



Participant Safety / Risk Management Policies

of the

**National Association of Competitive Soccer Clubs, Inc.,
doing business as US Club Soccer**

Updated December 15, 2021

Effective January 1, 2022

For convenience, this document contains the Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies as they appear within US Club Soccer's Policy Manual Section 13 and Appendices A and B. This document also includes Policy manual Section 1, which contains some applicable definitions.

Please reference usclubsoccer.org for additional information, resources and processes in conjunction with these policies.

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SECTION 1 – GENERAL:

Policy 1.01 – Business Name. The National Association of Competitive Soccer Clubs, Inc., shall conduct business under the name “US Club Soccer”.

Policy 1.02 – Governing Documents. US Club Soccer shall be governed by the NACSC Bylaws; these Policies; and the directives, forms, and procedures promulgated by US Club Soccer’s administrative offices.

Policy 1.03 – Definitions. In addition to the definitions contained in this Policy 1.03, definitions related to Participant Safety/Risk Management are contained within Policy 13.01.

“Academy” means a soccer organization which does not meet the definition of a Club, formed for the limited purpose of providing training to competitive players, with the permission of the player’s primary club or team, as further described in Policy 3.04.

“Adult Player” means any player who is not a youth player, as defined herein. For purposes of this definition only, adult players also include professional players.

“Affiliate Member” means a US Club Soccer Member, such as an academy or league, which has qualified for affiliate, non-voting membership status.

“Allegation of Misconduct” means the written allegation form that is available from US Club Soccer used to commence a disciplinary action against a club, team, or individual.

“Alliance Club” means a club which has been formed consisting of players from other Member Clubs.

“Club” means a competitive soccer organization which is organized for the purpose of developing and providing playing opportunities for soccer players, and complies with at least the minimum US Club Soccer Club Standards then in effect.

“Club League” means a league consisting primarily of soccer clubs.

“Club Player Roster” means the official list of players that are registered with US Club Soccer on the US Club Soccer website.

“Competition Authority” means the individual or organization sanctioned to conduct a soccer competition, including a host Club, league, tournament administrator, or others.

“Competitive” means, in the context of a player, team, or club: selecting players via a tryout or selection process based upon ability, playing games outside the club, utilizing coaches holding Federation coaching licenses, and aspiring to play at the highest competitive level in their area.

“Federation” means the United States Soccer Federation, which is recognized as the national governing body for soccer in the United States by the United States Olympic Committee and FIFA.

“Federation-affiliated Members” means organizations that have been accepted as members by and are in good standing with the Federation, pursuant to the USSF Bylaws.

“FIFA” means the Federation Internationale de Football Association.

“Foreign Team” means a team which is located outside of the 50 States and District of Columbia.

“Good Standing” means a US Club Soccer Member which has registered its players pursuant to US Club Soccer policies and rules, has paid all required dues and fees, has abided by the Bylaws, Policies, rules, and directives of US Club Soccer, and is not subject to any disciplinary penalties by US Club Soccer or the Federation, or has otherwise been determined to be in “bad standing”.

“Host Club” means the Club, which is sponsoring or conducting a soccer tournament or other event.

“Individual Member” or **“US Club Soccer Individual Member”** means any individual registered and in good standing with US Club Soccer.

“Involuntary Player Release” means the removal of a player from a Club player roster at the request of the Club.

“League” (or **“Affiliate League”**) means a group of four (4) or more teams that join together for the purpose of inter-team play under a common set of administrative, competition rules, and an established game schedule that is not a club league.

“Member” or **“US Club Soccer Member”** means any Member Organization (or US Club Soccer Member Organization) or Individual Member (or US Club Soccer Individual Member).

“Member Club” means any Member in good standing of US Club Soccer, which is a soccer Club.

“Member Organization” or **“US Club Soccer Member Organization”** means any Club, Academy, Affiliate Member, recreational program, league team, tournament team, league, or similar organization sanctioned by/affiliated with US Club Soccer and in good standing.

“Player” means any youth player (unless it specifically references Adult Player) who is registered with US Club Soccer or another Federation-affiliated member.

“Recreational” means a player, team, or club, which does not meet the definition of competitive.

“Registration” means the process of a Member Organization joining US Club Soccer, or a player joining a Member Organization, and complying with US Club Soccer Policies and rules in doing so.

“Registration Year” (also known as **“Governing Season”**) means that time period in which a Member Organization’s Official Roster and passcards are valid.

“Soccer Club” means a competitive soccer organization, consisting of coaches, administrators, players, and teams formed at multiple age groups for the purpose of developing player and coaching skills, providing training and competition for its players and coaches, and entering into soccer competitive competitions outside of the Club Organization. As long as it has competitive players and programs, for US Club Soccer membership purposes, a soccer Club may also consist of recreational or “select” players and programs, or adult players. While the primary focus shall be outdoor soccer, Clubs may also participate in indoor soccer activities.

“State Association” means a youth or adult soccer organization, governing soccer in one state or a portion of a state, as defined by the Bylaws of the Federation.

“Suspension” means the temporary withdrawal of rights or a privilege afforded a US Club Soccer Member, or a player, coach, administrator, or other volunteer of a Member Organization.

“Team” means, for purposes of these Policies only, a group of soccer players playing on the same side in a soccer game, pursuant to FIFA Laws of the Game or other rules authorized for a specific competition.

“Tournament” means a soccer competition other than a league, conducted over a limited period of time with specific playing rules, which consists of more than 5 teams, and is organized by a host Member Club.

“Transfer” means the removal of a player from the player roster of one Club Member, and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the player roster of another Club Member.

“Voluntary Player Release” means the removal of a player from a Club’s player roster at the request of the player.

“Youth Player” means a player who has not reached 20 years of age as of January 1 of the applicable registration year.

SECTION 13 – PARTICIPANT SAFETY/RISK MANAGEMENT:

Policy 13.01 – Policy Statement and Definitions. US Club Soccer has zero tolerance for abuse or misconduct. US Club Soccer is committed to providing a safe environment and preventing abusive conduct in any form.

For the purposes of the policies set forth in Section 13 and Appendices A and B (collectively, “Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies”), as well as elsewhere in this Policy Manual, the following terms have been adopted:

- **Activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction:** This includes not only activities directly operated by US Club Soccer, but also sanctioned and related activities operated by Member Organizations, including, but not limited to, practices/training, scrimmages, sanctioned league and tournament activities, team travel, applicable off-field activities and other In-Program Contact.
- **Adult Participant:** Any adult (18 years of age or older) US Club Soccer or a Member Organization authorizes, approves or appoints to have Regular Contact with or authority over Minor Athletes in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction. There are two types of Adult Participants: 1) Direct Adult Participant (“DAP”); and 2) Third-party Adult Participant (“TPAP”).

Without limitation, individuals in the following roles are considered Adult Participants:

- US Club Soccer staff and Board of Directors (DAP)
 - Member Organization Board of Directors (DAP)
 - Member Organization executives, directors, coaches, managers, administrators and other staff who have Regular Contact with or authority over Minor Athletes, regardless of whether the individual is an employee, independent contractor, or volunteer (DAP)
 - Players age 18 or older on a team with a Minor Athlete (DAP)
 - id2 / PDP staff and coaches (DAP)
 - Anyone traveling as a member of a team delegation (DAP)
 - Sports medicine/health care professionals/athletic trainers (DAP if part of Member Organization; TPAP if contracted from hospital, healthcare system or similar organization)
 - U.S. Soccer Federation-registered referees (TPAP)
 - Referee assignors, coordinators or other referee staff having Regular Contact with Minor Athletes (DAP or TPAP)
- **Authority:** When one person’s position over another person is such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, they have the power or right to direct, control, give orders to, or make decisions for that person. See also the *Power Imbalance* definition in the SafeSport Code.
 - **Close-in-Age Exception:** An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant does not have authority over a Minor Athlete *and* is not more than four years older than the Minor Athlete. This exception *only* applies to US Club Soccer’s Prevention Policies (Policy 13.05 & Appendix B).
 - **Direct Adult Participant (DAP):** Any Adult Participant who is directly affiliated with US Club Soccer or a Member Organization.
 - **Dual Relationships:** An exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete and the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the exception.
 - **In-Program Contact:** Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete related to participation in sport. Examples of In-Program Contact include, but are not limited to, competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre-/post-game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team- or sport-related relationship-building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education or competition site visits.
 - **Minor Athlete:** Any individual under 18 years old who participates in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, players, coaches and referees who are minors.

- **Participant:** Includes 1) Adult Participants; 2) Minor Athletes; 3) Member Organization employees; and 4) any other individual registered with US Club Soccer or otherwise involved in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction.
- **Personal Care Assistant (PCA):** An Adult Participant who assists an athlete requiring help with activities of daily living (ADL) and preparation for athletic participation. This support can be provided by a Guide for Blind or visually impaired athletes or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration and toileting. PCAs are different for every athlete and should be individualized to fit their specific needs. When assisting a Minor Athlete, PCAs must be authorized by the athlete’s parent/guardian.
- **Regular Contact:** Ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein an Adult Participant is in a role of direct and active engagement with any Minor Athlete(s).
- **Third-party Adult Participant (TPAP):** Any Adult Participant that is not directly affiliated with US Club Soccer or a Member Organization. (Example 1: Athletic trainers from a hospital/healthcare system that a Member Organization uses for a game(s). Example 2: U.S. Soccer Federation-registered referees, or referee assignors having regular contact with Minor Athletes.)

All Participants are responsible for knowing and complying with all US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules (including those guidelines and directives on the US Club Soccer website) in addition to all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations and any applicable Member Organization policies and rules. Member Organizations are responsible for ensuring their own Participants comply with US Club Soccer’s Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies.

Limited exceptions to the Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies may be granted by US Club Soccer on a case-by-case basis where appropriate, provided that such exceptions do not materially impact athlete safety.

Policy 13.02 – Eligibility Status and Determinations. US Club Soccer may use any information and has absolute and sole discretion to make an eligibility status determination for any current or potential Participant in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction.

- (a) **Eligible.** An individual has met the criteria necessary for registration with US Club Soccer and participation in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction.
- (b) **Ineligible.** An Ineligible status refers to an individual who has not met the criteria necessary for registration with US Club Soccer or participation in US Club Soccer activities, and as such, is prohibited from doing so. Most commonly, this is the result of an individual who has not yet completed the applicable US Club Soccer registration requirements. An individual with an Ineligible status is not necessarily Disqualified.
- (c) **Closed.** A Closed status means a determination of Eligible, Disqualified or Ineligible has not been made. This is often the result of incomplete background screening, applicant withdrawal, incomplete registration or other requirements, lack of response, or other similar situation. By definition, an individual with a Closed status is also Ineligible.
- (d) **Disqualified.** An individual who is Disqualified is prohibited from all involvement in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction, including registration with US Club Soccer or participation in US Club Soccer programming. Unless specified otherwise by US Club Soccer, Disqualifications are indefinite, though a Disqualified individual may reapply for registration or participation with US Club Soccer for the subsequent registration year. By definition, all Disqualified individuals are also Ineligible.
 - (i) US Club Soccer may deny registration to and disqualify, and/or require corrective action, on an indefinite or interim basis, any Participant or potential Participant who:
 - pursuant to Policy 13.06, is determined by US Club Soccer’s Risk Management Committee (including a Risk Management Review Panel) to be denied registration and Disqualified and/or require corrective action; or
 - does not meet the background screening adjudication or eligibility criteria established by US Club Soccer; or
 - intentionally disregards US Club Soccer’s Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies, or registration procedures, or participates with players before registration is approved and an “eligible” determination is made; or

- continues to employ or utilize any individual who either fails to comply with the registration procedures; or
- falsifies information, completes an application on behalf of another; or
- as a result of risk management procedures is determined by US Club Soccer to be unfit to continue in his or her current position, and is thereby disqualified.

(ii) Interim Disqualification. An individual with an Interim Disqualification status is prohibited from involvement in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction while the matter is under review. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of US Club Soccer and could be harmful to Participants. An individual who is accused but later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated within US Club Soccer.

(iii) US Club Soccer shall notify the Federation of a Participant’s, or a potential Participant’s, applicable eligibility status and determinations in accordance with the Federation’s Bylaw 212 (Reporting Risk Management Disqualification) and Policies 212 and 601-10 (Recognition of Risk Management Actions). US Club Soccer may also notify other applicable organizations.

Policy 13.03 – Reporting.

- (a) Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse to Law Enforcement. Pursuant to the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (the “SafeSport Act”), which amended the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990, **all mandatory reporters are required to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to the local law enforcement agency or local child protective services agency that has jurisdiction to investigate reports of child abuse or to protect child abuse victims, or to the FBI. This requirement applies to, among others, all Participants.**

Specifically, the definition of mandatory reporter now includes any “adult who is authorized, by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or an amateur sports organization that participates in interstate or international amateur athletic competition, to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or such an amateur sports organization.”

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

- (b) Participant Safety/Risk Management Reporting Form. Beyond the obligations described in Section 13.03(a), Adult Participants also have an affirmative duty to report suspected abuse or other misconduct to US Club Soccer, and as may be applicable, the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Incidents or allegations which must be reported include, but are not limited to: arrests for a felony or other crime of physical misconduct; offenses against a child; sexual misconduct; violations of US Club Soccer’s Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies, the SafeSport Code or the MAAPP; or any other act or pattern of behavior which may have or in the future put Participants at risk. Members are encouraged to err on the side of reporting, and allow US Club Soccer to ascertain whether a disqualification from participation or other action is warranted.

US Club Soccer encourages reports to be made via the online form at: usclubsoccer.org/reportaconcern

Reports may be made anonymously, and there is no direct fee or cost involved in making a report. US Club Soccer does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. No individual who makes a good-faith report of misconduct will be subject to retaliation or any adverse employment consequence as a result of making a report.

Failure to promptly report suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities may constitute a violation of federal law and, in any event, may be deemed a violation of US Club Soccer’s Participant Safety/Risk Management policies.

Policy 13.04 – Prohibited Conduct Policy. US Club Soccer’s Prohibited Conduct Policy is included within this US Club Soccer Policy Manual as Appendix A.

Policy 13.05 – Prevention Policies – Limiting One-on-One Interactions Between Adults and Minors. US Club Soccer’s Prevention Policies are included within this US Club Soccer Policy Manual as Appendix B.

Policy 13.06 – Risk Management Committee.

- (a) The Chairperson and members of the Risk Management Committee shall be appointed annually by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, subject to majority approval of the Board of Directors.
- (b) The primary responsibility of the Risk Management Committee is to conduct a review or hearing to determine eligibility for registration with US Club Soccer or participation in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction of an individual(s) who:
 - (i) Has been the subject of a reported concern, allegation of misconduct or is otherwise alleged to have violated US Club Soccer’s Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies or acted in a manner that may be detrimental to the welfare of Participants or soccer; or
 - (ii) Has a potentially disqualifying offense(s) in background screening results or otherwise may not meet the eligibility criteria established by US Club Soccer; or
 - (iii) Pursuant to Federation Policy 601-10 (Recognition of Risk Management Actions), has been disqualified or disciplined for violation of another Federation Organization Member’s Risk Management program; or
 - (iv) Has requested an appeal pursuant to Policy 13.07.

The committee may undertake additional responsibilities on an as-needed basis.

- (c) Risk Management Review Panel. Three (3) members of the Risk Management Committee shall constitute a Risk Management Review Panel, which has the authority to consider any responsibility and take action pursuant to Policy 13.06(b). The Chairperson of the Risk Management Committee, CEO/Executive Director, Vice President of Operations, or a person(s) designated by one of those individuals, is authorized to appoint Risk Management Review Panels from the pool of Risk Management Committee members.

Policy 13.07 – Risk Management Appeals. Individuals who have been or may be disqualified from registration or participation in activities within US Club Soccer’s jurisdiction may appeal the determination to the US Club Soccer Risk Management Committee within 15 calendar days of such notification by submitting the “US Club Soccer Risk Mgmt DQ Request for Appeal” form, available via usclubsoccer.org.

A Risk Management Review Panel shall be convened, determine next steps, and ultimately render a decision. The information submitted, and otherwise available or relevant, will be shared with the Risk Management Review Panel and/or other members of the Risk Management Committee.

Policy 13.08 – Background Screening.

- (a) Background screening is required of all Adult Participants.
- (b) Direct Adult Participants, except for players who have no other Direct Adult Participant role, must complete background screening and the Disqualification-Suspension Review requirement via the US Club Soccer staff registration process.
- (c) For Direct Adult Participants who are players and have no other Direct Adult Participant role, and for Third-party Adult Participants, the applicable Member Organization is responsible for ensuring the Adult Participant is not on any of the following registries or lists:

- (i) the applicable sex offender registries in the relevant state (ex: state of the applicable Member Organization); and
- (ii) the U.S. Center for SafeSport Centralized Disciplinary Database, available via the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s website; and
- (iii) U.S. Soccer’s Risk Management Disqualifications list (which includes US Club Soccer’s); and
- (iv) US Club Soccer’s Suspensions list.

Member Organization access to the applicable U.S. Soccer and US Club Soccer disqualification and suspension lists is provided via US Club Soccer.

- (d) Background screening of Minor Athletes is not required.
- (e) Timing. Background screening is required by the earlier of: 1) prior to Regular Contact with a Minor Athlete, or 2) within the first 45 days of the individual taking on the role giving them access to Minor Athletes, and every other year thereafter.

Policy 13.09 – U.S. Center for SafeSport Training.

- (a) Completion of the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s Core or Refresher Training – whichever is applicable based on one’s individual training cycle – is required of the following individuals on an annual basis:
 - (i) Adult Participants
 - (ii) Member Organization employees

SafeSport Training must be completed by the earlier of: 1) prior to Regular Contact with a Minor Athlete, or 2) within the first 45 days of either initial membership or upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy.

- (b) Direct Adult Participants must complete or document compliance with the SafeSport Training requirements in Policy 13.09(a) via the US Club Soccer player or staff registration process.
- (c) For Third-party Adult Participants or other individuals who are not Direct Adult Participants, US Club Soccer registration may be used to complete or document compliance with the SafeSport Training requirements in Policy 13.09(a), but it is not required. Those individuals are nevertheless required to abide by Policy 13.09(a), and compliance is the responsibility of the applicable Member Organization.
- (d) The U.S. Soccer access link/code may be needed to access SafeSport Training, which may be obtained by following the instructions at usclubsoccer.org or emailing SafeSport@usclubsoccer.org.
- (e) Medical Providers. Adult Participants who are medical providers required to comply with Policy 13.09(a) may take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of SafeSport Core training.
- (f) For Minor Athletes. US Club Soccer strongly encourages all Minor Athletes, subject to parental consent, to take the U.S. Center for SafeSport minor athlete training regarding the prevention of child abuse on an annual basis. The training is free and available via the U.S. Center for SafeSport website.
- (g) For parents of Minor Athletes. US Club Soccer strongly encourages all parents of Minor Athletes to take the U.S. Center for SafeSport Parent’s Guide to Misconduct in Sport training on an annual basis. The training is free and available via the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s website.

Policy 13.10 – Compliance.

- (a) US Club Soccer reserves the right to, either directly or indirectly, audit, survey, require certifications of compliance with, or otherwise review Members’ compliance with US Club Soccer’s Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies.

- (b) Violation of the Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies may result in disqualification, corrective action, disciplinary action and/or termination with respect to the applicable Participant and/or Member Organization, in accordance with US Club Soccer and/or U.S. Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules.
- (c) Compliance by Members of any applicable local, state or federal law, rule, regulation or other requirement beyond those contemplated by US Club Soccer is the responsibility of the applicable Member Organization.
- (d) Mandatory Self-Disclosure. Any person who has been disqualified or declared by a sport organization to be temporarily or permanently ineligible or disqualified is required to self-disclose this information to riskmanagement@usclubsoccer.org at the time of application with US Club Soccer, or if already a Participant, immediately upon the disqualification or ineligible declaration by another sport organization. Failure to disclose is a basis for disqualification, corrective action, disciplinary action and/or termination.

APPENDIX A: US Club Soccer Prohibited Conduct Policy

This policy set forth in this Appendix A (“Policy”) applies to all Participants (as that term is defined in Policy 13.01) as well as conduct by any subcontractor, supplier, customer or third party and their employees in their dealings with US Club Soccer and personnel of Member Organizations. This Policy has been adopted from and is consistent with U.S. Soccer’s Prohibited Conduct Policy and the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code.

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

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

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

This Policy is in addition to all other provisions of the US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules as well as all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations. It is the obligation of all Participants to know and comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

HARASSMENT:

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

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

Prohibited conduct can also include jokes, kidding, or teasing about another person’s protected status. While harassing conduct is unlawful only if it affects tangible job benefits and/or interferes unreasonably with work performance and creates an abusive or hostile work environment, this Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of law.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

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

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

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

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

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

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

RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN HARASSMENT:

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

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

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:

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

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:

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

EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT:

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

PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT:

Physical misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Physical misconduct is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in soccer.

BULLYING:

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

HAZING:

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

PROCEDURES FOR COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION:

All Participants are responsible to help ensure that we avoid misconduct. US Club Soccer cannot act to eliminate misconduct unless it has notice of the conduct. Participants are thus charged with reporting any concerns regarding compliance with its Participant Safety/Risk Management Policies. For the avoidance of doubt, in some instances, Participants will be required to report to law enforcement and/or the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Furthermore, US Club Soccer employees are responsible to help assure that the work environment, on or off-premises, is free from harassment. Additionally, US Club Soccer expects all Member Organizations to have similar policies for their respective employees. All employees have an obligation to promptly report any allegedly harassing conduct they are the subject of, that they learn of, or that they witness. US Club Soccer's policy provides for immediate notice of problems to the persons designated in this Policy so that we may address and resolve any problems as quickly as possible.

An employee must report the harassing conduct to either:

- The person to whom you report (supervisor or manager);
- Department Head;
- The Human Resources Department;
- The Legal Department;
- The Chief Executive Officer; or
- US Club Soccer's Participant Safety/Risk Management Reporting Form, accessible via usclubsoccer.org

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

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

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

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

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

TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

See Section 13.09 of the US Club Soccer Policy Manual.

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APPENDIX B: US Club Soccer Prevention Policies

Limiting One-on-One Interactions Between Adults and Minors

Soccer is a team sport. Although appropriate physical contact and one-on-one interaction between Minor Athletes and Adult Participants may be conducive to improving physical skills, US Club Soccer believes prudent limitations on one-on-one interactions can reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct without negatively impacting player development or unnecessarily limiting one-on-one time with trusted adults that is healthy and valuable for a child.

These policies set forth in this Appendix B (“Prevention Policies”) apply to all Participants (as that term is defined in Policy 13.01). This Policy has been adopted from and is consistent with U.S. Soccer policies and the SafeSport MAAPP.

A. ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS/MEETINGS:

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, the risk of child sexual abuse is reduced. 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.

1. Observable and interruptible.

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

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

3. Meetings with mental health care professionals. If a mental health care professional meets with a Minor Athlete at a sanctioned event or facility which is partially or fully under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer, the meeting must be observable and interruptible except if: (1) the door remains unlocked; (2) another adult is present at the facility; (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, although the minor’s identity need not be disclosed; (4) the organization is notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and (5) written legal guardian consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to the applicable Member Organization directly operating the activity, or US Club Soccer if US Club Soccer is directly operating the activity.

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

- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:

- The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable Member Organization (or to US Club Soccer, for activities directly operated by US Club Soccer) for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
- The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s SafeSport education and training policy; and
- The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s background screening policy.

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

5. Recommendations.

- (a) Monitoring. When one-on-one interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes occur at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer, another Adult Participant should monitor each meeting or training session. Monitoring includes reviewing the parent/guardian consent form, knowing that the meeting or training session is occurring, knowing the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and dropping in on the meeting or training session.
- (b) 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 Athletes to have a meeting or training session with an Adult Participant subject to these policies.

B. ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES, MESSAGES AND RUBDOWNS:

1. Licensed, certified professional.

- (a) Any athletic training modality, massage or rubdown performed by an Adult on a Minor Athlete at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer or a training or competition venue is prohibited unless such adult is a licensed massage therapist.
- (b) Any athletic training modality, massage or rubdown performed at a facility under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer 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.
- (c) Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstances.

2. Written consent. Written consent by a legal guardian be obtained at least annually before providing any athletic training modality, massage or rubdown on a Minor Athlete. Parents must be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

3. Recommendations.

- (a) Parent training. Parents/guardians should 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.
- (b) The provider should narrate the steps in the athletic training modality, massage or rubdown before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.

C. LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS:

1. **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 the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that: parent/legal guardian consent has been obtained; such exceptions are approved by the applicable Member Organization or US Club Soccer; everyone is fully clothed; and two or more Adult Participants are present.
2. **Isolated one-on-one interactions.**
 - (a) All one-on-one, In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete in a locker room, rest room, or changing area must be observable and interruptible, except if:
 - A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant ("PCA"), and:
 - The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable Member Organization (or to US Club Soccer, for activities directly operated by US Club Soccer) for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer's SafeSport education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer's background screening policy.
 - (b) If US Club Soccer or a Member Organization is using a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, times for use by Adult Participants, if any, shall be designated.
3. **Undress.** Under no circumstances shall an Adult Participant shower with Minor Athletes or otherwise be undressed (disrobed or partially or fully unclothed where private body parts are exposed) in front of Minor Athletes unless: a Dual Relationship Exists; the Close-in-Age Exception Applies; or a Minor Athlete requires a PCA and the PCA requirements set forth in this Section C have been fulfilled.
4. **Monitoring.** The use of locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas at facilities under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer shall be regularly and randomly monitored by the applicable Member Organization (or by US Club Soccer if US Club Soccer is directly operating the activity) to ensure compliance with these policies. The applicable Member Organization shall provide a 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.
5. **Non-exclusive facility.** If US Club Soccer or its members use a facility not under its jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Adult Participants are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth here.
6. **Recommendations.**
 - (a) 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, check on the athlete's whereabouts.
 - (b) Parents are discouraged 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:

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

2. Open and transparent.

- (a) All electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be open and transparent except if:
- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable Member Organization (or to US Club Soccer, for activities directly operated by US Club Soccer) for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s SafeSport education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s background screening policy.

3. One and transparent means:

- (a) If an Adult Participant needs to communicate directly with a Minor Athlete via electronic communications, another Adult Participant or the minor’s legal guardian shall be copied.
- (b) If a Minor Athlete communicates to the Adult Participant privately first, the Adult Participant should respond to the Minor Athlete with a copy to another Adult Participant or the minor’s legal guardian.
- (c) An Adult Participant communicating electronically to the entire team shall copy another Adult Participant.
- (d) Minor Athletes may “friend” the applicable organization’s official page.
- (e) Only platforms that allow for open and transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

4. Prohibited electronic communications.

- (a) Adult Participants are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications with Minor Athletes, except under the exceptions contained in Section D(2)(a).
- (b) Adult Participants are not permitted to “private message,” “instant message,” “direct message,” or send photos via Snapchat or Instagram to a Minor Athlete privately, except under the exceptions contained in Section D(2)(a).

5. Requests to discontinue. Legal guardians may request in writing that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by US Club Soccer, a Member Organization, or Adult Participants. US Club Soccer and/or the applicable Member Organization shall abide by any such request that their child not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

6. Recommendations.

- (a) Hours. It is recommended that real-time electronic communications only be sent between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., unless there is a specific safety- or soccer-related need to communicate.
- (b) Monitoring.
- It is recommended that social media pages shall be monitored by two or more Direct Adult Participants associated with the applicable Member Organization, and posts that violate US Club Soccer’s policies and practices for appropriate behavior are removed.
 - The legal guardian or a minor athlete and the applicable organization’s administrator shall be informed of any prohibited posts.

- (c) Social media connections. Adult Participants should not maintain private social media connections with Minor Athletes, and Adult Participants should discontinue existing social media connections with Minor Athletes, except under the exceptions outlined in Section D(2)(a). It is anticipated that this recommendation will become a requirement in the near future.

E. TRANSPORTATION:

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

1. Transportation.

- (a) US Club Soccer generally does not arrange for transportation for its Members.
- (b) An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:
- A Dual Relationship Exists; or
 - The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - The Adult Participant has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable Member Organization (or to US Club Soccer, for activities directly operated by US Club Soccer) for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s SafeSport education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s background screening policy.
- (c) Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
- (d) Adult Participants may transport Minor Athletes if accompanied by at least one other Adult Participant or at least two minors.
- (e) Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian is required for all transportation arranged by a Member Organization (or by US Club Soccer if US Club Soccer is directly operating the activity).

2. Recommendations.

- (a) Shared or Carpool Travel Arrangement. US Club Soccer encourages parents/legal guardians to pick up their Minor Athlete first and drop off their Minor Athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
- (b) Parent training. It is recommended that parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to travel alone with an Adult Participant.

F. LODGING:

“Lodging” is team travel to a competition or other team activity that US Club Soccer or a Member Organization plans and supervises, and that requires an overnight stay or use of a hotel.

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

- The Adult Participant has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian; or
 - A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant (“PCA”), and:
 - The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to the applicable Member Organization (or to US Club Soccer, for activities directly operated by US Club Soccer) for the Adult Participant PCA to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s SafeSport education and training policy; and
 - The Adult Participant PCA has complied with US Club Soccer’s background screening policy.
2. Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually.
 3. Monitoring or Room Checks During In-Program Travel. If the Member Organization or US Club Soccer performs room checks during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present for the room checks.
 4. Additional Requirements for Lodging Authorized or Funded by a Member Organization or US Club Soccer.
 - (a) Any Adult Participant traveling with the organization must agree to and sign the organization’s Lodging policy at least annually.
 - (b) Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athletes are assumed to have authority of Minor Athletes and thus must comply with US Club Soccer’s SafeSport education and training policy.
 5. Meetings.
 - (a) Meetings shall be conducted consistent with US Club Soccer’s policy for one-on-one interactions – i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible.
 - (b) Meetings shall not be conducted in a hotel room.
 - (c) It is recommended that team travel policies are signed and agreed to by all minor athletes, parents, and adults traveling with the organization.
 6. Recommendations.
 - (a) It is recommended that parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor to travel alone with an Adult Participant.

G. MINOR ATHLETES WHO BECOME ADULT ATHLETES:

All athletes turning 18 who still meet the threshold for Regular Contact must comply with the Prevention Policies herein, absent the Close-in-Age Exception, which applies to the enforcement of Prevention Policies only.

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