



USA Softball Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies September 21, 2019

**For USA Softball and its membership, including its Local
Association members.**

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INTRODUCTION

USA Softball, in conjunction with policies formulated by The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center), is committed to building a sport community where participants can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct.

Authority: Prevention Training and Policies

Federal law authorizes the Center to address the risk of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of amateur athletes in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements. See [Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017](#).

Prevention Training

Federal law authorizes the Center to develop training to prevent abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, of any amateur athlete. National governing bodies and paralympic sports organizations *are providing and offering consistent training related to the prevention of child abuse to: (1) adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors and (2) subject to parental consent, to members who are minors.*

Prevention Policies

Federal law also authorizes the Center to develop policies and procedures for implementation by national governing bodies or paralympic sports organizations to prevent abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, of any amateur athlete. As a part of these policies and procedures, national governing bodies and paralympic sports organizations are implementing *reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete who is a minor and an adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at a facility under the jurisdiction of a national governing body or paralympic sports organization without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances.*

Application and implementation

The U.S. Olympic Paralympic Committee and national governing bodies are required to follow these Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (“Policies”).

As a national governing body, USA Softball (USAS) joins with the U.S. Center for SafeSport in its commitment to building a sport community where participants can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct.

The policies set forth below are adopted by USAS Softball and approved by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Where the policy is indicated as “Mandatory,” the policy must be followed. Where the policy is indicated as “Optional”, the policy is recommended by the U.S. Center for SafeSport and is considered optional for USA Softball and Local Associations and may be followed or required when it is appropriate for the situation. For ease of reference, the Mandatory policies are shaded in grey and the Optional policies are not. There may be occasions from time to time when USA Softball changes a policy from “Optional” to “Mandatory.”

USA Softball requires these policies be adopted and followed by related Local Affiliated Organizations, including its Local Associations.

USA Softball requires employees, contractors, athletes and members to follow the policies set forth below.

TERMINOLOGY

Covered Organization: The U.S. Olympic Paralympic Committee and a national governing body, USA Softball.

Jurisdiction: Authority or control.

Local Affiliated Organization (LAO): A regional, state, or local club or organization that is directly affiliated with an NGB or that is affiliated with an NGB by its direct affiliation with a regional or state affiliate of an NGB.

For purposes of these policies, USA Softball deems each of USA Softball’s Local Association members (“**Local Associations**”) to be LAOs.

Minor, child or minor athlete: An amateur athlete under 18 years of age.

National Governing Body (NGB): An amateur sports organization affiliated with a sport included on the program of the Olympic, Paralympic, or Pan-American Games, which is also recognized by the United States Olympic Paralympic Committee (USOPC) pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501-220529. This definition shall also apply to the USOPC, or other sports entity approved by the USOPC, when they have assumed responsibility for the management and/or governance of a sport included on the program of the Olympic, Paralympic, or Pan-American Games. USA Softball is a National Governing Body.

National Member Organization: A national organization that is directly affiliated with a NGB, over which the NGB has jurisdiction (without respect to whether the NGB has disciplinary authority over individual members of that national organization), and is: (a) an Amateur Sports Organization requesting sanction from a NGB; or (b) an Applicable Amateur Sports Organization under the [Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017](#).

PART I EDUCATION & TRAINING POLICY

Education about child abuse, athlete abuse and bullying, helps everyone become more aware of unsafe situations and encourages discussions about methods to provide a safe and nourishing environment for all athletes. USA Softball encourages all members and all parents to participate in the SafeSport training.

A. Adults Required to Complete Mandatory Training by USA Softball

(Background screening and checks are not covered by this policy; please see the separate policy, required by the USOPC, regarding individuals who must be background screened.)

USA Softball requires the following individuals complete training provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport (“Center”):

Individuals associated with Local Associations

- Adult members of Local Associations who i) have regular contact with athletes or ii) have authority over athletes
- Employees and Board Members of Local Associations
- Individuals providing services to Local Associations, including but not limited to contractors, volunteers, interns, who i) have regular contact with athletes or ii) have authority over athletes

Individuals associated with USA Softball

- Adult athlete members of USA Softball, except for Short Term Athlete Members due to their limited participation and those Master Athletes who do not i) have regular contact with minor athletes or ii) have authority over minor athletes
- Adult members of USA Softball who i) have regular contact with athletes or ii) have authority over athletes
- Employees and Board Members of USA Softball

USA Softball requires athletes who will become 18 years of age during the upcoming membership year, complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport training on or before their 18th birthday, provided that such athletes under 18 have the consent of their parents or legal guardians.

To satisfy the training obligations, USA Softball and Local Associations shall adhere to this Education & Training Policy. The Center's “Core Center for SafeSport Training” provides the child abuse prevention training provided for in federal law.

1. Core Center for SafeSport Training

The individuals listed above in Part I, A are required to complete training concerning child abuse prevention. Training other than the Core Center for SafeSport Training does not satisfy this policy. USA Softball, LAOs, Local Associations, and NMOs may provide training in addition to the Core Center for SafeSport Training. However, if an organization provides additional training, it shall not refer to such training as “SafeSport” training.

2. Refresher Course(s)

A refresher course is required on an annual basis, and must be completed on or before July 1, immediately subsequent to the one-year anniversary of the completion of the Core Center for SafeSport Training or the most recent refresher course, for each of the above listed individuals in Part I, A at USA Softball or a Local Association. Policies, procedures and/or communications to said adults concerning refresher course requirements must be updated on or before June 23, 2019.

B. Minor Athletes

USA Softball shall, subject to parental consent, annually offer and give training to members who are minors regarding prevention and reporting of child abuse. USA Softball shall track:

- A description of the training(s);
- The date the training(s) was offered and given; and
- A description of how the training(s) was offered and given.

USA Softball fulfills the requirement to offer and give training by instructing members how to access training specifically for minors that is offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Local Associations shall provide the instructions to its minor members and their parents or legal guardians and assist USA Softball in instructing members on how to access training specifically for minors offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

C. Exemptions

Exemptions from this Education & Training Policy may be made on a case-by-case basis for victims/survivors. Requests may be made directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, ngbservices@safesport.org, or to USA Softball at sbrown@usasoftball.com. The Center and USA Softball will work with persons on a case by case basis as to any appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities to satisfy the training requirements herein.

D. Minor athletes who become adult athletes

With the exception of athletes who are members of the same team, Minor Athletes who reach the age of majority (i.e. 18 years of age) must adhere to the provisions found in the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies when interacting with minor athletes who are 14 years of age or younger. For the purposes of these Policies the “same team” is intended to include athletes who regularly train and compete together in the same sport. Minor Athletes who reach the age of majority and then obtain a position of authority that presents a power imbalance, such as becoming a coach or official, must also comply with these Policies regardless of the age of the minor athletes with whom they will interact.

PART II POLICIES FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, programs reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. The policies below apply to USA Softball and to Local Associations. When the word “organization or organizations” is used, it includes both USA Softball and Local Associations.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

A. Mandatory Components.

1. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- a. Adult members at a facility that is either partially or fully under the jurisdiction of USA Softball or a Local Association;
- b. Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
- c. Any adult authorized by USA Softball or a Local Association to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
- d. Adult staff and board members of USA Softball or a Local Association.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of this policy.)

2. Observable and interruptible

- a. One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under the organization’s jurisdiction are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
- b. One-on-one interactions between minor athletes and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under the organization’s jurisdiction are prohibited, except in the circumstances described in subpart 4 of this section and under emergency circumstances.

3. Meetings

- a. Meetings between Applicable Adults and minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under the organization’s jurisdiction may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office at a facility partially or fully under an organization’s jurisdiction, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

4. Meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers

If a mental health care professional and/or health care provider meets with minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under the organization’s jurisdiction, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that: (1) the door remains unlocked; (2) another adult is present at the facility; (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the mental health care professional and/or health care provider, with a copy provided to USA Softball or the applicable Local Association. The consent

may be given via email or text, when necessary. Consent may be provided at the beginning of each season provided that the professionals and health care providers are specifically named in the consent. Consent is not required in the event of an emergency and the parents or legal guardian cannot be contacted timely and the athlete is deemed to need immediate medical/mental health attention.

5. Individual training sessions

Individual training sessions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted at a facility partially or fully under the organization's jurisdiction if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. It is the responsibility of the Applicable Adult to obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session if the individual training session is not observable and interruptible by another adult. Such permissions for individual training sessions that are not observable and interruptible by another adult, must be obtained at the beginning of each season. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.

B. Optional Components

1. Monitoring

When one-on-one interactions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes occur at a facility partially or fully under the organization's jurisdiction, Applicable Adults will monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes: knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one.

2. Out-of-program contacts

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

MASSAGES AND RUBDOWNS/ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES

A. Mandatory Components

1. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- a. Adult members at a facility that is either partially or fully under the jurisdiction of USA Softball or a Local Association;
- b. Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
- c. Any adult authorized by USA Softball or a Local Association to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
- d. Adult staff and board members of USA Softball or a Local Association.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of this policy.)

2. Massage or rubdown/athletic training modality

Any massage or rubdown/athletic training modality performed at a facility or a training or competition venue must be conducted in an open and interruptible location. Any massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the massage or rubdown/athletic training modality in the room.

B. Optional Components

1. Written consent

Written consent by a legal guardian shall be provided before providing each massage or rubdown/athletic training modality on a minor athlete. Parents must be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

A. Mandatory Components

1. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- a. Adult members at a facility that is either partially or fully under the jurisdiction of USA Softball;
- b. Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
- c. Any adult authorized by USA Softball or a Local Association to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
- d. Adult staff and board members of USA Softball or a Local Association.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for purposes of this policy.)

2. Non-exclusive facility

If USA Softball or a Local Association uses a facility not fully under its jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Applicable Adults in categories 1. a through d are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth herein.

3. Use of recording devices

Use of any device’s (including a cell phone’s) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under our organization’s jurisdiction is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by USA Softball or an applicable Local Association, and two or more Applicable Adults are present.

4. Undress

Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Applicable Adult at a facility under USA Softball’s or a Local Association’s jurisdiction intentionally expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a minor athlete.

5. One-on-one interactions

- a. Except for athletes on the same team, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area when at a facility under the partial or full jurisdiction of USA Softball or a Local Association, except under emergency circumstances.
- b. If USA Softball or a Local Association is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, the organization will designate separate times for use by Applicable Adults, if any.

6. Monitoring

USA Softball and Local Associations will regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas at facilities under their respective jurisdictions to ensure compliance with these policies.

B. Optional Components

USA Softball or a Local Association may include any of the following Components:

1. To minimize the risk of bullying and hazing, the organization uses locker room monitors to ensure that minor athletes are not left unsupervised in locker rooms and changing areas, including, when appropriate, Applicable Adults listening-in from nearby to locker room interactions among minors.
2. Applicable Adults make every effort to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, will check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.
3. We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent when other minor athletes are changing in the same locker room or changing area. If this is necessary, parents should let a coach or administrator know about this in advance.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Mandatory Components

1. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- a. Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
- b. Any adult authorized by USA Softball or a Local Association to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
- c. Adult staff and board members at USA Softball or a Local Association.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of this policy.)

2. Content

All electronic communication originating from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

3. Open and transparent

- a. Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), another Applicable Adult or the minor’s legal guardian will be copied.
- b. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor’s legal guardian.
- c. When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult will copy another adult.
- d. Minor athletes may “friend” the organization’s official page.

4. Requests to discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the organization or by the Applicable Adults subject to this policy. The organization will abide by any such request that their minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

B. Optional Components:

1. Hours

Electronic communications will generally only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or while traveling internationally, during competition travel or during camps.

2. Monitoring

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

3. Prohibited electronic communications

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes.

LOCAL TRAVEL

A. Mandatory Components

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

- a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
- 2) Any adult authorized by USA Softball or a Local Association to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
- 3) Adult staff and board members at USA Softball or a Local Association.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of this policy.)

- b. Transportation

Applicable Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must have at least two minor athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete’s parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel. The parent/legal guardian may provide the written agreement at the beginning of each season, provided the agreement contains the specific names of the Applicable Adults, and the specific dates, location and types of travel.

B. Optional Components

1. Shared or Carpool Travel Arrangement

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

2. Parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor athlete to travel alone with an Applicable Adult who is subject to these policies.

TEAM TRAVEL

A. Mandatory Components

1. Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

- a. Application

This policy shall apply to:

- 1) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
- 2) Any adult authorized by USA Softball or a Local Association to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
- 3) Adult staff and board members at USA Softball or a Local Association.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of this policy.)

- b. Team/competition travel

When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete must have his/her legal guardian’s written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with said Applicable Adult. The legal guardian’s written permission may be provided for all competitions at the beginning of the season, provided the permission contains the specific names of the Applicable Adults, and the specific dates, location and types of travel.

- c. Hotel rooms

Applicable Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the Applicable Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the minor athlete). However, a parent/legal guardian may consent to such an arrangement in advance and in writing. Furthermore, a parent/legal guardian may consent in advance and in writing to the minor athlete sharing a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an adult athlete. The parent/legal guardian’s written consent may be provided at the beginning of the season, provided the consent contains the specific names of the Applicable Adults, and the specific dates, location and types of lodging. A separate enclosed bedroom in a condominium or house will be treated the same as a separate hotel room, provided that a minor athlete has the opportunity to utilize bathroom facilities alone.

- d. Meetings

Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the organization’s policy for one-on-one interactions (i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible).

B. Optional Components

1. Team travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all minor athletes, parents, and Applicable Adults traveling with the organization.
2. Applicable Adults who travel with the organization must successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with the organization’s policies.
3. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership (two Applicable Adults should be present) and observable and interruptible environments should be maintained.
4. Meetings should not be conducted in a hotel room.
5. Parents/legal guardians receive education concerning child abuse prevention before providing consent for their minor athlete to travel alone with an Applicable Adult who is subject to these policies.