

# **SAFESPORT PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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Introduction .....	2
Letter from the Chair .....	4
U.S. Center for SafeSport .....	5
Definitions .....	6
Section I – SafeSport Policies .....	7
Sexual Misconduct .....	9
Grooming Behaviors .....	11
Physical Misconduct .....	12
Emotional Misconduct .....	14
Bullying, Threats and Harassment .....	15
Sexual Harrassment .....	17
Hazing .....	18
Section II – Athlete Protection Policies .....	19
Supervision and Leadership .....	22
Two-Deep Leadership .....	22
Locker Rooms and Changing Areas .....	23
Social Media, Mobile and Digital Communications Policy .....	24
Travel Guidelines .....	26
Codes of Conduct .....	28
U.S. Figure Skating Member .....	29
Skater .....	30
Coaches .....	31
Parent .....	34
Club Board Member .....	36
Section III – SafeSport Awareness Training .....	37
Section IV – Screening and Background Check Program .....	40
Section V – U.S. Figure Skating Policy on Harassment and Abuse .....	46
Section VI – Reporting Misconduct and Policy Violations .....	50
Importance of Confidentially .....	52
Section VII – Monitoring and Supervision of the SafeSport Program .....	53
Club SafeSport Compliance Chair Job Description .....	55

U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members and to protect the opportunity of its members to participate in the sport in an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. U.S. Figure Skating will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of its members, including but not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents/guardians, and volunteers or any other persons while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating.

There are many positive reasons to participate in figure skating, but like all sports, it can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct: emotional, physical and sexual, as well as bullying, harassment and hazing. All forms of misconduct are unacceptable and in direct conflict with U.S. Figure Skating values and ideals.

Misconduct may damage an athlete's psychological well-being. Athletes who have been mistreated experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, and loss of self-esteem. Misconduct also may have a negative impact on family, friends and the sport. Misconduct often hurts an athlete's competitive performance and may cause him or her to drop out of sport entirely.

This SafeSport Program Handbook, originally created by the U.S. Olympic Committee and adapted by U.S. Figure Skating on May 1, 2013, includes various policies that apply to all U.S. Figure Skating clubs, programs, events and activities. It includes the available and required training for coaches and select U.S. Figure Skating volunteers, officials and staff members on recognizing and

reducing circumstances for potential abuse to occur; information on U.S. Figure Skating's required 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 U.S. Figure Skating and its member clubs and programs shall respond to allegations of abuse and misconduct; and how U.S. Figure Skating and its member clubs and programs will monitor and supervise this program to help ensure its effectiveness.

As described more fully within this Handbook, each U.S. Figure Skating member club shall designate a club board member to hold the title of SafeSport Compliance Officer. In the absence of a formal designation, the club president shall be the SafeSport Compliance Officer. This document is also a guide that may be useful to all U.S. Figure Skating member clubs and programs in developing their own policies. U.S. Figure Skating clubs and programs are independent businesses which should have their own business practices, policies and procedures.

Through the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program, U.S. Figure Skating is committed to providing the safest possible environment for all participants.

### **For more information:**

Online - [www.usfigureskating.org/safesport](http://www.usfigureskating.org/safesport)  
Email [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org) or  
call 719-635-5200



**U.S. Figure Skating’s SafeSport Program involves these key components:**

- Policies Prohibiting Abuse and Misconduct
- Monitoring and Supervision of SafeSport Program
- Education and Awareness Training
- Screening of Coaches and Volunteers
- Responding to Reports of Abuse
- Reporting Concerns of Abuse

**Why SafeSport?**

Sport provides athletes with an opportunity to perform – on and off the ice. Unfortunately, sport can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct and abuse. Studies indicate that as many as 1 in 8 athletes will be sexually abused within their sport. Misconduct is a critical issue in sport, and one that we all need a plan to prevent.

**Who is affected by SafeSport?**

We all play a role in reducing misconduct in sport. SafeSport provides resources for all members of the sport community – organizations, clubs, programs, teams, coaches, parents/guardians, volunteers and athletes – to identify and report potential misconduct, to implement ways to reduce the opportunity for such behavior and to enact plans to promptly respond if it does occur.

U.S. Figure Skating has ZERO TOLERANCE for misconduct. As a community, we have an opportunity to be part of the SafeSport solution. Start now by visiting [www.usfigureskating.org/safesport](http://www.usfigureskating.org/safesport).

To All U.S. Figure Skating Members, Member Clubs, Programs and Volunteers:

The SafeSport Program is the cornerstone of U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to ensure a safe, healthy and positive skating environment for all of its members and volunteers. In order to be successful, we all have a role to play. Every member must be accountable for identifying and reporting misconduct and/or suspected abuse - to a club SafeSport Compliance Chair, to safesport@us-figureskating.org or to The Center for SafeSport, and, if any form of child abuse is observed or suspected, contact either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report. This Handbook provides clear guidance on the core principles and accountabilities of the SafeSport Program and how to timely report concerns. It serves as a road map for clubs and members in meeting these key responsibilities.

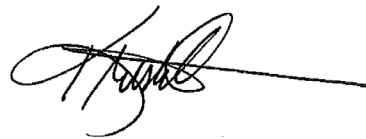
The current edition of the SafeSport Handbook includes several important reminders and Policy updates from U.S. Figure Skating:

- mandatory compliance with the SafeSport Policy and Guidelines for all members and member clubs;
- the expansion of the categories of individuals requiring background checks and the completion of the SafeSport Training program prior to their participating in U.S. Figure Skating related activities;
- the revision of the travel policy to mandate Two-Deep Leadership and eliminate one-athlete and one-coach travel; and,
- annual confirmation from member clubs affirming that they are in compliance with U.S. Figure Skating's Policy regarding required background checks and SafeSport Training.

It is important for every member of U.S. Figure Skating to read and understand the SafeSport Policy, its core principles and the Codes of Conduct set forth in the SafeSport Handbook. It is essential that every member club engage in open discussions with their members, parents and coaches about the Policy and the Codes of Conduct and determine how the club, through its membership and leadership, will work to identify, report and, where appropriate, respond to issues as they arise. The new training courses created by The Center for SafeSport, available on the members only website, provide a wealth of knowledge regarding sexual, physical and emotional misconduct and abuse, and how they can occur in sport. We are confident that a commitment by the membership to the SafeSport Policy and its compliance requirements will provide the foundation on which U. S. Figure Skating will reinforce its commitment to a safe, healthy and positive environment for all members and participants.

We look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,



Kris Arneson Cutler  
U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Committee Chair

The U.S. Center for SafeSport, located in Denver, opened in March 2017. The Center's Response and Resolution Office will investigate and resolve alleged policy violations of the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement's 47-member National Governing Bodies, which includes U.S. Figure Skating.

- The SafeSport Code identifies prohibited conduct and serves as the benchmark by which the Center determines whether or not a policy violation has occurred.
- Aggregate data from Center investigations will be used to identify trends and patterns across sport, strengthening national prevention efforts.

## **Jurisdiction and Authority**

The Center has jurisdiction over Covered Individuals (see definition on page 5)

Covered individuals are defined as:

- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating
- U.S. Figure Skating or the USOC authorizes, approves or appoints a person to a position of authority over athletes or who will have frequent contact with athletes
- Identified by U.S. Figure Skating as being within the Center's jurisdiction

The Center will have the exclusive authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport Code violations involving sexual misconduct. U.S. Figure Skating will retain the authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport violations that are non-sexual in nature. Although, at U.S. Figure Skating's request, the Center may exercise the discretionary authority to take on cases of this nature.

All individuals, including those who are not members of U.S. Figure Skating, are encouraged to report suspected violations of SafeSport.

Covered individuals who are over the age of 18 are required to report any suspected SafeSport violations related to or accompanying sexual misconduct. Covered individuals who fail to report SafeSport violations will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **How to Report Sexual Misconduct Violations**

Individuals shall report suspected sexual misconduct violations directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Online Reporting Form: <https://www.safesport.org/response-resolution/report>

Phone: 720-524-5640

## Child, children, minor and youth

Anyone under the age of 18. Here, “child,” “children,” “minor” and “youth” are used interchangeably.

## Child physical abuse

- Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by contact behaviors, such as punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. Child physical abuse also may include non-contact physical misconduct as described in the Athlete Protection Policy.
- Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway ([www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)).

## Child sexual abuse and misconduct

- Child sexual abuse and misconduct involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a minor that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power or disparity in age, development or size, such that one child is the aggressor. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or digital communications, exposure or voyeurism.
- Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway at [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

## Covered Individual

Any individual who:

- a) currently is, or was at the time of a possible violation of the Code, within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating or who is seeking to be within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating (e.g., through application for membership);
- b) is an athlete or non-athlete participant that U.S. Figure Skating or the USOC formally authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of authority over athletes or to have frequent contact with athletes; or,
- c) U.S. Figure Skating identifies as being within the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s jurisdiction.

## Misconduct

Conduct that results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing.

## Participants

Participants are minors who participate in a sport activity through a club or organization and athletes 18 years and older and officials.

## Position of Power

When one person has direct supervisory, evaluative or other authority over another. Examples: A person who may be in a position of power includes someone such as a coach, boss, employer or medical personnel.

## Power Imbalance

Power imbalance may exist where one person is in a position of power such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, there is a power imbalance.

- Whether someone occupies a position of power such that there is a power imbalance depends on several factors including: the nature and extent of the supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the person; the actual relationship between the parties; the parties’ respective roles; the nature and duration of the relationship; the age of the people involved.
- Once a coach-athlete relationship is established, a power imbalance is presumed to exist throughout the coach-athlete relationship (regardless of age) and is presumed to continue for minor athletes after the coach-athlete relationship terminates and the athlete reaches 20 years of age.
- A power imbalance may exist, but is not presumed, where an intimate relationship existed before the sport relationship (e.g., a relationship between two spouses or life partners that preceded the sport relationship).
- Based on the totality of the circumstances, including whether there is an aggressor, and/or a significant disparity in age, size, strength or mental capacity.

# SECTION I

## SafeSport Policies





U.S. Figure Skating is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring it promotes an environment free from misconduct. As part of this program, U.S. Figure Skating has implemented policies to address certain types of abuse and misconduct, and to reduce, monitor and govern areas where potential misconduct could occur.

**The policies below address the following types of misconduct:**

- Sexual Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct
- Emotional Misconduct
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

**The SafeSport policies below set forth the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct and shall be implemented by member clubs to reduce the risks of potential misconduct:**

- Athlete Protection Policy and Commitment to Safety
- Two-Deep Leadership and Appropriate Supervision
- Locker Room and Changing Room Policy
- Social Media, Mobile and Digital Communications Policy
- Travel Policies for Individual and Team Travel
- Codes of Conduct for Skaters, Parents/Guardians, Coaches and Learn to Skate USA Instructors and Club Board Members

All U.S. Figure Skating members shall familiarize themselves with each form of misconduct and shall refrain from engaging in such misconduct and/or violating any of these policies.

**Reporting Procedure:**

In the event that any U.S. Figure Skating member, club volunteer, official or staff observes inappropriate behavior (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual misconduct, or any other type of misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each such person to immediately report their observations to the appropriate person or entity.

To make a report, email [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org) or call 719-635-5200. All reports involving sexual misconduct must be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport by completing an online report at [www.safesport.org/response-resolution/report](http://www.safesport.org/response-resolution/report) or by calling 720-524-5640. In addition to reporting within U.S. Figure Skating, U.S. Figure Skating members and staff must also report suspected child physical or sexual misconduct to appropriate law enforcement authorities as required under U.S. Figure Skating rules and under applicable law. One should never attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual misconduct allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **Sexual Misconduct**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Sexual Misconduct**

Figure skating teaches lessons that reach beyond the ice arena, but its ability to do so depends on maintaining the bonds of trust, mentorship and mutual respect among members. These elements are undermined when sexual misconduct occurs in any sport setting. Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment and rape. Every member of the sport community, especially adults in positions of authority, can contribute to a sport environment free from sexual misconduct by working together and being informed.

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no sexual abuse or misconduct involved in any of its member clubs and programs by coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents/guardians or volunteers.

#### **Definition:**

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Last, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

#### **Notes:**

- An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete, regardless of age, and an adult in a position of authority.
- Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Sexual misconduct of a minor occurs when an adult coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer touches a minor for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification of the minor or the coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer. Sexual misconduct of a minor also occurs when a minor touches a coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of either the minor or coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian, or volunteer, even if the touching occurs at the request or with the consent of the coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer.

#### **Authority and Trust:**

Once the unique coach-athlete relationship is established, the authority and trust on the part of the coach over the athlete shall be assumed, regardless of age. However, in some circumstances in regard to adult skaters, this assumption is rebuttable.

#### **Imbalance of Power:**

Factors relevant to determining whether there is an imbalance of power include, but are not limited to: the nature and extent of the adult coach's, official's, director's, employee's, parent/guardian's or volunteer's supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the athlete; the relationship between the parties; the parties' respective roles; the nature and duration of the sexual relations or intimacies; the age of the adult coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer; the age of the athlete or participant; and whether the adult coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer has engaged in a pattern of sexual interaction with other athletes or participants.

Sexual contact between children also can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age,

development, or size that renders 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 U.S. Figure Skating function are defenses to a complaint of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct may also occur between adults or to an adult. Sexual misconduct 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.

Sexual misconduct 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 photo to minor; exposing minors to pornographic material, sending minors sexually explicit digital messages or photos (e.g. "sexting"), deliberately exposing a minor to sexual acts, or deliberately exposing a minor to inappropriate nudity.

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 U.S. Figure Skating member who engages in any act of sexual misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent ban and referral to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and law enforcement authorities.

## EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

### Touching offenses

- Fondling an athlete's breasts, buttocks or genitalia
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback, free lessons/ice time, etc.) for sexual acts
- Genital contact – whether or not either party is clothed
- Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants

### Non-touching offenses

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior
- A coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- A coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- A coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
- Exposing athletes to pornographic material
- Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive digital or written messages or photos (e.g., "sexting")
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)

- Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature

These guidelines do not apply to a pre-existing relationship between spouses or life partners.

### How to Report Sexual Misconduct Violations

Individuals should report suspected sexual misconduct violations directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Online Reporting Form: <https://www.safesport.org/response-resolution/report>

Phone: 720-524-5640

### ‘GROOMING’ BEHAVIORS

Offenders typically control their victims through a systematic process called “grooming” or seduction. Many offenders exploit a child’s vulnerabilities using a combination of tactics to gain the victim’s trust, lower inhibitions and gain cooperation and “consent.” Since the initial stages of the grooming process can occur in public or group settings, offenders also take care to groom the community, which makes it easier to gain the trust of staff and administrators. The grooming process has six steps:

1. **Targeting the victim** – An offender will identify a child and determine his or her vulnerabilities.
2. **Gaining trust** – Through watching and gathering information about the child, an offender will become acquainted with his or her needs.
3. **Filling a need** – Offenders will often provide lavish gifts, extra attention and affection to forge a bond with their victims.
4. **Isolating the child** – By developing a special

relationship with the child, an offender creates situations in which he or she is alone with the child.

5. **Sexualizing the relationship** – An offender will desensitize a child by talking to, taking photos of and even creating situations in which both the offender and victim are touching or naked. The adult then uses a child’s curiosity and feelings of stimulation to engage in sexual activity.
6. **Maintaining control** – To ensure the child’s continued participation and silence, offenders can use secrecy and blame as well as other tactics. Victims sometimes continue the relationship out of fear or shame at the thought of having to tell someone about the abuse.

Since interactions between a predator and child can occur in sport settings around other people, coaches, staff members or volunteers are well positioned to witness grooming behavior. Therefore, it’s critical for all members of the sport community to be on the alert for policy violations, suspicious behavior, or other signals that an individual might be a sexual predator. Offenders will use tickling, wrestling, horseplay, photography and gift giving to push the boundaries of what’s acceptable and form connections with their victims.

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected grooming behavior should be immediately directed to [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org) or call 719-635-5200.

## Physical Misconduct

### How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Physical Misconduct

Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity; in practices and competition, athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete -- such as direct contact with coaches or other members, disciplinary actions, or punishment -- is unacceptable. Physical misconduct can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and diet. Two of the best ways to promote safe conditions are to set clear boundaries and take a team approach to monitoring athletes and participants.

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no physical misconduct of any participant involved in any of its member clubs, programs and activities by any coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer.

#### Definition:

Physical misconduct 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 misconduct also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical misconduct 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 with a participant, physical abuse also includes the providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of 21 and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant.

It also includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault).

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

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

Any U.S. Figure Skating member who engages in any act of physical misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

## EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

### Contact offenses:

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
- Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
- Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law)
- Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete
- Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, after a serious injury (e.g., a concussion)
- \*Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., public weigh-ins, caliper tests for humiliation purposes)

***\*For further information please consult the U.S. Figure Skating Policy on Athlete Health and Well-Being***

### Non-contact offenses:

- Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space)
- Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface)
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

## Reporting Physical Misconduct

It's critical for clubs, programs, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents/guardians to report suspicions or allegations of physical misconduct to U.S. Figure Skating, SafeSport, and to appropriate law enforcement officials.

### Physical Contact in Training and Instruction

Physical contact in sport is inherent in instruction and training. Appropriate physical contact has three elements:

1. The physical contact takes place in public
2. There is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
3. The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

With these elements in place, physical contact with athletes for the safety and instruction, celebration or consolation may be appropriate. In particular, coaches improve skills and make the training environment safer through appropriate physical contact.

## Emotional Misconduct

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no emotional misconduct of any participant involved in any of its clubs, programs or activities by any coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer.

### Definition:

Emotional misconduct 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 misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- **Verbal Acts:**

A pattern of verbal behaviors that attack a participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting) or repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.

- **Physical Acts:**

A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or punching walls, windows or other objects.

- **Acts that Deny Attention and Support:**

A pattern of ignoring a participant for extended periods of time or routinely or arbitrarily excluding participant from practice.

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

**Please note:** A single incident (e.g., a verbal outburst) may be inappropriate, but does not constitute emotional misconduct, which requires a pattern of harmful behaviors over time.

A U.S. Figure Skating member who engages in any act of emotional misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

**Note:** Bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing (defined in the following sections) often involve some form of emotional misconduct.

U.S. Figure Skating supports an environment for participation in figure skating conducive to the enjoyment of figure skating 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 emotionally, physically or sexually.

Bullying can occur through written, verbal or digitally transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with all U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned activities and events.

### **Examples of bullying prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:**

- **Physical**  
Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting or slapping; throwing objects such as sporting equipment at another person.
- **Verbal**  
Teasing, ridiculing, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.

- **Social, including cyberbullying**

Using rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; using digital communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate someone; socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same.

- **Sexual**

Teasing, ridiculing or taunting based on gender or sexual orientation (real or implied), gender traits or behavior (e.g., taunting someone for being too effeminate), or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.

While other 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 U.S. Figure Skating member or parent/guardian of a participant who engages in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent ban and 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.



## **Difference between mean, rude or bullying behavior**

Mean is defined as purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone very infrequently. Rude is defined as inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else.

Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power. The main distinction between “rude” and “mean” behavior has to do with intention and repetition. While rudeness is often unintentional, mean behavior very much aims to hurt or depreciate someone.

Conduct may not rise to the level of bullying behavior if it is rude, mean or arising from conflict or struggle between persons, absent a power imbalance, who perceive they have incompatible goals. Mean and rude behavior may be a code of conduct violation, however, and should be treated as such.

## **Threats**

Harassment is defined in various sources such as case law, state legislation, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporation and workplace documents, and Human Rights Commission materials. U.S. Figure Skating has not adopted any specific definition of harassment, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. The following, however, presents a general overview.

**Behavior:** Harassment in sport 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.

**Environment:** Creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive. Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not. It includes, for example, name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed. Harassment includes child abuse.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is a form of harassment prohibited by this policy. It shall be a violation for any member, coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer, 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.

U.S. Figure Skating shall investigate all indications, informal reports and formal grievances of sexual harassment by any athlete, coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer, 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 acts, 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 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.

It is also 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 U.S. Figure Skating participant or parent/guardian 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 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

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no hazing of any participant involved in any of its member clubs, programs or teams by any member, coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer.

### Definition:

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 or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.

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. Team building promotes respect and dignity, creates a team atmosphere and is a shared positive experience.

It is also 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 U.S. Figure Skating member 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 referral to law enforcement authorities.

### Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

It is a violation of the Athlete Protection policy if a coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), staff member and/or volunteer. In addition, it is a violation of the SafeSport Guidelines to observe any form of misconduct and fail to timely report it as details in this program.

### Reporting

Although these policies are designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Staff, members, volunteers and participants of each member club and program shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in the reporting policy. It is a clear violation of this policy if a club or program does not properly report suspicions or allegations to the appropriate entity or law enforcement authorities, if warranted.

### Violations

Violations of the Athlete Protection Policy shall be reported pursuant to the U.S. Figure Skating reporting policy and will be addressed under the disciplinary rules and procedure of the organization.

# SECTION II

## Athlete Protection Policies



The following policies are set forth to further help prevent misconduct in all U.S. Figure Skating related activities. U.S. Figure Skating requires each member club and program to develop and implement its own policies based upon the information within this SafeSport Handbook for the purposes of athlete protection and providing a safe environment for all to participate.

## **Athlete Protection Policy**

The athlete protection policy describes the organization's commitment to promoting athlete safety by describing acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

The absence of clear behavioral boundaries is a significant risk factor for misconduct. If inappropriate conduct is not clear to sport stakeholders, unacceptable situations might be tolerated and no disciplinary action taken. Unclear boundaries can also lead to inadvertent misconduct (e.g., where a coach models behavior that he or she experienced as an athlete without realizing its negative effects).

The athlete protection policy clarifies to all stakeholders that the organization is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes. It also emphasizes and sets forth standards of behavior that clearly outline unacceptable behaviors, minimize opportunities for misconduct, and help to prevent unfounded allegations.

## **Elements**

- States commitment to athlete safety
- Describes to whom the policy applies (e.g., those individuals within the organization's control)
- Defines all forms of misconduct in sport:
  - o Emotional, physical and sexual misconduct in sport
  - o Bullying, harassment and hazing in sport
  - o Prohibits all forms of misconduct in sport
- Meets or exceeds requirements of relevant standard of care or legislation
- States who shall/may report suspected misconduct
- States to whom a report should be made per U.S Figure Skating SafeSport program
- Describes how the organization will address violations of the Athlete Protection policy

## **Commitment to Safety**

In the event that a coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each member to immediately report his or her observations to the club's SafeSport Compliance Officer and take the appropriate action stated in applicable U.S. Figure Skating Rules.

## Sample public statement –

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Members should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of misconduct allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. Instead, it is the responsibility of each member to immediately report suspicions or allegations to the [CLUB SAFESPORT COMPLIANCE CHAIR] or safesport@usfigureskating.org. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under U.S. Figure Skating's disciplinary rules and procedures.

[CLUB/PROGRAM] recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

## Sample Club Membership agreement –

All clubs, programs and teams shall add language in annual membership renewals so all members not only understand the SafeSport Program and its policies, but agree to abide by all codes of conduct. The below is a sample SafeSport statement that can be added to your club or program renewal information and/or code of conduct.

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

The following code of conduct applies to all participants in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating and [CLUB/PROGRAM/RINK] including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions, training camps and local rink activities.

I recognize that my participation or my child's in all the activities associated with U.S. Figure Skating and [CLUB/PROGRAM/RINK] is an honor and privilege that carries certain responsibilities. I agree to fully abide by the rules and guidelines set forth by U.S. Figure Skating or its properly designated agents.

## **Supervision of Athletes and Participants**

This policy describes U.S. Figure Skating's plan for advising the proper supervision of members and participants during all program activities and to minimize one-on-one interactions between a coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer. A plan for proper supervision raises awareness about those activities that pose a high risk for misconduct, as well as ways to minimize one-on-one interactions.

### **Two-Deep Leadership**

Two-deep leadership is a preventative method to minimize one-on-one interactions between minors and adults. Two-deep leadership means that at least two individuals, preferably adults (i.e.- rule of three) are present at all times with individual minors when off the ice. For example, it could be two club volunteers, two coaches, or a coach and parent/guardian of the skater. This two-deep strategy makes it more difficult to isolate a minor and avoid detection. This policy is intended to minimize one-on-one interactions not only for the protection of the minor but also to help protect coaches and volunteers from false accusations.

Appropriate one-on-one interactions with athletes or participants:

### **Individual meetings at the rink or during events and competitions**

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or at an event or competition. Under these circumstances, coaches, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as the corner of the arena.
- If an individual meeting is to take place in an office or a locker room, the door should remain unlocked and open.
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary at a test session or competition, the coach, staff member and/or volunteer should inform another coach, staff member and/or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked.

## Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

Athletes are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms/changing areas and restrooms due to various stages of dress/undress and because they are less supervised than at many other times. Athlete-to-athlete problems, misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing may occur when a coach or other responsible adult is not in a position to observe. Adherence to a locker room/changing area policy enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct.

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to safety, U.S. Figure Skating now requires all member clubs and programs to publish and post locker room/changing area policies specific to the facilities and distribute them to parents and guardians of all minor participants and members.

Clubs shall include the following information in their policy:

- Procedures for supervising and monitoring locker rooms and changing areas
- Permission or prohibition for parents/guardians to be in the locker rooms
- Prohibited conduct, including at least all forms of abuse and misconduct prohibited by U.S. Figure Skating
- Specific policies regarding the use of mobile digital devices (e.g. mobile phones) and prohibiting the use of all recording and photographic devices

## Co-Ed Locker Rooms

If the club activity or event consists of both female and male participants, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate locker room and changing arrange-

ments made. Where possible, member clubs and programs should have female and male skaters dress/undress in separate locker rooms. If separate locker rooms are not available, the skaters will take turns using the locker room to change or use the appropriate restroom within the facility.

Locker rooms used for warm-up and that are intended to be co-ed will be labeled as such and require that the door to be open at all times.

In the event of a medical situation or emergency, U.S. Figure Skating officials working on behalf of the event (such as doctor, physical therapist, chief referee) or emergency medical personnel will be permitted into the locker room/changing area.

The use of any recording and photographic devices inside a locker room/changing area is strictly prohibited.

Locker rooms and changing areas at U.S. Figure Skating competitive events are for athletes only, will be labeled with regard to specific use and where identified will be gender specific. An exception can be made for athletes 11 years old and younger that will allow for one parent of the same sex to assist their child immediately prior to and after their skating event(s). Synchronized and Theatre on Ice teams have separate locker room policies and should refer to the specific policies for teams on the SafeSport webpage.

Any violation of this policy will be addressed under the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program and U.S. Figure Skating Ethics/Grievance procedures.

To view event specific locker room policies, please visit [www.usfigureskating.org/safesport](http://www.usfigureskating.org/safesport)



## **Social Media, Mobile and Digital Communications Policy**

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's emphasis on participant safety, communications involving minor participants should be appropriate, productive and transparent. Effective communication concerning activities, schedules and administrative issues among coaches, members and their families, officials and volunteers is critical.

U.S. Figure Skating encourages and supports members, member clubs, programs and teams to take part in social media by posting, blogging and tweeting positive experiences in skating as a show of support of its members and for promotion of the club, its programs and events. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media and other forms of digital communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of mobile and digital communications can result in misconduct.

All digital communication of any kind between adults and minors, including use of social media, must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about skating-related activities. Consider social media communications as public at all times.

The club, program or team is required to have a signed name and likeness consent and release agreement form (see appendix for sample) by the minor's parent or legal guardian before any distribution or posting of photos, videos, images, etc. No contact information for any minor shall in any case be placed on any social media site.

Coaches, skaters and club volunteers must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowable digital communication. All content between adults and minors should be readily available to share with the public or families of the minor member. If the member is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media or similar communication must also copy or include a parent or legal guardian.

## **Social Media**

U.S. Figure Skating recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other digital communications can be concerning where minor participants are involved. Coaches are specifically prohibited from having their skaters join their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media platforms.

As a best practice to facilitate communication, an official club, program or team page may be set up and members and parents/guardians may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page.

## **Email, Text Messaging and Similar Digital**

## **Communication**

Coaches, volunteers and skaters may use email and text messaging to communicate with each other about non-personal matters. All email and text message content between adults and minors must be non-personal in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about club/skating-related activities. Emails and text messages from an adult to any minor participant must copy or include a parent/guardian.

### **Request To Discontinue All Digital Communication or Imagery with Minors**

Following receipt of a written request by the parent/guardian of a minor that their child not be contacted by any form of digital communication by adults, the local club, program or team administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

## **Misconduct**

Social media and other means of digital communication can be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, “sexting,” bullying, harassment and hazing). Such communications by a coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian, skater or volunteer of a U.S. Figure Skating club or program will not be tolerated and will be considered violations of U.S. Figure Skating’s SafeSport Program.

## **Reporting**

Infractions of U.S. Figure Skating’s mobile and digital communications policy shall be reported to the appropriate person as described in Section VI of this Handbook. A participant or parent/guardian of a participant who violates this social media, mobile and digital communications policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

## Travel Guidelines

Travel guidelines direct how minors shall be supervised during travel to and from practice and competitions and provide two-deep leadership which eliminates one-to-one interactions.

During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar. Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct.

Adherence to travel guidelines helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to SafeSport, U.S. Figure Skating requires its clubs and programs to have published practices for travel, when applicable. Travel is defined as travel to a skating activity that is planned and supervised by the member club or program. Travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all members, parents/guardians, coaches and others involved.

Clubs should include the following in their Travel Guidelines:

- Club travel guidelines must mandate two-deep leadership for travel to and from practice sessions and competitions and prohibit one-athlete and one-coach travel (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, or sibling of that particular athlete).
- Club travel guidelines must be signed and agreed upon by all members, parents/guardians, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, or sibling of that particular athlete).

### Team Travel

#### (i.e. - Synchronized and Theatre On Ice teams)

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when the club or team sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that skaters can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the athletes. However, no coach, staff member, or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including valid drivers' licenses, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicles and compliance with all state laws.

Appropriate adult-to-athlete ratios will depend on the age of athletes and other participants. Evaluate your program to determine your supervisory needs. The club or team shall provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance. Athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. The club or team will also notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted. For instance, ask hotels to block pay per view channels and request an additional large room or suite so that members and athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms. Reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize.

Encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, encourage all athletes to contact parents and guardians regularly and allow for any unscheduled calls by either the athlete or parent/guardian.

### **Mixed Gender and Mixed Age Travel**

The club or team may be made up of male and female athletes across various ages. Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same sex and age group. Athletes will also be grouped by age and sex for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone. Clubs must make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same sex. Regardless of gender, a coach shall in no case share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, or sibling of that particular athlete).

### **Chaperone Responsibilities**

Chaperones ensure that the athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers adhere to all policy guidelines. While these include the travel policy, it also includes all other relevant policies contained in club or team's Participant Safety Handbook.

Chaperones should monitor the activities of all coaches, staff members, volunteers and athletes. Specifically, chaperones may:

- familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel;
- monitor for adherences to club policies during team travel;

- encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communication with their parents/guardians;
- monitor athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary;
- ensure athletes comply with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age requirements;
- not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing duties;
- make certain that an athlete is not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member (this includes coaches, staff and chaperones);
- Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations to an administrator or the club's Safesport Compliance officer.

***\* Please refer to the Team Manager's Manual on the Synchronized homepage for more information.***

## Codes of Conduct

members, especially when serving in different capacities within the organization – athlete, parent/guardian, coach, official, board member or volunteer. It is meant to clarify the mission, values and principles, and linking them with standards of conduct we expect from members.

U.S. Figure Skating encourages all member clubs and programs to develop and implement codes of conduct for its members. Below are examples for clubs and programs to use in creating, implementing and enforcing codes of conduct for skaters, parents/guardians, coaches and board members.

### Dealing with Violations:

The following are suggested approaches to handling objectionable behavior and violations of the codes of conduct -- depending upon the seriousness of the offense. It is important to adhere to the conflict resolution process as outlined in the club's bylaws. There is a sample Conflict Resolution Process for Clubs for reference on the Clubs webpage [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org)

### Violations and how they will be addressed:

The violation of any provision of this Code will be addressed at the time it occurs by a member of the club board of directors following the procedures outlined in the conflict resolution process.

#### First offense:

Club member will be addressed verbally (in private) regarding the violation.

#### Second offense:

The member will be removed from the activity and given a written warning. A face-to-face meeting with the member and, if a minor, the member's parent or legal guardian will be conducted.

#### Repeated offenses:

Repeat offenses will be taken very seriously by the club board of directors. Discipline may include loss of club privileges for extended periods, and/or revocation of club membership.

**In the case of egregious offenses, Club leadership is required to make a report to U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport, local law enforcement and/or child protective services.**

[CLUB NAME] Code of Conduct Agreement Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
[member's name printed], have read the Code of Conduct, and agree to uphold all guidelines and tenets of this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Member's signature (18 years or older)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent/Guardian's signature  
(if under 18 years of age)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## U.S. Figure Skating Member Code of Conduct

### GR 1.02 Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct applies to all participants in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions and training camps:

I recognize that my participation in all activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions and training camps, is an honor and privilege that carries certain responsibilities. I agree to fully abide by the rules and guidelines set forth by U.S. Figure Skating or its properly designated agents. As a precondition to participation in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, I will adhere to the following tenets in good faith:

- A. I will exhibit the highest standards of fairness, ethical behavior and genuine good sportsmanship in all of my relations with others.
- B. I will not damage public or private property. I understand that I may be held financially responsible for damage deemed to be wantonly or willfully executed on my part, and that I may be subject to disciplinary action by U.S. Figure Skating.
- C. I will not use or possess illegal drugs, and I will not engage in criminal activity. I understand that, if I am found to use or possess illegal drugs, or if I am found to engage in any criminal activity during any activity hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, I may be subject to criminal penalties as well as penalties imposed by U.S. Figure Skating.

- D. I will adhere to the rules of U.S. Figure Skating and the host organization at all activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating.
- E. I will comply with all applicable anti-doping rules including, but not limited to, ISU anti-doping rules.
- F. I will conduct myself in a manner not detrimental to the welfare of figure skating. I understand that my actions reflect on U.S. Figure Skating and the sport of figure skating both positively and negatively. I understand that if my acts, statements, or conduct are considered detrimental to the welfare of figure skating by the appropriate authority, I may be subject to penalties imposed by U.S. Figure Skating pursuant to GR 1.04.
- G. I understand that the penalties that may be imposed may include, but are not limited to, loss of future international selections, loss of financial support from U.S. Figure Skating and its Memorial Fund, and loss of participation in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating.
- H. I understand that all disciplinary proceedings will be conducted pursuant to Article XXV, Section 3, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws, and that my rights and remedies are derived therefrom.

GR 1.03 U.S. Figure Skating will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment (including sexual harassment), misconduct, (including sexual, physical and emotional misconduct), bullying or hazing of any of its members including coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, athletes and volunteers — or any other persons — while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating.

## **For Club Customization: Sample Skater Code of Conduct**

As a member of our club, all skaters must adhere to this Code of Conduct at all times.

### **General Guidelines:**

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. This Skater Code of Conduct has been established to ensure the safety of all members using our ice to ensure quality practice time for all home club, associate, non-members and guests who purchase ice from the club and who participate in all club-related activities.

1. All skaters, regardless of whether they hold home club, associate, non-member or guest status, must follow and uphold the provisions in this Skater Code of Conduct regarding behavior on and off the ice. All club members are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and be courteous toward their fellow skaters, coaches, parents/guardians of skaters, U.S. Figure Skating officials and guests.
2. [CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to promoting a positive and friendly environment for all skaters. Remember 'The Golden Rule' — treat other people like you want to be treated — with respect.

### **Ice Etiquette and Safety:**

1. While in lesson or practice, it is the skater's responsibility to always be conscientious and aware of other skaters around them.
2. Skaters must skate with the flow of other skaters and familiarize themselves with the most commonly used areas for jumps and spins.
3. The only time a skater has the SOLE right of way is when they are skating their program to music. When you hear another member's music, please extend that person the courtesy and move out of their path momentarily. This only takes a moment and you will enjoy the same courtesy while you are performing your program.
4. Advanced skaters are expected to exhibit patience toward beginner members of the club. Remember, you were an inexperienced skater once, and it takes time for our future generation to advance to the point where they are completely comfortable skating with all levels of skaters.

### **Unsafe or Discourteous Behavior:**

Unsafe or discourteous behavior of any kind will not be tolerated.

## For Club Customization – Coaches' Code of Ethics, Standards and Conduct

**Purpose:** [CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. This information is intended to provide both the general principles and the decision rules to cover most situations encountered by coaches and instructors. It has, as its primary goal, the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom coaches work.

It is the individual responsibility of each coach to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Above all, coaches of young people can have great influence on developing athletes who are reliant on these coaches for the basic instruction and guidance necessary to reach the top levels. Coaches can have tremendous power over these athletes in their quest to the top. This power must not be abused. Therefore, we have set forth these codes of ethics and conduct to guide our coaches and protect our athletes for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

### General Principles:

- **Competence:** Coaches must strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work. They should recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They should provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training and/or experience. In those areas, where recognized professional standards do not yet exist, coaches must exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They shall maintain knowledge of relevant scientific and professional information related to the services they render, and they must recognize the need for ongoing education. Coaches should make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical and administrative resources.
- **Integrity:** Coaches should seek to promote integrity in their coaching profession. Coaches should always be honest, fair and respectful of others. They must not make representations about their qualifications, services, products, or fees that are false, misleading or deceptive. Coaches should strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they should attempt to clarify for relevant parties, the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Coaches must avoid conflicts of interest.
- **Professional Responsibility:** Coaches must uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different athletes. Coaches should consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their athletes, or other recipients of their services. Coaches should be concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues' conduct. When appropriate, they should consult with their colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.
- **Respect for Participants and Dignity:** Coaches shall respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants. Coaches must be aware of cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation,



disability, language and socioeconomic status. Coaches must eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

- **Concern for Others Welfare:** In their actions, coaches must consider the welfare and rights of their athletes and other participants. When conflicts occur among coaches' obligations or concerns, they should attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Coaches shall be sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and should not exploit nor mislead other people during or after their relationship.
- **Responsible Coaching:** Coaches must be aware of their ethical responsibility to the community and the society in which they work and live. Coaches must comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport or activity. The coach shall strive to serve as a leader and model in the development of appropriate conduct for the athlete both within and beyond the U.S. Figure Skating setting. The coach shall strive to use strategies in practice and competition that are designed to encourage play within the letter and spirit of the rules. The coach shall strive to keep the concepts of winning and losing in proper perspective. The coach shall strive to enforce policies and rules with fairness, consistency and an appreciation for individual differences.

#### **Ethical Standards:**

- **Compliance with Rule Requirements:** All coaches must complete all annual coaching member requirements set forth by U.S. Figure Skating Rules and the PSA that apply to them

by the appropriate deadlines.

- **Competence:** Coaches should not undertake these duties until they have first obtained the proper training, study and advice that they are competent to do so.
- **Maintaining Expertise:** Coaches should maintain a level of expertise through continued education and experience and shall strive to acquire additional education and experience through sources available to them.
- **Respecting Others:** Coaches shall respect the rights of other's values, opinions and beliefs even if they differ from their own.
- **Nondiscrimination:** Coaches must not engage in discrimination based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status, or any other basis as protected by applicable law.
- **Misconduct:** Coaches must not, under any circumstances, engage in any form of misconduct and will respond to complaints of such a nature to respondents with dignity and respect.
- **Personal Problems or Conflicts:** Coaches should have a responsibility to be aware if there are personal problems or conflicts which may affect their ability to work with athletes. They should also be able to identify problems affecting their athletes, which could potentially create situations that place their athletes in harm or danger of injury, and take the appropriate steps to remove the athlete from this environment.

Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3B, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

**Coaches Code of Conduct:**

- Must obey and abide by all U.S. Figure Skating published rules, regulations and procedures.
- Shall maintain exemplary standards of personal conduct.
- Must obey all state, national and international laws.
- May not be under the effects of alcohol, illegal drugs or any substance that can affect athlete safety and coaching judgment.
- Must refrain from using any profane or abusive language.
- Must not engage in any type of misconduct with any athlete.
- Must teach and support the athletes fairly and equitably.
- Must never discriminate against any athlete.

I understand that as a U.S. Figure Skating member coach, I have assumed certain responsibilities to prepare, develop and be an advocate and role model. I agree to the "Coaches Code of Conduct," have read the "Coaches Code of Conduct" and understand what is expected of me.

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Signature

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Printed name

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Date

***\*Also refer to the PSA Code of Ethics and Tenets of Professionalism for more information.***

**For Club Customization:  
U.S. Figure Skating Parent/Guardian  
Code of Conduct**

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

**By signing below I hereby agree that:**

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship by my actions, demonstrating positive support for all skaters, coaches, and officials at every practice, competition and test session.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child and others ahead of my desire to win.
3. I will encourage my child to skate in a safe and healthy environment by maintaining a respectful and courteous attitude to others.
4. I will promptly inform my child's coach of any physical/mental disability or challenge affecting my child that may affect the safety of my child or others.
5. I will teach my child that doing his/her best is more important than winning.
6. I will not to ridicule, bully, blame, or yell at my child or other skaters, coaches, officials or volunteers in response to a poor performance or for any other reason.
7. I will do my best to make skating fun at all times and will remember that my child participates in sports for his/her own enjoyment and satisfaction.
8. I will teach my child to treat other skaters, coaches, fans, volunteers, officials, and rink staff with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation or ability. I will also take action and report any acts of bullying, harassment or abuse to the appropriate authorities.
9. I will applaud any effort in both victory and defeat emphasizing positive accomplishments and learning from mistakes.
10. I will teach my child to resolve conflicts calmly and peacefully without resorting to hostility or violence.
11. I will be a positive role model for my child and others.
12. I will demand a figure skating environment for my child that is free of drug or alcohol abuse and agree that I will not use or provide to a third-party any illegal drug prohibited by applicable federal, state, or municipal law.
13. I will not assist or condone any athlete's use of a banned substance as described by the International Olympic Committee, International Skating Union, United States Olympic Committee, or U.S. Figure Skating, or, in case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by one of these organizations.
14. I will expect my child's coach to be in compliance with all requirements of U.S. Figure Skating and the Professional Skaters Association, to continue their education and training through programs offered by U.S. Figure Skating, the Professional Skaters Association and other accredited organizations.

15. I will respect my child's coach and refrain from "side line" coaching my child or other skaters.
16. I will respect the decisions of officials, their authority and decisions during competitions and test sessions and teach my child to do the same.
17. I will show appreciation and recognize the importance of volunteers and club officials. I will fulfill my responsibility to help my club with membership, special projects, competitions and test sessions.
18. I agree to report to the appropriate entity/party any SafeSport or Code of Conduct violations that I observe.
19. I will become familiar with the rules of the U.S. Figure Skating and teach my child accordingly.
20. I will support and respect all skaters and their right to participate.

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Signature

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Printed name

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Date

## **For Club Customization: U.S. Figure Skating Club Board Member Agreement**

As a board member of the club, I am fully committed and dedicated to the mission and have pledged to carry out this mission. I understand that my duties and responsibilities include the following:

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

1. I will actively promote the club in a positive manner.
2. I understand my legal responsibilities for the club and those of my fellow board members. I am responsible for knowing and overseeing the implementation of policies and programs, including the SafeSport Program.
3. I accept the bylaws and operating principles and understand that I am responsible for the health and well-being of this club and adhering to the member code of conduct of U.S. Figure Skating.
4. I promise to be fiscally responsible for this organization. I will make myself aware and knowledgeable regarding our budget and finances and will take an active part in reviewing, approving, and monitoring the budget and fundraising to meet the goals of our club.

5. I will actively engage in fundraising for this organization. These may include individual solicitation, undertaking special events, and the like. I am making a good faith agreement to do my best and to raise as much money as I can.
6. I promise to treat my fellow board members and other club members with respect. When conflict occurs, I will respectfully disagree and work for a compromise that is in the best interest of the club.
7. I will attend board meetings, be available for phone consultation, and serve on at least one club committee. If I am not able to meet my obligations as a board member, I will offer my resignation.

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Board Member

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Date

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Club President

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Date

# SECTION III

SafeSport Awareness Training



Each member club and program that is primarily and directly responsible for administering and supervising U.S. Figure Skating programs must be fully versed in U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program and possess the information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for physical and sexual misconduct and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns. Each member club is required to certify to U.S. Figure Skating at least annually that it is in compliance with the SafeSport Awareness Training requirement as set forth in this handbook.

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 misconduct 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.

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that all individuals U.S. Figure Skating formally authorizes, approves or appoints (1) to a position of authority over, or (2) to have frequent contact with athletes must complete the SafeSport Training prior to participating in and/or preparing for U.S. Figure Skating related activities.

Those required to complete an approved SafeSport Training course include the following members and individuals:

- (1) U.S. Figure Skating member coaches;
- (2) team leaders;
- (3) team managers for synchronized skating and Theatre on Ice Teams;
- (4) team physicians;

- (5) team support staff selected by U.S. Figure Skating;
- (6) U.S. Figure Skating Staff and S.T.A.R.S. anchors;
- (7) U.S. Figure Skating-hired independent contractors and/or vendors who come into contact with skaters;
- (8) U.S. Figure Skating board members and committee chairs; and,
- (9) U.S. Figure Skating-appointed staff or chaperones at U.S. Figure Skating camp.

Effective July 1, 2018 the following members and individuals will also be required to complete an approved SafeSport Training course:

- (1) registered Learn to Skate USA instructors;
- (2) Club SafeSport Compliance Chairs; and,
- (3) U.S. Figure Skating officials.

As to individuals newly taking a role that requires an approved SafeSport Training course, the required training must be completed within 60 days of taking such a role but in no case shall the individual have contact with athletes until after completion of the required training.

## **About the Training:**

To register and complete the approved SafeSport training course individuals must first be members or become members of U.S. Figure Skating. Members then login to their members only site at [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org) and click on the SafeSport icon and follow the directions.

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



# SECTION IV

## Screening and Background Check Program



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

1. Protect U.S. Figure Skating participants from known offenders so that such known offenders cannot participate in U.S. Figure Skating programs and events.
  2. Deter offenders who have not been caught from joining U.S. Figure Skating clubs and because the organization has a known policy against misconduct.
  3. Protect U.S. Figure Skating's reputation as a sport where proactive precautions are taken to keep participants safe from misconduct.
  4. Help protect U.S. Figure Skating member clubs, programs, events and all members from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.
2. States that, as appropriate to the position, function and access to athletes and participants, an applicant screening may include:
    - o an employment, contractor and/or volunteer application designed to reveal high-risk responses or behaviors, including information concerning past employment, contractor, or volunteer experience;
    - o reference checks, with questions designed to reveal high-risk behaviors or life patterns;
    - o a face-to-face, telephone or video conference interview, with questions designed to reveal high-risk behaviors or life patterns;
  3. Requires signed release from applicant which gives permission to others to provide relevant information freely. Requires signed consent and waiver form, providing permission for a criminal background check to be conducted regarding the applicant.

### **Screening**

Applicant screening processes identify applicants with characteristics that would increase the risk of harm if they were placed in a position of trust. The screening process is based on the requirements of the position, the nature of the contact with athletes and participants and the legal limits placed on the use of screening tools. Sound, practical and responsible screening practices reduce the chance that athlete and participants will encounter potentially dangerous adults.

### **Elements of a comprehensive screening policy:**

1. States that applicants who will have routine contact with athletes must consent to and pass applicant screening process before working with athletes or other participants

### **Applicant Screening Policy**

It is U.S. Figure Skating's policy that prior to a member club's and program's hiring or securing either staff or volunteers to work or assist in U.S. Figure Skating related activities, all applicants must consent to and pass a formal applicant screening process before performing or participating. Elements of the screening process include, as applicable, successful completion of an application, interview, reference check and criminal background check. Each member club is required to certify to U.S. Figure Skating at least annually that it is in compliance with the background check requirement as set forth in this handbook.

### **Education regarding Club's Protection Policy**

To deter applicants who may be at risk of mistreating athletes or participants from applying for positions, U.S. Figure Skating requires that all member clubs and programs educate its applicants about its protection policies and offers applicants an early opt-out by:

- Requiring awareness training before placement and/or before working with athletes and participants;
- Informing applicants about policies and procedures relevant to prevention;
- Asking applicants to review and agree to our policies and procedures before proceeding with the process;
- Requiring applicants to sign a document acknowledging review of our policies and procedures.

### **Written Applications**

Each applicant for a position will complete an application form consisting of personal, identifying information and a general release with applicant's signature.

#### **The written application will:**

- Ask about previous work and volunteer experiences;
- Ask questions intended to illicit information concerning high-risk behaviors (e.g. discuss a time you purposely broke a policy and why you chose to do so);

- Provide a written release for contacting personal references and performing a criminal background check, including an indemnification clause;
- Ask open-ended questions (not yes or no) that encourage broad answers;
- Use disclosure statements to ask applicants about previous criminal arrests or convictions for sexual offenses, violence against youth and other violent criminal offenses or felonies.

### **Personal Interview**

Appropriate staff will interview applicants whose experience and credentials are considered a fit for available positions. During this interview, club/program representative will ask open-ended questions to encourage discussion, clarify responses and expand on the applicant's answers to questions from the written application.

### **References**

References of applicants will be contacted by phone or in writing and asked specific questions regarding the applicant's professional experiences, demeanor and appropriateness for involvement with minor athletes and participants.

### **Release**

Each applicant will provide a signed release, consistent with federal, state and local laws regulating employment practices, that allows references to speak freely about the applicant's qualifications without fear of reprisal and authorizing member club/program to obtain information concerning an applicant's past employment, volunteer experience and information provided by the applicant during the screening process (i.e., written application and personal interview).

## **U.S. Figure Skating Background Check Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

U.S. Figure Skating requires individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (1) to a position of authority over, or (2) to have frequent contact with athletes to have successfully completed a background check with a green light finding prior to participating in and/or preparing for U.S. Figure Skating related activities.

### **2. Designated Individuals to be Checked**

Those required to complete a background check include the following members and individuals:

- (1) U.S. Figure Skating member coaches;
- (2) team leaders;
- (3) team managers for synchronized skating and Theatre on Ice Teams;
- (4) team physicians;
- (5) team support staff selected by U.S. Figure Skating;
- (6) U.S. Figure Skating Staff and S.T.A.R.S. anchors;
- (7) U.S. Figure Skating-hired independent contractors and/or vendors who come into contact with skaters;
- (8) U.S. Figure Skating board members and committee chairs;
- (9) registered Learn to Skate USA instructors; and,
- (10) U.S. Figure Skating-appointed staff or chaperones at U.S. Figure Skating camp.

Effective July 1, 2018 the following members and individuals will also be required to complete a background check:

- (1) Club SafeSport Compliance Chairs; and,
- (2) U.S. Figure Skating officials.

As to individuals newly taking a role that requires a background check, the background check must be completed within 60 days of taking such a role but in no case shall the individual have contact with athletes until after U.S. Figure Skating receives a green light that the individual has successfully completed the background check.

### **3. Search Organization**

The National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) shall be the authorized search organization that performs background searches for U.S. Figure Skating. NCSI is a full-service screening organization that works in accordance with the Recommended Guidelines established by the National Council on Youth Sports (NCYS). NCSI operates as an independent company, but is owned and governed in partnership with NCYS.

In addition to conducting the background search, NCSI is responsible for interpreting the search results, communicating with the applicant regarding the search result, and reporting to US Figure Skating all search results. NCSI will also be responsible for complying with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained in the background search process.

### **4. Procedure for Registration for Background Check**

NCSI has developed a background check authorization and disclosure form for U.S. Figure Skating via a secure website. NCSI will provide U.S. Figure Skating with the website information so U.S. Figure Skating can communicate with those individuals designated to be checked on how to access the site and register for a background check. Designated individuals must complete the online background check authorization and disclosure form prior to participation as a U.S. Team member or, as applicable.

## 5. Information to be checked

All individuals screened for U.S. Figure Skating shall undergo a background check that includes:

- Two independent national databases
- Sex offender registries of all available states
- Social Security number and address verification
- Federal terrorist database search
- Non-database (county courthouse runner) search of county criminal records in the jurisdiction of longest and most recent residence in the past five years
- International background checks for countries where the individual has lived, worked, or studied for three or more consecutive months during the past five years

## 6. Findings

NCSI will issue results to the applicant and U.S. Figure Skating based on a “Red Light/Green Light” system. A “Green Light” finding (meaning “meets the criteria”) indicates an individual is suitable for participation in U.S. Figure Skating with regard to the background search. A “Red Light” finding (meaning “does not meet the criteria”) determines an individual is not suitable for participation in U.S. Figure Skating with regard to the background search. If questions arise concerning a background search, the applicant will be contacted by NCSI and provided the opportunity to correct potential errors in the applicant’s record or provide additional information prior to issuing a “Red Light.” In such situations, the U.S. Figure Skating Executive Director will be contacted.

A conviction or disclosure from an applicant that contains the following information will be flagged as a “Red Light” (“does not meet the criteria”):

1. Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement greater than one year)
  - a. Defined on the basis of exposure to the offense for which the defendant was convicted, pled guilty or pled nolo contendere. If pled down, then the crime to which the defendant ultimately pled.
  - b. Defined by all crimes punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction. If range, alternate sentencing, or indeterminate sentencing, outer range > one year.
2. Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person.
3. Any lesser crime of a sexual nature or classified as a sex offense including but not limited to “victimless” crimes of a sexual nature such as prostitution, pornography, indecent exposure; and crimes in which sexual relations is an element.
4. Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol).
5. Any crime involving cruelty to animals.
6. Any sex offender registrant.
7. Any lesser crime involving harm to a minor.

Additionally, the following information will result in further investigation involving the applicant and the appropriate courts, which will lead to a determination of either a “Red Light” or a “Green Light”:

- An arrest of one or more of the criterion offenses with no disposition noted;
- Expunctions, restoration of rights, or pardons of a criterion offense;
- Any charge involving a child resulting in a disposition favorable to the applicant; or
- An arrest or conviction where it is not readily apparent if drugs or alcohol are involved.

The above criteria are contained within the guidelines developed by the National Council for Youth Sports (NCYS) and have been adopted by NCSI. The NCYS considers the criteria for a “Red Light” findings (“does not meet the criteria”) to be consistent with the principles of the federal PROTECT Act of 2003. An applicant must receive a “Green Light” to be considered compliant.

## **7. Review of Background Search Findings**

Should an applicant contest the content of a record provided to the applicant as part of the U.S. Figure Skating background search, the applicant may seek an appeal of the record with NCSI pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Should an applicant contest a U.S. Figure Skating decision to deny membership or participation based on a “Red Light” finding resulting from the background search, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision to U.S. Figure Skating pursuant to a process established by U.S. Figure Skating.

# SECTION V

## U.S. Figure Skating Harassment and Abuse Policy

Revised (November 2013)

(Approved by U.S. Figure Skating's Board of Directors November 9, 2013)



U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members and to protect the opportunity of its members to participate in our sport in an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. The association will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of any of its members including coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, athletes, and volunteers - or any other persons - while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating.

## Definitions

### 1. Harassment

Harassment is defined in various sources such as case law, state legislation, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporation and workplace documents, and human rights commission materials. U.S. Figure Skating has not adopted any specific definition of harassment, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. The following, however, presents a general overview.

- **Behavior:** 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.

- **Environment:** Creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning, or offensive.

Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not. It includes, for example, name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual favors, as well as undue pressure to perform or succeed.

Harassment includes child abuse.

### 2. Child Abuse

A legal definition of child abuse exists in each state. For purposes of enforcing this policy, U.S. Figure Skating adopts the legal definition of child abuse of the state(s) in which the child resides and where the incident of child abuse occurs. If there is a conflict between the state laws defining child abuse, the definition that provides the child with the greatest protection will be used for enforcing this policy. A child is someone under the age of 18 or who has not attained the age of legal majority in the state in which he or she resides.

Child abuse and misconduct can be physical, sexual or emotional in nature. Child physical abuse includes physical contact -- or the threat of it -- that intentionally causes bodily harm or injury to a child. This includes, for example, hitting, shaking, kicking, shoving a skater into a barrier, etc., as well as forcing an individual to skate when he or she is injured, or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment.



Child physical abuse also includes providing alcohol and drugs to a minor, knowingly permitting an athlete to return to sport prematurely following an injury, and chronic inattention to a child's basic needs and welfare.

Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity between an adult and a minor. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power or disparity in age, development or size, such that one child is the aggressor.

The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, and noncontact sexual acts such as taking and/or distributing sexual explicit photos or sending sexually suggestive written or digital communications.

Child 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, for example, patterns of verbal behavior attacking an athlete personally, or a pattern of ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time.

## **Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse**

### **1. Report the abuse to authorities.**

In most states, you are obligated to bring this matter to the attention of local law enforcement or a public child welfare organization and make a report. In fact, not reporting the incidents in some states is against the law and the coach or witness could be liable for failure to report. Some states have a "Mandated Reporter Status." Be aware of your state laws and specific reporting requirements as people involved in certain occupations must report suspected child abuse. If you do not know

which authorities to contact in your state, call the National Domestic Violence / Abuse Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233 or 1-800 787-3224 TDD). All calls to the hotline are confidential, and callers may remain anonymous if they wish. You may also call Victims Assistance Ministry at 1-800-355-2545 or seek help directly by contacting one of the Child Protective Services or one of the Law Enforcement Agencies in your area.

### **2. Report the abuse to U.S. Figure Skating.**

Notify the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Committee Chair or safesport@usfigureskating.org.

**Mandated Reporters:** A key legal protection for children and youth across the

United States is the requirement that, following special training in the identification and reporting of child abuse, people involved in certain occupations must report suspected child abuse to a local law enforcement agency or local public child welfare agency or both, depending on state law.

These mandatory reporter occupations include health practitioners, teachers, social workers, psychologists, clergy, firefighters, police officers, day camp administrators and youth organization and youth recreation program employees and coaches, among others, as prescribed by state law. Therefore, if mandated reporters observe abuse or suspect abuse of a young skater, they are required by law to report it immediately.

Mandated reporters may be U.S. Figure Skating team physicians, sport psychologists, or certain rink employees. They are not required to disclose the fact that they made such a report to the parent or guardian, nor are they supposed to investigate the situation. They will obtain only enough

information to report a “reasonable suspicion.” The reporter’s identity is confidential and will only be disclosed between cross-reporting child protection agencies.

**Other Observers:** If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected by a non-mandated reporter, that person should immediately telephone either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report. (If more than one child protection agency exists, many states require that they cross-report.)

Some communities provide a child abuse hotline for this purpose. Even if observers are unsure as to whether or not an action, incident, or situation meets their state’s legal definition of child abuse, they should report it. Child safety must be the most important consideration. To encourage this, the reporter’s identity is always kept confidential. The local child protection agency is then responsible for assessing the matter and conducting any investigation. That agency is also responsible for informing the reporter as to what determination it made and what actions it took as a result of its evaluation. Observers should not attempt to handle the situation themselves or investigate the circumstances. Instead, they must report the matter to their local child protection agency.

### **Procedures for Reporting Harassment**

Harassment, as defined herein, between or among U.S. Figure Skating members, shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics or Grievance Committee of U.S. Figure Skating as soon as is practicably possible, per ECR 2.00 and GCR 2.00.

Depending on the nature and/or severity of the harassment, the reporter may also choose to contact a local law enforcement agency or seek

assistance from a local or state human rights commission.

### **Violation of Harassment and Abuse Policy**

Any person in violation of this policy statement will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article XXV, Section 3 of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws. Any person convicted of child abuse or sexual abuse in a court of law shall be permanently banned from membership in U.S. Figure Skating and from participation in U.S. Figure Skating programs and activities, in accordance with the association’s Code of Ethics.

### **Retaliations or Threats of Reprisal**

Retaliation or threats of reprisal against an individual for filing a complaint under this policy or for participating or assisting in any procedure under this policy will be considered harassment for the purpose of this policy.

### **Condemnation or Groundless Allegations**

If a person in authority knows or should reasonably have known that harassment or abuse may have occurred and fails to report it or take appropriate action as set out in this policy statement, that person may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3B, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3B, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

# SECTION VI

Reporting Misconduct  
and Policy Violations



## **Section VI – Reporting Misconduct and Policy Violations**

The reporting policy clarifies to all participants, staff, volunteers, responsible parties and members of the public that the organization understands its duty and responsibility to create a safe and positive environment for athletes. This statement also further reinforces the organization’s commitment to athlete safety.

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 from occurring. 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, U.S. Figure Skating seeks to remove barriers to disclosing misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse.

It is also critical that all members understand that they should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to U.S. Figure Skating or to appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **Reporting Abuse, Misconduct and Policy Violations is:**

- The obligation of U.S. Figure Skating on members and member clubs to report 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 Grievance Procedures outlined in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook.

## **Upon a report or other notice of credible information or allegations that a person who is subject to the jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating:**

1. May have violated any of the provisions of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program Handbook
2. Violated any of the sexual misconduct, physical misconduct, emotional misconduct, bullying, threats and harassment, hazing policies or willful tolerance policies
3. Is subject to allegations of actual or suspected child physical or sexual abuse

U.S. Figure Skating will conduct an inquiry and/or initiate a disciplinary proceeding pursuant to Article XXV, section 3B, to determine the appropriate discipline that may be imposed.

## **To make a report:**

Email [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org) or call 719-635-5200

## **To Report Sexual Misconduct Violations:**

Individuals should report suspected sexual misconduct violations directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Online Reporting Form - <https://www.safesport.org/response-resolution/report>

Phone: 720-524-5640

## **Importance of Confidentially**

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.

# SECTION VII

Monitoring and Supervision of  
the SafeSport Program



## **Section VII – Monitoring and Supervision of the SafeSport Program**

The monitoring and supervision aspect of U.S. Figure Skating’s SafeSport Program describes how U.S. Figure Skating member club and programs monitor, supervise and ensure that 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 all participants.

### **Member Clubs and Programs:**

- Shall monitor and enforce compliance of all U.S. Figure Skating rules and implemented policies;
- Shall monitor that during all programs and activities, any and all coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents/guardians and volunteers that will have routine access to minor participants, have completed the required training and screening prior to such persons having access to athletes and participants;
- Shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the U.S. Figure Skating rules, SafeSport Program or applicable law;
- Shall conduct reviews and evaluation of their program to monitor and promote compliance with the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program;
- Shall designate a club board member to hold the title of SafeSport Compliance officer. In the absence of such designation, the SafeSport Compliance officer shall be the club president. The specific duties of the SafeSport Compliance officer will include monitoring the SafeSport policies and procedures of the club, verifying coach compliance and being the initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, compiling information and when appropriate reporting such information to U.S. Figure Skating. (See job description below);
- Should have at least three persons within the club who have completed the SafeSport Program training course. This course is free of charge.



# Club SafeSport Compliance Chair Job Description

## General Description

The Club SafeSport Compliance chair will be responsible for the implementation and coordination of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program within their local club. The officer will serve as the liaison for the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program and work within their local club to facilitate implementation of all aspects of the SafeSport Program.

## Position Appointment and Requirements

The chair must be a current member (club board member is preferred) of U.S. Figure Skating in good standing and a home club member of the respective club.

## Responsibilities and Duties

### The SafeSport Compliance Officer will:

1. Complete the required SafeSport training
2. Serve as the primary contact for U.S. Figure Skating and oversee the implementation of effective educational programs for all members, their parents/guardians and coaches, as provided by U.S. Figure Skating.
3. Oversee the drafting and implementing of club policies based upon the recommendations of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport program.
4. Verify all coaches participating in all club and U.S. Figure Skating events and activities are compliant per U.S. Figure Skating rules.
5. Understand the complaint reporting structure and refer all reports of a violation of the SafeSport Policies directly to the appropriate U.S. Figure Skating committee.
6. Participate in workshops/webinars as provided by U.S. Figure Skating, collect and share information about the SafeSport program and disseminate information on best practices.
7. Perform other functions as necessary in the fulfillment of U.S. Figure Skating's continuing efforts to foster safe, healthy and positive environments for its members.