

# **Abuse / Molestation Risk Management Program**

Our sports organization has adopted and should implement the following risk management elements:

## **Criminal Background Checks**

Criminal background checks should be run with a third-party vendor on all paid and volunteer staff with access to youth. Any background check that indicates that a potential staff member is unfit to work with youth should result in disqualification of such staff member.

Prior to running background checks, the following steps should be taken\*:

- All prospective staff to complete written application to include question about whether the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime involving physical violence / sex offenses, and a consent provision to run a background check.
- Determine disqualification criteria
- Develop procedures to protect the confidentiality of records
- Comply with all state and federal laws

\*(More information is available from background check vendor or Sadler Sports Insurance under [Risk Management](#) section of website.)

## **Recognizing Grooming**

Grooming is the process of which sexual predators pave the way for sexual abuse by gradually gaining the trust of and conditioning of minors, parents, and administrators. The steps in the grooming process are as follows:

- Identify a vulnerable child whose needs are not being met such as lack of attention by parents, lack of spending money, etc.
- Fill the missing needs of the child by providing attention, transportation, help with homework, special favors, confiding in secrets, spending money, gifts, etc. to create a "special bond".
- Gain trust of family by spending disproportionate amount of time with them.
- Isolate the victim to create one on one opportunities.
- Gradually use boundary invasions that start off with inappropriate electronic communications and photo sharing, tickling, wrestling, massages, alcohol, drugs, pornography, etc. that lead to nudity and sexual activity.
- Maintain control and silence with threats of fear and shame.

## **Policies To Protect Against Misconduct**

The following policies should be communicated to all paid and volunteer staff:

- All forms of abuse including sexual, physical, emotional, harassment, bullying, and hazing are prohibited.
- Prohibited sexual abuse physical acts include genital contact whether or not either party is clothed; fondling of a participant's breast or buttocks; sexual penetration; sexual assault, exchange of a reward in sport for sexual favors; lingering or repeated embrace that goes beyond acceptable physical touch; tickling, wrestling, or massage; and continued physical contact that makes a participant uncomfortable.
- Prohibited sexual abuse verbal acts include making sexually oriented comments, jokes and innuendo; staff member discussing his or her sex life with participant; asking about a participant's sex life; requesting or sending a nude or partial dress photo; exposing participants to pornographic material; voyeurism; and sexting with a participant.
- Any type of grooming behavior is prohibited.
- Prohibited forms of physical abuse include punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, slapping, or intentionally hitting a participant with objects or sports equipment; providing alcohol to a participant under legal drinking age; providing illegal drugs or non prescribed medications to any participant; encouraging or permitting a participant to return to play after injury or sickness prematurely without clearance of a medical professional; prescribing dieting or other weight control methods for humiliation purposes; isolating a participant in a confined space; forcing participant to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose; withholding, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition medical attention, or sleep.
- Prohibited emotional abuse includes a pattern of verbally attacking a participant personally such as calling them worthless, fat or disgusting; physically aggressive behaviors such as throwing or hitting objects; and ignoring a participant for extended periods of time or excluding them from practice.
- Bullying includes an intentional, persistent, or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating (e.g., staff not preventing) physical, nonphysical, or cyber bullying behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person emotionally, physically, or sexually. It is often not the staff, but instead, other participants who are the perpetrators of bullying. However, it is a violation if the staff member knows or should have known of the bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participants.

- Prohibited hazing includes any contact which is intimidating, humiliating, offensive or physically harmful. Hazing typically is an activity that serves as a condition for joining a team of being socially accepted by team members.
- Two deep leadership is required where two adults (e.g., any combination of staff or parents) should be present at all times so that a minor participant can't be isolated with a single unrelated adult, except in the case of an emergency.
- All electronic communications including email, texting, social media, etc. between the staff member and a minor participant should be limited strictly to the legitimate activities of the organization.
- Any overnight travel exposure should prohibit adults spending the night in the same room as an unrelated minor participant; require grouping of participants of the same sex and age group in rooms; and provide adequate oversight with a same-sex chaperone for each group.
- Take off/pick up of athletes by staff should be strongly discouraged because of the difficulty in limiting one-on-one contact.

**Reporting Suspicions of Child Sexual or Physical Abuse and Other Forms of Abuse**

Federal or state law may require any adult staff member who has a suspicion of child sexual or physical abuse to independently report such suspicion directly to law enforcement within 24 hours. Failure to report may be a punishable offense.

In addition, the adult staff member should report the suspicion within 24 hours to the appropriate organization official and the official should also report to law enforcement within 24 hours if there is suspicion that child sexual or physical abuse has been committed.

The organization should allow law enforcement to handle the investigation and the suspected staff member should be immediately suspended or reassigned to alternative duties that don't involve access to youth pending the outcome of the investigation. Organization officials should not comment on the allegation or police investigation until it has been concluded.

Staff members should also report prohibited misconduct other than child sexual and physical abuse to the appropriate organization official and the organization can investigate and decide what types of sanctions, if any, are appropriate.

The organization is prohibited from retaliating in any way against a staff member who makes a good faith report of a suspicion of any form of misconduct.

**Communication Of Information**

The information in this risk management program should be communicated by pre season staff meeting and/or by distribution of this document to all paid and volunteer staff.

Our sports organization has adopted this program and incorporated it into our written policies and procedures.

Name of Coach/Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_