

FAPPLESEED YOUTH APPLESEED YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION SAFE SOCCER POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The Applesseed Youth Soccer Association (“AYSA”) Safe Soccer Policy sets the standard for all member organizations as part of requirements for Applesseed Youth Soccer Association’s **Safe Soccer Policy**.

AYSA has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and misconduct. All participants in the soccer community must play an active role in creating an environment free from emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. In that regard, the policy set forth was developed to help all participants detect and report abuse, respond to it and prevent future occurrences. This policy includes six (6) key components: Prohibited Conduct, Mandatory Reporting, Background Checks, Education and Training, Limiting One-on-One Interactions (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies) and Enforcement.

ADULT PARTICIPANTS, MINOR ATHLETES, AND POLICY EXCEPTIONS

This policy uses the term “Adult Participants” to refer to those adults (aged 18 years and older) to whom these policies apply. Adult Participants are required to follow all policies included in AYSA’s Safe Soccer Policy. Adult participants are defined as any adult (18 years of age or older) who are:

1. Organization Board Members, Officers, and Directors;
2. Organization Employees and Independent Contractors;
3. Coaches and Trainers;
4. Team Managers and Club Administrators;
5. Tournament Directors;
6. Athletic Trainers;
7. Referees - *while Referees, Referee Coaches, Referee Mentors, Referee Assignors and other Referee Program affiliated personnel are expected to comply with these policies due to their participation in AYSA’s programming, it is understood that these individuals are also subject to policies set forth by **State Referee Committee** and/or U.S. Soccer Policy. All U.S. Soccer Referees will continue to complete their background Check and education and training through the Referee Committee. They are, however, subject to the other four (4) components of this policy.*

Many aspects of this policy are issued to protect “Minor Athletes” who participate in AYSA’s programming. A Minor Athlete is an amateur athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of AYSA. Although this policy focuses in many areas on concerns unique to Minor Athletes, these may be applicable and are designed to protect participants of all ages.

Please note that a “Close in Age” Exception exists within the different components of this policy. This exception applies to certain policies and allows for “In-Program” contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

- The Adult Participant has no authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- The Adult Participant is not more than four (4) years older than the Minor Athlete.

Further, Adult Participants with a dual role or relationship with a minor creates an exception to certain policies set forth within this document. A “Dual Relationship” exception exists when:

- An Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian at least annually.
- Many of the exceptions require parent/guardian consent.
- Examples of a dual role relationship can include, but is not limited to:
 1. Adult Participant who is a Parent/Guardian of a minor athlete;
 2. Adult Participant who is an Aunt/Uncle of a minor athlete; or
 3. Adult Participant who is a family friend of a minor athlete.

“In Program” contact includes sanctioned events and facilities, but it also applies more broadly to sport-related interactions, and is defined as:

- Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport.

Examples of in-program contact include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

It should be noted that all defined Adult Participants and Minor Athletes of AYSA’s programming are subject to specific prohibited conduct as outlined and defined in the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s [SafeSport Code](#). Prohibited behaviors include harassment, sexual harassment, racial, religious, or national origin harassment, child sex abuse, sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying and hazing. All Adult Participants have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a direct violation of this policy. Any violation of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Adult Participants or Minor Athletes may subject the individual to disciplinary action and AYSA prohibits any retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct, including potential violations of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Adult Participants for Minor Athletes.

1. **Harassment** - repeated and/or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation or annoyance, offends or degrades, creates a hostile environment, or reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.
2. **Sexual Harassment** - any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise. Sexual harassment can also include harassment related to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, which may include acts of aggression, intimidation, or hostility, whether verbal or non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise, even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.
3. **Racial, Religious or National Origin Harassment** - includes any verbal, written or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner which makes a reasonable person uncomfortable in the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: jokes, which include reference to race, religion or national origin; the display of objects or pictures which adversely reflect on a person’s race, religion or national origin; or use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person’s race, religion or national origin.
4. **Child Sexual Abuse** - any sexual activity with a child is prohibited. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.
5. **Sexual Misconduct** - any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority is prohibited. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.
6. **Emotional Misconduct** - a pattern of deliberate, non- contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

7. **Physical Misconduct** - is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports but have no place in soccer.
8. **Bullying** - intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership are prohibited. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.
9. **Hazing** - coercing, requiring, forcing, or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group, or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members are prohibited. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

MANDATORY REPORTING

All Adult Participants of AYSA are mandatory reporters of any known or suspected child abuse. All reports must be made to the appropriate [law enforcement authorities](#) within 24 hours; the abuse does not need to be confirmed. Adult Participants should never seek to conduct their own investigations.

AYSA does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. Any Adult Participant or Minor Athlete who makes a good faith report will not be subject to retaliation, including harassment, as a result of making a report. The *SafeSport Act of 2017* also includes qualified immunity for good faith reports. The obligation to report is not always satisfied by making an initial report and an Adult Participant is required to report supplemental information of which he/she becomes aware that may be relevant in a pending investigation.

To report abuse, email President.aysa1@gmail.com. Regardless of the method for reporting any known or suspected child abuse, all Adult Participants of AYSA are also required to report the information to AYSA.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

AYSA's Background Check Policy is in place to set forth requirements pertaining to appropriate background check. This Background Check Policy does not apply to individuals under 18 years of age. All Adult Participants shall be known collectively as "Adult Applicant" for the purposes of this Background Check Policy.

Any athlete, referee, coach, or otherwise, who is under the lesser of (1) the age of 18, or (2) the age of majority in the applicable state and who is participating in AYSA sanctioned activities and competitions, will be known as a "Minor Athlete" for the purposes of this Background Check Policy.

Every Adult Applicant is required to apply for a background Check every two (2) years by using the AYSA digital compliance platform by the earlier of 1) prior to regular contact with a Minor Athletes; or 2) within the first 60 days of the Adult Applicant taking on the role giving them access to Minor Athletes.

A comprehensive background Check, including a national search, national sex offender search (50 states plus U.S. territories) and 5-year county of residence criminal record search will be conducted on every Adult Applicant submitted every two (2) seasonal years valid through August 15th biennially. In addition, all Adult Applicants should be vetted against AYSA's suspension database, U.S. Soccer's disqualification list and the [SafeSport Centralized Disciplinary Database](#).

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The following Adult Participants must complete the *Child Safety* Course through the AYSA digital compliance platform:

- Adult Participants who have regular contact with any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor;
- Adult Participants who have authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor; or
- Adult Participants who are an employee or board member of AYSA or its direct and indirect members.

Adult Participants, who are medical providers required to take training, can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the *Child Safety* course when available.

Adult Participants must complete this training:

- Before regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor begins; and
- Within the first 60 days of either initial membership or upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy.

Refresher Training

The above listed Adult Participants must review and acknowledge understanding of AYSA's Prohibited Conduct Policy and Safe Soccer Policy on an annual basis, beginning the calendar year after completing the *Child Safety* Course. Every four (4) years, Adult Participants will complete the *Child Safety* Course training. Medical providers can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the *Child Safety* Course.

Minor Athlete Training

AYSA strongly encourages all Minor Athletes, subject to parental consent, to take the U.S. Center for SafeSport Youth Athlete Training on an annual basis. A parent/guardian must first create an account at www.athletesafety.org in order to give consent for their child to access the free training and select the appropriate module for their child's age.

Parent Training

AYSA strongly encourages all parents/guardians of Minor Athletes to take the U.S. Center for SafeSport Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport Training on an annual basis. The free training is available at www.athletesafety.org. An online Parent Toolkit is also available.

REQUIRED POLICIES FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

AYSA recognizes that youth-adult relationships can be healthy and valuable for development. Policies on one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. As child sexual abuse is often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations, it is critical that organizations limit such interactions between youth and adults and implement programs that reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Observable and Interruptible

All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, except in emergency circumstances. The exceptions below may apply to specific policies, and if the exceptions apply, they are listed in the policy. These exceptions also apply to all one-on-one In-Program Contact not specifically addressed in other policies:

- When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and

- (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the AYSA's background check policy;

MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must follow the one-on-one interaction policy in all meetings and training sessions where Minor Athlete(s) are present.

Individual Training Sessions

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

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the AYSA's background check policy.

The Adult Participant providing the individual training session must receive advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually, which can be withdrawn at any time; and parents/guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES, MESSAGES, AND RUBDOWNS

AYSA does not provide, promote, or approve of any In-Program athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of a Minor Athlete at any time.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

AYSA does not provide, promote, or approve of the use of locker rooms or changing areas at any time.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Open and Transparent

One-on-one electronic communication between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete should not be necessary, and communications should be between the Adult Participant and the Minor Athlete's parent or guardian. Any one-on-one electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Open and Transparent except:

- When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the AYSA's background check policy.

Open and Transparent means that the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant.

If a Minor Athlete communicates with the Adult Participant first, the Adult Participant must follow this policy if the Adult Participant responds.

Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

Team Communication

When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, the Adult Participant must copy or include another Adult Participant or the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians.

Content

All electronic communication originating from an Adult Participant(s) to a Minor Athlete(s) must be professional in nature unless an aforementioned exception exists.

Requests to Discontinue

Parents/guardians may request in writing that the Organization or an Adult Participant subject to this policy not contact their Minor Athlete through any form of electronic communication. The Organization and the Adult Participant must abide by any request to discontinue, absent emergency circumstances.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the AYSA's background check policy; and
- The Adult Participant has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.

Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.

An Adult Participant meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors.

LODGING

Strictly prohibited by AYSA. AYSA does not participate in or sanction any program or event which would require out of town travel or lodging. Any member organization or team which participates in such activity does so without the approval or sanctioning of AYSA and does so at their own peril.

ENFORCEMENT

AYSA's Policy on Enforcement is set forth to establish procedures for monitoring and enforcing compliance with AYSA's Safe Soccer Policy, as well as to establish an appropriate grievance process to address allegations of misconduct following the report or complaint of misconduct.

AYSA takes all reports of potential violations of this Safe Soccer Policy seriously and is committed to confidentiality and investigation of allegations.

AYSA reserves the right to, either directly or through a contracted third-party service provider, survey, audit, require certifications of compliance with, or otherwise review compliance with AYSA's Safe Soccer Policy. All violations of the Policy will be subject to the current AYSA Disciplinary and Appeals Process.

The decision of the AYSA Executive Board shall be final and binding on all parties. The individual has the right to appeal a final decision rendered by AYSA's process for violations of the AYSA Safe Soccer Policy, excluding those decisions rendered pertaining to the Background Check Policy of the AYSA Safe Soccer Policy, which is outlined in the AYSA Disciplinary and Appeals Process.