



SAFESPORT PROGRAM HANDBOOK



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Introduction

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 off-ice safety in any part of 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, Screening, Locker Room Supervision and Hazing Policies, in addition to Codes of Conduct applicable to administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players and spectators. This SafeSport Handbook is intended to update and collect USA Hockey's various policies to protect its participants from all types of misconduct and abuse.

This 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 Program**; 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 and its Member Programs should **Respond** to allegations of abuse and misconduct; and how USA Hockey and its Member Programs will **Monitor and Supervise** this program to help ensure its effectiveness.

As described more fully herein, each USA Hockey Affiliate shall have an Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator whose duties will include monitoring the training of local program administrators and others within the Affiliate, serving as the Affiliate's initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, compiling information on disciplinary issues within the Affiliate and, when appropriate, reporting such information to USA Hockey.

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

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:

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

“Participant” or “participant” means and includes any person that is registered with USA Hockey or an Affiliate or Member Program of USA Hockey.

“Member Programs” 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.

“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.

“local program” shall mean and refer to any local hockey programs that are sanctioned by the USA Hockey Affiliate with jurisdiction over that geographic area.

“responsible adult” shall mean and refer to a person within a Member Program that has either been assigned or has assumed certain duties within a local program or for a particular team.

All references to a **“parent”** shall mean and refer to a parent and/or guardian, as appropriate.



SECTION I

USA Hockey SafeSport Policies

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, and certain policies intended to reduce, monitor and govern the areas where potential abuse and misconduct might occur.

The Policies below address the following types of abuse and misconduct:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bullying, Threats and Harassment
- Hazing

The above Policies set forth some of the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct.

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

- Locker Room Policy
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Policy
- Billeting Policy

All USA Hockey members shall familiarize themselves with each form of misconduct 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' employees or volunteers 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.

In addition to reporting within USA Hockey, such persons must also report suspected child physical or sexual abuse to appropriate law enforcement authorities when required under this Policy and/or under applicable law. Employees and volunteers should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

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.

SEXUAL ABUSE

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no sexual abuse of any participant involved in any of its Member Programs, whether such participant is an adult or a minor, by an employee, volunteer, independent contractor or another participant. Sexual abuse of a minor occurs when an adult employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant touches a minor for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either the minor or the employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant. Sexual abuse of a minor also occurs when a minor touches an employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of either the minor or the employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant, if the touching occurs at the request or with the consent of the employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant.

Sexual contact between or among children also can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or size, rendering the younger child incapable of giving informed consent, if there is the existence of an aggressor, or where there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as exposure or voyeurism.

Neither consent of the minor to the sexual contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a hockey function are defenses to a complaint of sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse may also include non-touching offenses, such as sexually harassing behaviors; an adult discussing his/her sex life with a minor; an adult asking a minor about his/her sex life; an adult requesting or sending nude or partial dress photos to a minor; exposing minors to pornographic material; sending minors sexually explicit electronic messages or photos (e.g. "sexting"); deliberately exposing a minor to sexual acts; or deliberately exposing a minor to inappropriate nudity.

Sexual abuse may also occur between adults or to an adult. Sexual abuse includes sexual interactions that are nonconsensual or accomplished by force or threat of force, or coerced or manipulated, regardless of the age of the participants.

Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or child sexual abuse under applicable federal or state law constitutes sexual abuse under this Policy.

Any USA Hockey member who engages in any act of sexual abuse or misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no physical abuse of any participant involved in any of its Member Programs by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant. Physical abuse means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit an athlete with objects or sports equipment.

In addition to physical contact or the threat of physical contact of a participant, physical abuse also includes the providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of consent and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant.

Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under applicable federal or state law constitutes physical abuse under this Policy.

Physical abuse does not include physical contact that is reasonably designed to coach, teach, demonstrate or improve a hockey skill, including physical conditioning, team building and appropriate discipline. Permitted physical conduct may include, but is not necessarily limited to, 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.

Any USA Hockey member who engages in any act of physical abuse is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no emotional abuse of any participant involved in any of its Member Programs by an employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant. Emotional abuse involves **a pattern** of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a participant. These behaviors may include verbal acts, physical acts or acts that deny attention or support.

Examples of emotional abuse prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation: **a pattern of** (a) verbal behaviors that (i) attack a participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat, or disgusting); or (ii) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive motivational purpose; and (b) physically aggressive behaviors, such as (i) throwing sport equipment, water bottles, or chairs at or near participants; or (ii) punching walls, windows, or other objects.

Emotional abuse does not include generally-accepted and age appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, motivation, team building, appropriate discipline, or improving athletic performance.

A USA Hockey member who engages in any act of emotional abuse is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

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

BULLYING, THREATS AND HARASSMENT

USA Hockey supports an environment for participation in hockey conducive to the enjoyment of hockey that is free from threats, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this Policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying, harassing or threatening behavior are regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying

Bullying is the use of coercion to obtain control over another person or to be habitually cruel to another person. Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with any USA Hockey sanctioned activities or events.

Examples of bullying prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation **physical behaviors**, including punching, kicking or choking; and **verbal and emotional behaviors**, including, the use of electronic communications (i.e., “cyber bullying”), to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate.

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

A USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who engages in any act of bullying 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

A threat to harm others is defined as 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 is prohibited in any manner in connection with any USA Hockey sanctioned activities or events.

Any USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who engages in any act of threatening or harassing behavior 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

Harassment includes **any pattern** of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability.

Examples of harassment prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation such non-physical offenses as (a) making negative or disparaging comments about a participant's sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; and (c) withholding or reducing playing time to a participant based on his/her sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color or ethnic traits.

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment prohibited by this Policy. It shall be a violation for any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant to harass a participant(s) through conduct or communications of a sexual nature or to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation. USA Hockey and/or its Affiliate organizations shall investigate all indications, informal reports and formal grievances of sexual harassment by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant and appropriate corrective action shall be taken. Corrective action includes taking all reasonable steps to end the harassment, to prevent harassment from recurring and to prevent retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment, even if the harasser and the participant being harassed are the same sex and whether or not the participant resists or submits to the harasser, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a participant's participation in any activity; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a participant is used as the basis for decisions affecting the participant; or
3. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive such that it limits a participant's ability to participate in or benefit from a hockey related program or activity or it creates a hostile or abusive environment.

Any conduct of a sexual nature directed by a minor toward an adult or by an adult to a minor is presumed to be unwelcome and shall constitute sexual harassment.

Acts of verbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature may also constitute sexual harassment. Legitimate non-sexual touching or other non-sexual conduct is **not** sexual harassment.

While other team members are often the perpetrators of harassment or sexual harassment, it is a violation of this Policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the harassment or sexual harassment but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who engages in any act of harassing or sexually harassing behavior 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 or sexually harassing behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

HAZING

There shall be no hazing of any participant involved in any of USA Hockey's Member Programs by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant.

Hazing includes any conduct which is intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful. The hazing conduct is typically an activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

Examples of hazing prohibited by this Policy include, **without limitation**, requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs; tying, taping, or physically restraining a participant; sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature; sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food; social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; 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.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of a person's willingness to cooperate or participate.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or promote team cohesion, so long as such activities do not have reasonable potential to cause emotional or physical distress to any participant. Examples of 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.

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

A USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who violates this Hazing Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited, to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

LOCKER ROOM POLICY

Youth players are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms, changing areas and restrooms due to various stages of dress/undress and because they 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 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 have at least one responsible screened adult present 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. Acceptable locker room monitoring could include having locker room monitors in the locker room while participants are in the locker room, or could include having a locker room monitor in the immediate vicinity (near the door) outside the locker room that also regularly and frequently enters the locker room to monitor activity inside. If the monitor(s) are inside, then it is strongly recommended that there be two monitors, both of which have been screened. A local program or team may impose or follow stricter monitoring requirements. 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. The responsible adult that monitors and supervises the locker room shall have been screened in compliance with Section III of this Handbook.

Further, responsible adults must also secure the locker room appropriately during times when minor participants are on the ice.

It shall be permissible for a local 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 a mobile device's recording capabilities in the locker rooms is not permitted at any USA Hockey sanctioned event, provided that it may be acceptable to take photographs or recordings in a locker room in such unique circumstances as a victory celebration, team party, etc., where all persons in the locker room are appropriately dressed and have been advised that photographs or recordings are being taken.

All local programs shall publish locker room policies to the parents of all minor participants that are specific to the facilities they regularly use. The local 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.

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.

Co-Ed Locker Rooms

As a team sport in which youth teams can often include both male and female players, special circumstances may exist that can increase the chance of abuse or misconduct. If the team consists of both male and female players, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. It is not acceptable under USA Hockey's Sexual Abuse 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. Where possible, the male and female players should undress/dress in separate locker rooms and then convene in a single dressing room prior to the game or team meeting. Once the game is finished, the players may come to one locker room and then the male and female players proceed to their separate dressing rooms to undress and shower (separately), if available. If separate locker rooms are not available, then the genders may take turns using the locker room to

change and then leave while the other gender changes. Where possible, when both male and female players 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.

The USA Hockey SafeSport website (www.usahockey.com/safesport) contains sample approaches that may be used by a local program depending on the facilities available at a particular arena.

Additionally, reference USA Hockey's Co-Ed Locker Room Policy set forth in the USA Hockey Annual Guide, which also addresses gender equity and the need to provide equal exposure to coaching and instruction as it may be impacted by a program's Co-Ed Locker Room Policy.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

As part of USA Hockey's emphasis on safety, communications involving any participant, and especially our 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 critical. 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 participants. The improper use of social media, mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce these risks.

All electronic communication between coach and player must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Coaches, players and all team personell 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 players joined to or connected through their personal Facebook page 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 players though that site. All electronic communication of any kind between coach and player, 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 players 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.

Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery with Athlete

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor player that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults in the program, the local 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.

Reporting

Infractions of USA Hockey's Electronic Communications Policy should be reported to the appropriate person as described in Section IV of this Handbook.

A USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who violates this 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 USA Hockey participation involves overnight travel for youth teams to games and tournaments. Minor players are most vulnerable to abuse or misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a greater risk of player to player misconduct. 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 players will be supervised between and during travel to and from practice and competitions. Adherence to travel policies helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

Each USA Hockey local program shall 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 acknowledging receipt of and agreeing to the travel policy be obtained by the local program/team. Some travel involves only local travel to and from local practices, games and events, while other travel involves overnight stays. Different policies should apply to these two types of travel. A sample local and overnight travel policy form for a local program may be found at www.usahockey.com/safesport.

Elements of all travel policies must include:

Local Travel

- The local 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.
- The employees, coaches, and/or volunteers of a local program or team, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor and should only drive with at least two other players or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor's parent.
- Where an employee, coach and/or volunteer is involved in an unrelated minor player'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.
- Employees, coaches and volunteers who are also a player's parent or guardian may provide shared transportation for any player(s) if they pick up their player first and drop off their player last.
- It is recognized that in some limited instances it will be 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.

Organization/Team Travel

- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the player).
- Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the players. No employee, coach, or volunteer 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 have been screened in compliance with the USA Hockey Screening Policy and all team drivers shall have been screened and the screen shall include a check of appropriate Department of Motor Vehicle records.
- The local 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.
- Players should share rooms with other players 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 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.
- 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, parents will be notified 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.

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 meet the following requirements:

- No more than two players should 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).

- All adults living in the household of the billet family shall be screened in accordance with the USA Hockey Screening Policy 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.
- All adults living in the household of the billet family shall have completed training in compliance with the Education and Awareness Training Policy prior to the player moving in with the family.
- Billet families and the player and player's parents shall all sign an agreement with the organization and/or team that they will comply with the rules and regulations for the billeting arrangement and the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies.
- Based upon the requirements of the jurisdiction, 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 team shall have a billet coordinator who shall be responsible for overseeing compliance with the Billeting Policy and all other USA Hockey SafeSport Policies.
- The team shall have a mandatory curfew for all billeted players. The host family may have an earlier curfew.
- Players shall 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 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 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 organization's/team's billeting policy shall include requirements that the billet family maintain appropriate homeowners/renters insurance.
- Players staying 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 initiated by either the player or parents.



SECTION II

Education and Awareness Training

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 seduce 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.

It is the policy of USA Hockey that those participants who (1) have direct 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 in managerial or supervisory roles of a USA Hockey Member Program, and (4) are new and current employees and/or volunteers of a USA Hockey Member Program, shall complete appropriate training about child physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct as set forth below.

Appropriate training shall be designed to:

- Provide definitions for, and effects of, child physical and sexual abuse
- Provide definitions for, and effects of, all forms of abuse and misconduct (emotional, physical, and sexual; bullying, harassment, and hazing)
- Identify risk opportunities for child physical and sexual abuse
- Address common myths about offenders
- Outline patterns, behaviors, and methods of operation of sexual predators
- Identify risk opportunities for abuse and misconduct in sport
- Identify policies, practices, and procedures to recognize, reduce, and report misconduct

The extent and content of the required training may vary for different types of participants, and USA Hockey's policy is that the following training shall be required (note that USA Hockey may modify these requirements from time to time as it deems appropriate):

- A. **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. As such, 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. USA Hockey has adopted the United States Olympic Committee's SafeSport training materials, which include a series of online training videos that are available for the training of local program leaders, administrators, board members, etc. The training videos in total are approximately 90 minutes long.

Each local program registering youth players shall be required to have at least one representative complete the online training each year. Local programs are strongly encouraged to have all of their officers, directors and other key representatives complete the online training. Upon completion of the online training, each person taking the training will be able to print a certificate of completion, and USA Hockey will keep a record of those that have completed the training.

On or before November 30 of each playing season, (1) the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator for each Affiliate shall confirm and certify to the Affiliate that at least one representative from each local program registering youth players in that Affiliate has completed the training, and (2) each Affiliate shall confirm and certify to USA Hockey that at least one representative from each local program in the Affiliate has completed the required online training.

- B. Coaches: Coaches are the adults that typically have the most on and off-ice contact with youth hockey players. All coaches of youth or girls hockey teams are strongly encouraged to complete the SafeSport Training Program during the 2013-14 season. Commencing with the 2014-15 playing season, all coaches shall be required to complete the SafeSport Training Program every two years. Coaches that complete the training during the 2013-14 season shall not be required to take the training in 2014-15, but shall complete the training the following year. New coaches shall take the training during their first year of registration and every two years thereafter. It is anticipated that the training for coaches will be implemented as part of their every other year screening requirement. It is also anticipated that USA Hockey will modify the training that is required for a coach taking the training for the second time (e.g., by modifying and shortening the training).
- C. Officials: Officials also have regular contact with youth hockey players. All officials eighteen (18) years and older are strongly encouraged to complete the SafeSport Training Program during the 2013-14 season. For the 2013-14 season, officials eighteen (18) and over that have not completed the training by December 31, 2013 will be ineligible to officiate in state, district or national championships. Commencing with the 2014-15 playing season, all officials eighteen (18) years and older shall be required to complete the SafeSport Training Program every two years. Officials that complete the training during the 2013-14 season shall not be required to take the training in 2014-15, but shall complete the training the following year. New officials eighteen (18) and over shall take the training during their first year of registration and every two years thereafter. It is anticipated that the training for officials will be required to be completed as part of their certification requirements. It is also anticipated that USA Hockey will modify the training that is required for an official taking the training for the second time (e.g., by modifying and shortening the training).
- D. Other Volunteers/Employees: All volunteers and employees in USA Hockey Member Programs that will have regular, routine or frequent access to or supervision over minor participants, and all persons in a supervisory position of a USA Hockey Member Program, shall be required to complete the SafeSport Training Program as a condition of being appointed to such position. Volunteers and employees that have less regular, non-routine or infrequent access to minor participants are strongly encouraged to complete the SafeSport Training. Affiliates and USA Hockey Member Programs shall assess which categories of volunteers and employees within such programs (e.g., team managers, locker room monitors, travel chaperones, etc.) will have regular, routine or frequent access to 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. Programs should plan early so that volunteers have adequate time to complete the training before assuming duties. Any local program may require and enforce policies that all of the program's volunteers and employees 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 Team Manager/Volunteer Member category (**at no charge**) and may complete the training through a link on the SafeSport webpage or registration confirmation email.

- E. Parents/Players: 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 and players will be made aware of USA Hockey's SafeSport Program through emails and other communications that takes them to a short video describing the program and letting them know about additional materials and training (including the Safesport online training) that is available at **www.usahockey.com/safesport**. That video, and perhaps other videos from the USOC online training, may be emailed to members during the year. USA Hockey will also produce posters, brochures and other educational materials to publicize the program and the means of reporting suspected abuse or misconduct.

Certain jurisdictions in the United States have mandatory training and testing that may apply to those that work or volunteer with youth athletes. If state mandated training and testing is in place then the training and testing shall be consistent with relevant standards of care and legislation.



SECTION III

Screening and Background Check Program

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 that person consents to be screened and passes a criminal background screen conducted by the Affiliate or USA Hockey.

USA Hockey Screening

USA Hockey shall conduct screening of its employees, volunteers, agents and independent contractors as follows:

- 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.
- All USA Hockey employees shall be screened as a condition of their employment and then shall be re-screened every two (2) years.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Affiliate Screening Policies

As a condition of its affiliation with USA Hockey, each Affiliate of USA Hockey shall adopt a screening policy in compliance with the requirements set forth below:

- A. The Affiliate shall cause all volunteers and employees over the age of eighteen (18) that will have regular, routine or frequent access to youth participants to be screened **prior to** such volunteers or employees having such access. An approved screen shall be valid for two (2) years. All previously screened persons must be re-screened every two (2) years.
- B. The Affiliate shall manage and directly supervise the screening program within its Affiliate. The Affiliate shall select one or more screening vendors and shall require that all local programs have the required volunteers and employees (see below) screened through the Affiliate’s vendors in compliance with the Affiliate’s screening program.
- C. All screens of coaches and officials, and all other volunteers and employees in USA Hockey Member Programs over the age of eighteen (18) that will have regular, routine or frequent access to or supervision over minor participants, must at a minimum include a “national” screen that covers a national criminal database, the sex offender registries for all 50 states, and every county database in which the applicant has lived during the previous five (5) years. With respect to screens of volunteers or employees that have less contact with youth participants, an Affiliate may request that the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Committee approve of a screening policy for that Affiliate in which certain categories of volunteers or employees are not required to have a “national” screen, but in all cases such screens must include the sex offender registries for all 50 states, and every county database in which the applicant has lived during the previous five (5) years. For screens of individuals that will serve as a team driver, the screen must also include a Department of Motor Vehicles check. Affiliates may in their discretion include additional databases in their search.
- D. The Affiliate or its vendor shall verify the identification of the screened individual through a social security number verification or other acceptable identity verification process.
- E. The Affiliate shall have an Affiliate Screening Coordinator (who may also be the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator) who is responsible for monitoring and reporting on compliance with the screening policy by the Affiliate and all of the Affiliate’s local programs.
- F. The Affiliate’s screening policy shall require that the following persons be screened in accordance with this policy:
 1. Members of the Affiliate Board of Directors
 2. Local program administrators
 3. Coaches
 4. Team managers
 5. Officials
 6. Locker room monitors
 7. Team drivers (unless professional transportation companies are used)
 8. Travel chaperones
 9. Anyone with regular, routine or frequent access to youth participants

The Affiliate and/or local program may require that additional persons be screened.

- G. The following are the **minimum criteria** that must be searched for by the Affiliate’s background screening provider (each Affiliate may include additional criteria with the approval of USA Hockey) and which may serve as a basis under which a person may be disqualified or prohibited from serving as an employee or volunteer:
 1. Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement greater than one year).
 2. Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person.

3. Any lesser crime of a sexual nature, or in which sexual relations is an element, or classified as a sex offense including but not limited to “victimless” crimes of a sexual nature such as prostitution, pornography, and indecent exposure.
4. Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol).
5. Any crime involving cruelty to animals.
6. Sex offender registrant.
7. Any lesser crime involving harm to a minor.

Convictions of (whether disclosed by the applicant or sourced in a criminal records search), and pending dispositions for any of the above crimes or registrations shall be reported to the Affiliate and the Affiliate shall make a determination of whether the applicant shall be approved for the position sought. Affiliates shall designate the Affiliate Screening Coordinator or a screening review committee who shall receive and review any screens in accordance with the requirements below.

In addition to the **minimum criteria** above, and any additional criteria that the Affiliate elects to include in its search by the screening vendor, 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. Has a history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to children in USA Hockey.
- H. The Affiliate’s screening policy must include such consents and notifications from and to screened persons as are required by applicable state and federal law, including without limitation compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
- I. The Affiliate’s Screening Policy must have adequate security for the safekeeping, privacy and production of documents and information in connection with its screening of all applicants.
- J. Each Affiliate shall submit its screening policy and plan to USA Hockey each year for approval by the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Committee. The submission shall include without limitation the positions to be screened, the criteria to be searched, screening vendor to be used, databases to be checked (and if different databases for different personnel, shall specify those differences), the means of Affiliate enforcement to require screens are completed before access, and the means by which the Affiliate handles any “hits” and any appeals from a denial of eligibility, as well as such other information as is necessary to demonstrate compliance with this policy.
- K. Each Affiliate shall submit to USA Hockey on a yearly basis during the month of April a report for the just completed playing season that identifies the number of screens completed in each category of screened individuals (see paragraph F above).
- L. In the event that the Affiliate’s policy does not meet the minimum criteria set forth herein, the SafeSport Program Committee shall report such finding to the USA Hockey Executive Committee to take appropriate steps to require compliance by the Affiliate.

- M. USA Hockey recognizes that some Affiliates may not have arrangements with a screening vendor that complies with the requirements set forth herein. These Affiliates should contact USA Hockey for referral and contact information for screening vendors that are capable of complying with such requirements.
- N. While the Affiliate is responsible for managing and directly supervising the screening program within its Affiliate, local programs within the Affiliate must monitor and supervise their programs so that screening is completed before any employee or volunteer has regular, routine or frequent access to youth participants. This will require more planning by the local program to screen adequate numbers of employees and/or volunteers to operate their program.

Junior Hockey Screening

As a condition of its certification by USA Hockey, each USA Hockey Junior League shall adopt and enforce a screening policy in compliance with the requirements set forth below:

- A. All Junior league and team personnel over the age of 18 and having regular, routine or frequent access to participants under the age of 18 shall be screened prior to such personnel having regular, routine or frequent access to participants under the age of 18.
- B. All screens and the Junior League's screening policy shall be in compliance with paragraphs C., D., G., H., I., J., K. and L. pertaining to Affiliates (as applicable references to the Affiliate in those paragraphs shall also refer to the Junior league).
- C. The Junior League shall either conduct all screens for the teams within the league or shall manage and directly supervise the screening program conducted by the teams in the league.
- D. The league shall designate a League Screening Coordinator who is responsible for monitoring and reporting on compliance with the screening policy by the league and its teams.

Handling "Hits" and Appeals

- Decisions related to screening hits and the eligibility of any person screened for a USA Hockey national program (e.g., board, council, committee, and section members, and coaches, staff and volunteers for any national or district camp, national team, select camp, and national and district tournaments, and Junior Officiating Development Program officials) shall be made by the USA Hockey Vice President & Legal Council Chairperson or his/her designee. Appeals of such decisions shall be appealable and directed to the USA Hockey Screening Appeals Committee, c/o the USA Hockey Executive Director. The Screening Appeals Committee shall be comprised of at least three (3) qualified persons from different areas of the country, and shall be appointed on an ad-hoc basis by the President of USA Hockey from time to time as needed. For any appeal of a denial of eligibility for a position with a USA Hockey national program, the USA Hockey Executive Director or his/her designee shall designate three (3) members from the Screening Appeals Committee to hear such appeal. The procedure for any appeals to the Screening Appeals Committee shall be as provided in USA Hockey Bylaw 10.E as set forth in the then current USA Hockey Annual Guide.
- Decisions related to screening and the eligibility of any person screened by an Affiliate shall initially be made by the Affiliate Screening Coordinator or a person or group of persons designated by the Affiliate to make such decisions. The Affiliate Screening Policy shall designate that a decision denying eligibility of any employee or volunteer shall be appealable to the Affiliate's board of directors, or a designated committee of such board of directors, in compliance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10.E.
- Decisions related to screening and the eligibility of any person screened by a Junior League or team shall initially be made by the Junior League's Screening Coordinator or a person or group of persons designated by the League to make such decisions. The league's screening policy shall designate that a decision denying eligibility of any employee or volunteer shall be appealable to the league's board of directors, or a designated committee of such board of directors, in compliance with USA Hockey Bylaw 10.E.

- The existence of any “hit” following a screen and the proceedings surrounding any appeal must be kept confidential until “notice” must be given about a rejection or acceptance of a person’s eligibility. USA Hockey or the applicable Affiliate or Junior League shall provide prompt written notice to any individual that has been deemed ineligible as a result of a hit following a screen, which notice shall include a reasonable description of the grounds for the denial of eligibility and the method and time periods to appeal such decision. Any 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, the person that made the initial decision, and witnesses (if any are permitted) should be requested and encouraged to keep the proceedings confidential.
- Decisions related to any screening hits of USA Hockey employees shall be made by USA Hockey’s Executive Director. There shall be no appeal of such decisions.
- **Appeal decisions of an Affiliate board of directors or the USA Hockey Screening Appeals Committee shall be subject to appeal to the USA Hockey Executive Committee.**
- Each Affiliate shall promptly report to USA Hockey in writing (to the attention of the USA Hockey Executive Director and to the USA Hockey Vice President, Legal Council Chairperson) the full name and identifying information for any individual that has been denied eligibility for employment or a volunteer position based on that person not consenting to be screened, not passing a background screen or the existence of other information that makes a person ineligible. USA Hockey shall create a database of such ineligible persons and the appropriate Affiliate shall be notified of any attempted registration by a person that has previously been denied eligibility for employment or a volunteer position.



SECTION IV

Reporting of Concerns of Abuse

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.
- The **Reporting Procedure**, which describes:
 - to whom reports are made (including the importance of certain reports being made to law enforcement authorities)
 - how to make reports to USA Hockey and/or the Affiliate
 - 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 local program, Affiliate or USA Hockey to address, rectify and impose discipline where appropriate.
- **Notification** to parents of other participants.

REPORTING POLICY

Accordingly, it is the policy of USA Hockey that every employee or volunteer 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 Abuse, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Bullying, Threats or Harassment, or Hazing Policies, and (3) suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to the appropriate USA

Hockey representatives (as set forth below); additionally, **in all cases involving suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, every employee or volunteer of a USA Hockey Member Program must also report to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.** Any report of misconduct or suspicion of child physical or sexual abuse 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.

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 employees and/or volunteers 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.

Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse

Child Physical or Sexual Abuse

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 grooming behavior should be directed to USA Hockey or the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator.

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.

Reporting Other Misconduct and Policy Violations

If any staff member and/or volunteer of USA Hockey, an Affiliate or local program receives an allegation or observes misconduct or other inappropriate behavior, such as grooming, that is not reportable to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, it is the responsibility of each staff member and/or volunteer to report their observations to USA Hockey or the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator immediately.

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 physical and sexual abuse to USA Hockey or the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator immediately.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

To Whom to Report

Suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse may, **and in many cases must**, be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. In order to further protect USA Hockey programs and participants, such reports should also be made to USA Hockey and/or the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator. A compilation of information on when a person must make a report to law enforcement authorities can be found at:

1. www.childwelfare.gov
2. www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm
3. www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/

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 victim or complainant may feel more comfortable reporting to their local program administrator. Any reports to a local 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 local program administrator for initial action, investigation and/or discipline.

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), (2) emailing to SafeSport@usahockey.org, or (3) calling **800-888-4656**.

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 complainant(s).
2. the type of misconduct alleged.
3. the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.
4. the approximate dates 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 complainant keep the complainant’s name confidential, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator, 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. 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 local program administrator.
- through email to USA Hockey at 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 complainant(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, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant 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.

HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED

Suspicions 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 physical or sexual abuse 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.

Additionally, 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
2. www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm
3. www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/

Immediate Suspension or Termination

When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against an employee, volunteer, independent contractor and/or other participant, USA Hockey and its Member Programs may immediately suspend the accused individual (i.e., a “summary suspension”) and/or immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated by an official agency. This shall apply whether or not the allegation involves an incident during a hockey program or event.

The accused individual shall be offered a hearing. A hearing under USA Hockey Bylaw 10 will not necessarily affect USA Hockey’s or the Member Program’s ability to immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual 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.

An employee’s or volunteer’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, harassment, hazing, emotional, physical, sexual or other abuse allegation is not reportable under relevant state or federal law, the local program, applicable Affiliate or USA Hockey shall internally address and investigate those alleged policy violations and misconduct, and impose discipline where appropriate.

Likewise, violations of USA Hockey’s Locker Room Policy, Electronic Communications Policy, Travel Policy and Billeting Policy shall be reported to the local program, applicable Affiliate or USA Hockey to address, rectify and impose discipline where appropriate.

Follow Up Reports to the Affiliate and USA Hockey

All local programs shall promptly notify the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator of 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.

Each Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator shall promptly notify USA Hockey of the results of any investigations, hearings or other proceedings within their Affiliate that involve 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 local 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 local 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 local programs. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.



SECTION V

Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct

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 local programs to investigate and conduct appropriate disciplinary proceedings following reports of suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct;
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality with respect to the complaint, complainant, victim, accused 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 local programs (1) may have violated any of the provisions of the USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook, (2) violated any of the Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Bullying, Threats and Harassment, or Hazing Policies, or (3) is subject to allegations of actual or suspected child physical or sexual abuse, USA Hockey, its Affiliates or applicable local programs shall conduct an investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings to determine the appropriate discipline that may be imposed.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if USA Hockey receives a report of physical 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 physical or sexual abuse 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 accused individual 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 youth participant who tells a single risqué joke constitutes less serious misconduct and depending on the circumstances, might be dealt with more appropriately through dialogue and 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 local programs shall report to the applicable Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator 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 each instance where an Affiliate has referred a matter to a local program for investigation or disciplinary proceedings, the Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator shall monitor the proceedings and provide appropriate guidance to help ensure the local program investigates and/or conducts disciplinary proceedings, as appropriate.

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

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. 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, complainant, victim, 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 accused individual shall be advised of his/her right to a hearing under Bylaw 10. If the accused individual is a minor, the local 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 risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm. When such a risk exists, USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate or local program should immediately suspend the accused individual 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. 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 local 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 hockey programs shall mean that for the duration of the period of suspension, the accused individual 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), 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.

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 complainant, victim and accused individual 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 accused individual must be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations brought forward. This may or may not include cross examination of the victim or complainant. In circumstances where the complainant or victim is a minor, it may be appropriate for the person that conducted the investigation that led to the hearing to provide testimony on the victim'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 accused individual'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 complainant and/or victim have the right to participate in the hearing process and provide evidence and argument to the hearing panel, a complainant or victim 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 Abuse, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, 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 local program in providing a safe environment for its participants.
2. The seriousness of the offense or act and impact on the victim.
3. The age of the accused individual and alleged victim when the offense or act occurred.
4. Any information produced by the accused individual, or produced on behalf of the individual, in regard to the individual's rehabilitation and good conduct.
5. The effect on the reputation of USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate and the local program.
6. Whether the individual poses an ongoing concern for the safety of participants in USA Hockey, the applicable Affiliate and the local 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.

As it is recognized that a local program's suspension is only effective with respect to that local program, and an Affiliate's suspension is only effective with respect to that Affiliate, Bylaw 10 provides that a local 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 local programs, and the Affiliate may request that USA Hockey recognize and enforce the suspension throughout USA Hockey and all other Affiliates.



SECTION VI

Monitoring and Supervision of the Program

The Monitoring and Supervision aspect of USA Hockey's SafeSport Program describes how USA Hockey and its 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.

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 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 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.

- **Local Programs**

- Local programs and their administrators shall monitor their program and enforce compliance of its teams with the Locker Room Policy, the Travel Policy, the Electronic Communications Policy, and the Billeting Policy.
- Local programs shall monitor their personnel so that the program's coaches, officials, program administrators, and other program volunteers and employees that will have regular, routine or frequent access to minor participants, have completed the required training in accordance with the Education and Awareness Training Policy.
- Local programs shall monitor their personnel so that all coaches, officials, program administrators, and other program volunteers and employees that will have regular, routine or frequent access to youth 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, routine or frequent access to youth participants.
- Local 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.

- Local 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.
 - Local programs shall at least annually report and provide information as required or requested to the applicable Affiliate and/or Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator on the local program’s compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program.
- **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 monitor Local Programs so that all programs require that all program personnel that will have regular, routine or frequent access to youth participants have completed the required training in accordance with the Education and Awareness Training Policy.
 - Affiliates shall monitor Local Programs so that all programs require that all program personnel that will have regular, routine or frequent access to youth 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, routine or frequent access to youth 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.
 - On or before November 30th of each season, Affiliates shall require and receive from each Local Program a certification of the program’s compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program. USA Hockey shall provide the form of certification by Local 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 November 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 its 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.

