuance of a Notice of Exercise of Jurisdiction, any temporary suspension, discipline, or other measures previously imposed by USA Hockey, an Affiliate or Member Program will be automatically and immediately adopted by the USCSS as its own, will be applicable throughout the USCSS’s jurisdiction, and will remain in effect unless and until the USCSS modifies those measures.

However, at such time as the USCSS has accepted jurisdiction of the investigation and resolution of such allegations, then USA Hockey and its Member Programs shall refrain from issuing any new suspensions in response to those allegations; provided that, USA Hockey and Member Programs may still put in place any

necessary safety plan(s) or interim measure(s) short of those measures that may deny or threaten to deny a Participant's opportunity to participate in a protected competition.

In issuing a summary suspension, the Respondent shall be offered a hearing under USA Hockey Bylaw 10, or under the USCSS's procedures if the USCSS adopts the suspension as its own.

Any determination under USA Hockey Bylaw 10 or by the USCSS will not necessarily affect USA Hockey's or the Member Program's ability to immediately suspend or terminate the Respondent from employment or performing services for organization. Please refer to [Section V](#) of this Handbook on Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct for more information on imposing discipline and hearing requirements.

A Participant's failure to report in compliance with this policy is a violation of this policy and grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to termination of an employee and/or dismissal of a volunteer.

### **Other Misconduct and Policy Violations**

When a bullying, threats, harassment, hazing, emotional, physical or other abuse allegation is not reportable under relevant state or federal law, the Member Program, applicable Affiliate or USA Hockey shall internally address and investigate those alleged policy violations and misconduct, and impose discipline where appropriate. If investigated by the Affiliate or a Member Program, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator or designee shall conduct or oversee the investigation.

Likewise, violations of USA Hockey's One-on-One Interactions Policy, Locker Room Policy, Athletic Training Modalities Policy, Social and Electronic Communications Policy, Travel Policy and Billeting Policy shall be reported to the Member Program, applicable Affiliate or USA Hockey to address, rectify and impose discipline where appropriate.

## **FOLLOW UP REPORTS TO THE AFFILIATE AND USA HOCKEY**

### **Member Program Reporting to Affiliate**

All Member Programs shall on a monthly basis provide the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator with notice of any alleged violations of SafeSport policies, and shall promptly advise the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator of the results of any investigations, hearings or other proceedings within their program that involve allegations or violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies or this SafeSport Handbook.

### **Affiliate Reporting to USA Hockey**

Each Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator shall on a monthly basis notify USA Hockey of any alleged violations of SafeSport policies, including the results of any investigations, hearings or other proceedings within their Affiliate that involve allegations or violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies or this SafeSport Handbook.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Following notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of an employee, volunteer, independent contractor and/or other participant, USA Hockey, the Affiliate or Member Program may consider the circumstances in which it will notify parents of other participants with whom the accused individual may have had contact. As appropriate, USA Hockey, its Affiliates and/or Member Programs may notify its staff members, volunteers, parents, and/or participants of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other criminal behavior that (1) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (2) is being investigated internally by USA Hockey, its Affiliates and/or Member Programs; or (3) has been referred to the USCSS. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.



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## SECTION V

# Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct

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In response to allegations of abuse or misconduct, the USA Hockey Bylaws that are applicable to suspensions and disciplinary proceedings shall apply. Those bylaws are found in Bylaw 10 of the USA Hockey Annual Guide. Bylaw 10 provides for a disciplinary process that must be followed in connection with suspension or other discipline of an individual, team, organization or others within the jurisdiction of USA Hockey. By following the procedures of Bylaw 10, USA Hockey Member Programs can provide a fair and reasonable process for handling reports of abuse by members.

**In this policy on Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct is:**

- The obligation of USA Hockey Affiliates and Member Programs to investigate and conduct appropriate disciplinary proceedings following reports of suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct;
- USA Hockey's delegation of the authority and jurisdiction to the USCSS to investigate and resolve allegations of violations by Participants of the Sexual Misconduct Policy;
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality with respect to the complaint, Claimant, Respondent and other information related to the report and incident(s) until "notice" must be given about a suspension or the outcome of any proceedings;
- The circumstances in which an immediate or "summary" suspension is appropriate and the procedures following a summary suspension;
- A general summary of the procedures for a hearing under Bylaw 10; and
- Factors and considerations that should be incorporated into findings and sanctions that are issued by a hearing panel.

### REQUIREMENT FOR INVESTIGATION AND/OR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

Upon a report or other notice of credible information or allegations that a person who is subject to the jurisdiction of USA Hockey or one of its Affiliates or Member Programs (1) may have violated any of the provisions of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook, or (2) violated any of the Physical Misconduct, Emotional Misconduct, Bullying, Threats, Harassment, or Hazing Policies, USA Hockey, its Affiliates or applicable Member Programs shall conduct an investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings to determine the appropriate discipline that may be imposed.

Upon a report of an allegation of a violation by a Participant of the Sexual Misconduct Policy, USA Hockey shall promptly report such information to the USCSS, and the USCSS shall have jurisdiction and authority to investigate such allegations or report, to issue any interim suspension or measures pending conclusion of the investigation, to make recommendations of sanctions or disciplinary action as a result of such investigation,

and to adjudicate such matter according to the USCSS Code. Neither USA Hockey nor any USA Hockey Affiliate or program shall engage in its own investigation or disciplinary process related to any allegations or reports that are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the USCSS. However, USA Hockey and its Affiliates and Member Programs may issue a Summary Suspension under Bylaw 10.D.(3)(a) which shall be effective until such time as USCSS has exercised jurisdiction over the matter and made a determination related to a person's eligibility pending the USCSS's investigation and adjudication process.

**Notwithstanding the foregoing, if USA Hockey receives a report of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a minor, USA Hockey will make a report to the proper law enforcement authorities. Further, USA Hockey and its Member Programs shall not conduct any investigation or hearing procedure in response to allegations of Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct if it in any way interferes with a pending legal investigation or criminal prosecution. As described below, it is appropriate to issue a summary suspension of the Respondent during the pendency of a legal investigation or criminal prosecution.**

USA Hockey recognizes that there are varying levels of misconduct. For example, physical and sexual misconduct are serious violations that may result in immediate suspension or dismissal. In contrast, a minor Participant who tells a single risqué joke constitutes less serious misconduct and depending on the circumstances, might be dealt with more appropriately through dialogue, education, and/or a verbal warning. Appropriate action should always consider the necessity of protecting minor participants from further abuse. In all cases, USA Hockey's and its Member Programs' disciplinary procedures and actions shall be proportionate, reasonable and applied fairly and equally.

It is also recognized that with respect to disciplinary action involving an employee of an organization, the organization will address allegations against its employees under its employment policies and procedures and other documents governing the employment.

All Member Programs shall report to the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator on a monthly basis any alleged violations of SafeSport Policies and the results of any investigations, hearings or other proceedings within their program that involve violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies or this SafeSport Handbook. In the Affiliate's discretion, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator or designee shall conduct the investigation or shall oversee its investigation by the Member Program. In each instance where an Affiliate has referred a matter to a Member Program for investigation or disciplinary proceedings, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator shall monitor the proceedings and provide appropriate guidance to help ensure the Member Program investigates and/or conducts disciplinary proceedings, as appropriate. It is important for the Member Program and Affiliate to ensure that those investigating a complaint or on a hearing panel shall be reasonably disinterested and impartial from the Claimant, Respondent, and the program involved.

Each Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator shall compile information on alleged violations of SafeSport policies and results of disciplinary proceedings within their Affiliate and report such information to USA Hockey on a monthly basis.

## INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION OF ALLEGATIONS BY USCSS

As the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey has delegated the authority and jurisdiction to the USCSS to investigate and resolve allegations of violations by Participants of the Sexual Misconduct Policy. Neither USA Hockey nor any USA Hockey Affiliate or program shall engage in its own investigation or disciplinary process related to any allegations or reports that are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the USCSS. The investigation and resolution of complaints by the USCSS shall be according to the USCSS Code.

Upon the issuance by USCSS of any interim suspension or other measures, or any other suspension or other sanction issued by USCSS after conclusion of the adjudicative process or by agreement with the person subject to suspension or other sanction, USA Hockey and its Affiliates and programs shall enforce such suspension, measures or other sanction throughout USA Hockey programs. USA Hockey and its Affiliates and programs

shall enforce any suspension or other sanction issued by the USCSS even if arising from allegations outside of USA Hockey programs.

There shall be no appeals of any decisions adjudicated by USCSS except through arbitration with the applicable arbitration body in conformance with the Supplementary Rules for U.S. Olympic SafeSport Hearings or other USCSS or USOPC governing documents as apply and are in effect at such time.

The delegation of authority and jurisdiction to USCSS as set forth above, and the restriction on USA Hockey, Affiliates and Member Programs, shall also include the investigation and issuance of sanctions related to allegations of other violations of USA Hockey SafeSport Policies (e.g., physical misconduct, emotional misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing) that are reasonably related to and accompany an allegation that involves sexual abuse or misconduct. Additionally, in USA Hockey's discretion, the USA Hockey national office may request that the USCSS accept jurisdiction of matters that do not involve sexual abuse or misconduct but do involve allegations of physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, harassment or hazing by or against any Participant.

## IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Any investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings must be kept confidential. An investigator shall not discuss the investigation with anyone except for the purposes of conducting the investigation, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities. An investigator shall not be required to provide a copy of the investigator's report or notes to any party unless required by law.

Hearings should be closed and confidential, to the extent possible, other than for notification of the outcome. Participants in the hearing, including the hearing committee, Claimant, Respondent and witnesses (if any are permitted), should be requested and encouraged to keep the proceedings confidential, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities. The hearing panel shall not discuss the testimony with anyone and shall deliberate among themselves until final resolution of the complaint, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities.

## IMMEDIATE OR "SUMMARY" SUSPENSION

The appropriate disciplinary response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident and in extreme cases, misconduct will result in immediate suspension and/or dismissal, provided that the Respondent shall be advised of his/her right to a hearing under Bylaw 10 (or if applicable through the USCSS Code). If the Respondent is a minor, the Member Program or Affiliate will contact his or her parents.

Summary suspension is intended for those situations in which an individual's continued employment, membership or participation poses a potential risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm. When such a risk exists, USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate or Member Program should immediately suspend the Respondent pending final resolution of the complaint or any legal proceedings. In such instances, the USA Hockey program shall provide the individual with notice and offer her/him an opportunity to contest the suspension.

A summary suspension is thus appropriate when there is a reasonable belief that the individual has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct and there is a risk of future harm to the Claimant or another Participant. Evidence which may be found sufficient to support a reasonable belief includes, at a minimum:

- the suspension or termination of employment or membership by a Member Program
- a Report Form has been filed with reasonably specific and credible information
- other legal documentation or report supporting a reasonable belief that the individual has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct, including abuse of a child (e.g., an arrest or a criminal indictment).

For the purposes of this Policy, a suspension from involvement in Member programs or USA Hockey activities shall mean that for the duration of the period of suspension, the Respondent may not participate in any capacity or in any role in the business, events, or activities of any Member Program.

Pursuant to Bylaw 10.D.(3)(a) (except when such matter is subject to jurisdiction and authority of the USCSS), the suspended individual, at the time of notice of the suspension, shall be provided with notice of the right to request a hearing under Bylaw 10.C. Ordinarily, Bylaw 10.D.(3)(a) requires that the suspended individual must request a hearing in writing within seven (7) days of being notified of the suspension. However, it is recognized that during the pendency of a criminal investigation or other legal proceeding the suspended individual may not want to or may be unable to appear at an administrative proceeding to contest a suspension, and so it is appropriate that when an active criminal investigation or legal proceeding is ongoing, the seven (7) day period to request a hearing should be stayed until seven (7) (or more) days following the conclusion of the criminal investigation, criminal proceeding or other legal proceeding.

Delaying any hearing of a person subject to a summary suspension until after the conclusion of a criminal or legal proceeding is also consistent with USA Hockey's policy that it will not enter into an investigation that may interfere with a pending legal investigation or criminal prosecution.

## HEARINGS

USA Hockey Bylaw 10.C. sets forth the hearing procedure applicable to disciplinary proceedings following complaints of abuse or misconduct or any violations of this SafeSport Program Handbook (other than violations that are subject to the jurisdiction and authority of the USCSS).

It is recognized that not all disciplinary action requires a hearing. There may be discipline imposed for minor violations where a reprimand, training or other sanction may be imposed and where a hearing would not be necessary. However, in cases where USA Hockey or a USA Hockey Member Program seeks to suspend or otherwise discipline a party, the governing body shall offer the party the right to a hearing, and the hearing shall occur in accordance with Bylaw 10 and within the time periods required under Bylaw 10.

The Claimant and Respondent shall have the right to receive written notice of the report or complaint, including a statement of the allegations, to present relevant information to the hearing panel and any investigator, and to be represented by legal counsel (at the party's own expense). Counsel for any party to a hearing shall be allowed to advise his/her client in the hearing, but may be limited in other activities as the panel in its reasonable assessment may determine.

In connection with any hearing, the Respondent must be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations brought forward. This may or may not include cross examination of the Claimant. In circumstances where the Claimant is a minor, it may be appropriate for the person that conducted the investigation that led to the hearing to provide testimony on the Claimant's behalf, or that the investigator's or fact finder's report substitute for the minor's testimony.

The hearing panel may proceed in the Respondent's absence if it cannot locate the individual or if the individual declines to attend the hearing.

The conduct of the hearing should be closed and confidential, to the extent possible, other than for notification of the outcome. The hearing panel or governing organization that imposes any discipline should consult with legal counsel before making any hearing decision or other report public.

Pursuant to Bylaw 10.E., there is a right to appeal the panel's decision. A Statement of Appeal must be delivered to the appropriate appeal authority within fourteen (14) days of the disciplined party's receipt of the written decision from the hearing panel. While the Claimant has have the right to participate in the hearing process and provide evidence and argument to the hearing panel, a claimant does not have the right to appeal a disciplinary decision.

## FINDINGS AND SANCTIONS

The hearing panel has the discretion to impose sanctions on the individual if it finds based on a preponderance of the evidence that any violations of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook or any violations of the Sexual Misconduct, Physical Misconduct, Emotional Misconduct, Bullying, Threats and Harassment, or Hazing Policies have occurred.

The hearing panel will communicate its finding to the individual. Its findings shall describe the facts that support any sanctions it concludes are necessary along with a statement of the rule(s) and/or policy(ies) that were found to have been violated by the individual. The panel may impose sanctions on the individual in its findings. Any sanctions imposed by the panel must be proportionate and reasonable, relative to the findings and conclusions of the panel as to what has occurred. The decision regarding the appropriate disciplinary action shall be up to the panel deciding each complaint. In imposing discipline, the panel shall consider:

1. The legitimate interest of USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate and the Member Program in providing a safe environment for its participants.
2. The seriousness of the offense or act and impact on the Claimant.
3. The age of the Respondent and alleged Claimant when the offense or act occurred.
4. Any information produced by the Respondent, or produced on behalf of the individual, in regard to the individual's rehabilitation and good conduct.
5. The effect on the ongoing operation of USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate and the Member Program.
6. Whether the individual poses an ongoing concern for the safety of participants in USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate and the Member Program.
7. Any other information, which in the determination of the panel, bears on the appropriate sanction.

Appropriate disciplines may range from a warning and a reprimand to suspension from involvement in USA Hockey Member Programs for a period of time, or may in some cases be permanent, and may involve a term of probationary conditions upon completion of an imposed suspension.

The SafeSport Program is intended to address and respond to conduct, and any sanctions or discipline should be directed to that conduct. While participants and their families may have financial or contractual disputes with programs, a SafeSport investigation or hearing regarding allegations of violations of SafeSport policies shall not consider or address any liability or responsibility in a financial or contractual dispute.

Generally, a Member Program's suspension is only effective with respect to that Member Program, and an Affiliate's suspension is only effective with respect to that Affiliate. Bylaw 10 provides that a Member Program that desires that a suspension extend throughout the Affiliate may request that the Affiliate recognize and enforce the suspension throughout the Affiliate and its other Member Programs, and the Affiliate may request that USA Hockey recognize and enforce the suspension throughout USA Hockey and all other Affiliates. However, any suspension imposed by USA Hockey or a USA Hockey Affiliate (i) for violation of the sexual misconduct policies of the USCSS or USA Hockey, or (ii) that is one year or more in length, shall automatically be considered a national suspension and shall be in effect across all USA Hockey sanctioned programs.







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## SECTION VI

# Monitoring and Supervision of the Program

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The Monitoring and Supervision aspect of USA Hockey's SafeSport Program describes how USA Hockey, its Affiliates and Member Programs monitor, supervise and ensure that the other aspects of the SafeSport Program (i.e., implementation and enforcement of policies, training requirements, screening requirements, responding, reporting and adjudication procedures, etc.) are being followed, and how they may be improved, so that they result in a safe environment for the participants. It is critical that all Affiliates and Member Programs recognize the need to fully implement the SafeSport Program policies, procedures and requirements in order to avoid misconduct from occurring within their programs.

Monitoring and supervision must occur at different levels within USA Hockey:

- **Team Coaches**
  - The head coach for each team shall be responsible for monitoring his or her team so that locker rooms are being properly supervised in accordance with the Locker Room Policy, that the team's travel is conducted in accordance with the Travel Policy, that all team electronic communications are in accordance with the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy, and that any billeting of players is in accordance with the Billeting Policy.
  - It is recognized that the head coach may not be personally responsible for direct supervision of each of the above areas at all times and may delegate responsibility to team personnel for certain activities or to other properly trained and screened adults, but as the primary supervisor of the team, the head coach shall be responsible for delegating duties as necessary to result in compliance.
- **Member Programs**
  - Member Programs and their administrators shall monitor their program and enforce compliance of its teams with the Locker Room Policy, One-on-One Interactions Policy, Travel Policy, Athletic Training Modalities Policy, Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy, and Billeting Policy.
  - Member Programs shall monitor their personnel so that the program's coaches, officials, program administrators, and other adult Participants that will have regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants, have completed the required training in accordance with the Education and Awareness Training Policy.
  - Member Programs shall monitor their personnel so that all coaches, officials, program administrators, and other adult Participants that will have regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants, have been properly screened in accordance with the USA Hockey Screening and Background Check Policy **prior to** such persons beginning in their position or otherwise having regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants.

- Member Programs shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the USA Hockey SafeSport Program or applicable law.
  - Member Programs shall report to the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator on a monthly basis any alleged violations of SafeSport Policies and the results of any investigations, hearings or other proceedings within their program.
  - Member Programs shall conduct reviews and evaluation of their program, and program and team personnel, to monitor and promote compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program.
  - Member Programs shall at least annually report and provide information as required or requested to the applicable Affiliate and/or Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator on the Member Program's compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program, including without limitation to confirm that all coaches, administrators and other adult Participants that will have regular access to or supervision over minor Participants have completed the required SafeSport Training and background checks as a condition of their participation.
- **Affiliates**
    - Affiliates shall have an Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator responsible for monitoring compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program in all programs of the Affiliate.
    - Affiliates shall require that all Member Programs, as a condition of such program being a member of the Affiliate and being considered a sanctioned USA Hockey program, must execute and deliver an agreement (which may be included within the Affiliate's other agreements with such Member Programs), under which the Member Program agrees to comply with all SafeSport Policies of the USOPC, the USCSS and USA Hockey.
    - Affiliates shall monitor Member Programs so that all programs require that all program personnel that will have regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants have completed the required training in accordance with the Education and Awareness Training Policy.
    - Affiliates shall monitor Member Programs so that all programs require that all program personnel that will have regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants are properly screened in accordance with the USA Hockey Screening and Background Check Policy prior to such persons beginning in their position or otherwise having regular contact with or supervision over minor Participants.
    - Affiliates shall require that all Affiliate personnel have received all required training and have been screened as a condition of holding that position.
    - Affiliates shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the USA Hockey SafeSport Program or applicable law, and shall monitor and supervise the Local Programs to help ensure all such reports are made.
    - Affiliates shall on a monthly basis notify USA Hockey of any alleged violations of SafeSport policies, including the results of any investigations, hearings or other proceedings within their Affiliate.
    - Affiliates shall conduct regular reviews of (a) all Affiliate officers, board members, staff and volunteers, and (b) all officers, board members, staff and volunteers of each Member Program within the Affiliate, to confirm that all persons in the Affiliate and Member Programs that are required to complete SafeSport Training or a background screen have done so prior to such persons having authority over or regular contact with Minor athletes.
    - On or before September 30th of each season, Affiliates shall require and receive from each Member Program a certification of the program's compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program. USA Hockey shall provide the form of certificate by Member Programs.
  - **National Level**
    - USA Hockey shall monitor compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program in all Affiliates.
    - USA Hockey shall monitor all Affiliates to determine whether they are properly supervising and monitoring their Local Programs' compliance with the Education and Awareness Training and

Screening Policies, and requiring that all required training and screening is completed in accordance with such Policies.

- USA Hockey shall require that all national personnel, including members of the Board of Directors, Councils and Committees and national office staff have received all required training and have been screened as a condition of holding that position.
  - USA Hockey shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the USA Hockey SafeSport Program or applicable law, and shall monitor and supervise the Affiliates to help ensure all such reports are made.
  - On or before September 30th of each season, USA Hockey shall require and receive from each Affiliate a certification of the Affiliate’s compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program. USA Hockey shall provide the form of certification to be used by Affiliates.
  - USA Hockey shall maintain a SafeSport Task Force to monitor USA Hockey’s and Affiliates’ compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program and shall consider modifications to the policies and other aspects of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program on a yearly basis or more often as necessary.
- **Addressing Non-Compliance by a Program or Affiliate**
    - In the event of material non-compliance by a Member Program of the SafeSport Program policies or requirements, the applicable Affiliate shall be responsible for issuing appropriate sanctions against that Member Program or administrators or coaches responsible for the non-compliance. Initially, it is expected that a single incident of non-compliance would be addressed through a written warning to the Member Program, administrator or coach, and subsequent incidents would result in more significant sanctions, which may include fines to a program, and/or temporary or permanent suspension of a Member Program, team, administrator or coach from USA Hockey activities. Notwithstanding the above, a single egregious incident may result in the initial sanctions being more serious than might be imposed under other circumstances. Such sanctions shall be in the Affiliate’s sole discretion, but shall be subject to the Member Program’s or person’s rights under USA Hockey Bylaw 10.
    - In the event of material non-compliance by an Affiliate of the SafeSport Program policies or requirements, USA Hockey shall be responsible for issuing appropriate sanctions against that Affiliate or administrators responsible for the non-compliance. Such sanctions shall be in USA Hockey’s sole discretion, but shall be subject to the Affiliate’s or person’s rights under USA Hockey Bylaw 10.





