

VSSA- ADOPTED 24 MARCH 2022

A. ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

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

The following is a model one-on-one policy, provided to assist Covered Organizations in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by a Covered Organization must include the Mandatory Components. If a Covered Organization does not create a policy for one-on-ones, the Mandatory Components and Recommended Components will become the default policy for appropriate one-on-ones for that organization.

Mandatory Components

Covered Organization policies must include components a through e.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adults at a facility under the jurisdiction of a Covered Organization or at an event sanctioned by a Covered Organization.
- 2) Adult members who have regular contact, related to participation in soccer, with amateur athletes who are minors
- 3) An adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
- 4) Staff and board members of a Covered Organization (collectively, Adults).

b. Observable and interruptible

- One-on-one interactions between minors and an Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at our facility are permitted, if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.

- Isolated, one-on-one interactions between minors and an Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at our facility are prohibited, except under emergency circumstances.¹

c. Meetings

- Meetings between Adults and minors at our facilities may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that (if available) has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

d. Meetings with mental health care professionals

If a mental health care professional meets with minors at our facilities, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy – provided that (1) the door remains unlocked, (2) another adult is present at the facility, (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, although the minor's identity need not be disclosed, and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to our organization.

e. Individual training sessions

Individual training sessions between Adults and minors are permitted at our facility if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. The Adult must obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months, and such permission may be withdrawn at any time.

Recommended Components

f. Monitoring

When one-on-one interactions between Adults and minors occur at our facility, adults will monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one.

¹ Adult personal care assistants authorized by a parent or guardian to help athletes requiring assistance with activities of daily living are permitted to interact with minor athletes one-on-one in a private setting, provided parent/guardian consent has been obtained.

g. Out-of-program contacts

Adults are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home, restaurants, and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact. Such arrangements are nonetheless strongly discouraged.

h. Parent Training

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

B. MESSAGES AND RUBDOWNS

The following is a model messages and rubdowns policy, provided to assist Covered Organizations in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by a Covered Organization must include the Mandatory Components. If a Covered Organization does not create a messages and rubdowns policy, the Mandatory Components and Recommended Components will become the default policy for that organization.

Mandatory components

Covered Organizations must include components a through b.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adults at a facility under the jurisdiction of a Covered Organization
- 2) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
- 3) An adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
- 4) Staff and board members of a Covered Organization

(collectively, Adults).

b. Licensed, certified professional

- Any massage or rubdown performed by an Adult on a minor athlete at our facilities or a training or competition venue is prohibited unless such Adult is a licensed massage therapist.

- Any massage or rubdown performed at our facilities or a training or competition venue by a licensed professional must be observable and interruptible. Any massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room.
- Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.
- The provider of any massage or other athletic training therapy should narrate the steps in the activity before taking them, seeking assent of the minor athlete throughout the process.

c. Written consent

Written consent by a legal guardian shall be provided before providing each massage or rubdown on a minor athlete and documented at least on an annual basis. This consent may be withdrawn at any time. Parents must be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

Recommended Components

d. Parent training

Parents/guardians receive the U.S. Center for SafeSport education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to receive an athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown.

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

C. LOCKER ROOMS, REST ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

The following is a model locker room, rest room, and changing area policy provided to assist Covered Organizations in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by a Covered Organization must include the Mandatory Components. If a Covered Organization does not create a locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas policy, the Mandatory Components and Recommended Components will become the default policy for that organization.

Mandatory Components

Covered Organizations must include components a through f.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adults at a facility under the jurisdiction of a Covered Organization or at an event sanctioned by a Covered Organization
- 2) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
- 3) An adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
- 4) Staff and board members of a Covered Organization

(collectively, Adults).

b. Use of recording devices

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras in locker rooms, rest rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under our organization's jurisdiction is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by the Covered Organization and two or more adults are present.

c. Undress

- Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Adult at a facility under our organization's jurisdiction be undressed (disrobed or partial or full nudity where private body parts are exposed) in front of or shower with minor athletes.

d. Isolated one-on-one interactions

- At no time are unrelated Adults permitted to be alone with a minor in a locker room, rest room, or changing area when at a facility under our jurisdiction, except under emergency circumstances.²
- If our organization is using a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, we will designate times for use by Adults, if any.

e. Monitoring

² Adult personal care assistants authorized by a parent or guardian to help athletes requiring assistance with activities of daily living are permitted to assist minor athletes one-on-one, provided parent/guardian consent has been obtained.

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

f. Non-exclusive facility

If our organization uses a facility not under its jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Adults in categories 2 through 4 are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth here.

Recommended Components

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

D. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The following is a model electronic communications policy, provided to assist Covered Organizations in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by a Covered Organization must include the Mandatory Components. If a Covered Organization does not create a social media & electronic communications policy, the Mandatory Components and Recommended Components will become the default policy for that organization.

Mandatory components

Covered Organizations must include components a through e.

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
- 2) An adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor

3) Staff and board members at a Covered Organization
(collectively, Participating Adults).

b. Content

All electronic communication originating from Participating Adults to amateur athletes who are minors must be open and transparent, and professional in nature.

c. Open and transparent

- If a Participating Adult needs to communicate directly with an amateur athlete who is a minor via electronic communications, another Participating Adult or the minor's legal guardian will be copied.
- If a minor athlete communicates to the Participating Adult privately first, the Participating Adult should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Participating Adult or the minor's legal guardian.
- A Participating Adult communicating electronically to the entire team will copy another Participating Adult.
- Amateur athletes who are minors may "friend" the organization's official page.
- Only platforms that allow for open and transparent communication may be used to communicate with minor athletes.

d. Prohibited electronic communications

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

e. Requests to discontinue

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

Recommended components

f. Hours

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

g. Monitoring

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

h. Social Media Connections

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

E. TRANSPORTATION

The following is a model transportation, provided to assist Covered Organizations in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by a Covered Organization must include the Mandatory Components. If a Covered Organization does not create a local travel policy, the Mandatory Components and Recommended Components will become the default transportation policy for that organization.

Mandatory Components

Covered Organizations must include components a through b.

"Transportation" consists of travel to training, practice, and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors

- 2) An adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
- 3) Staff and board members at a Covered Organization

(collectively, Participating Adults).

b. Transportation

- The organization does not arrange for local transportation.
- Participating Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated athlete who is a minor, absent emergency circumstances, and may only drive with at least two other minor athletes or another Adult Participant at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian at least annually.³

Recommended Components

c. Shared or Carpool Travel Arrangement

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

d. Parent Training

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

³ Adult personal care assistants authorized by a parent or guardian to help athletes requiring assistance with activities of daily living are permitted to transport a minor athlete one-on-one, provided parent/guardian consent has been obtained.

F. LODGING

The following is a model lodging policy, provided to assist Covered Organizations in developing their own policies. Any policy developed by a Covered Organization must include the Mandatory Components. If a Covered Organization does not create a lodging policy, the Mandatory Components and Recommended Components will become the default lodging policy for that organization.

Mandatory Components

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

a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
- 2) An adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
- 3) Staff and board members at a Covered Organization

(collectively, Participating Adults).

b. Lodging required permissions

- Legal guardian's written consent is required at least annually for any lodging arranged by a Covered Organization that includes a minor athlete and Adult Participant(s).
- Any Participating Adult traveling with the organization must agree to and sign the organization's Lodging policy at least annually.

c. Hotel rooms

- Participating Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the Participating Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the minor athlete), or unless the adult is a personal care assistant for an athlete who requires help with activities of daily living, and parent/guardian consent has been obtained.

d. Meetings

- Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the organization's policy for one-on-one interactions – i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible.
- Meetings shall not be conducted in a hotel room.
- If the organization or team performs room checks during lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed at least two adults must be present for room checks.

Recommended Components

- e. Participating Adults who travel with the organization must successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with the organization's policies.
- f. Parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor to travel alone with a Participating Adult.