



USA Team Handball

Athlete Safety Policy

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## Overview

USA Team Handball, with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, is committed to enabling a safe environment for participants and members of USA Team Handball. USA Team Handball has developed the following SafeSport Strategy for the attention of all Directors, Employees and Members of USA Team Handball. Misconduct is not tolerated and this policy outlines how USA Team Handball will educate, protect and take action on behalf of its members as it relates to unsafe behavior.

USA Team Handball is also committed to following the U.S. Center for SafeSport Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) published at: [https://www.teamusa.org/-/media/USA\\_Team\\_Handball/Documents/Safe-Sport/Minor-Athlete-Abuse-Prevention-Policies.pdf?la=en&hash=4E2398B7D780432C93006B2367A1C7D108971301](https://www.teamusa.org/-/media/USA_Team_Handball/Documents/Safe-Sport/Minor-Athlete-Abuse-Prevention-Policies.pdf?la=en&hash=4E2398B7D780432C93006B2367A1C7D108971301).

The USA Team Handball strategy has 6 key steps:

1. Definition of the Policy
2. Training on Safety Issues
3. Screening of Individuals
4. Monitoring and Supervision of Activities
5. Safe Reporting, Investigative Ability, Clearance of Innocently Accused Individuals and Action Against Correctly Accused Individuals
6. USA Team Handball Commitment to Response

Enforcement of the policies contained in this handbook fall under the responsibility of USA Team Handball, with the exception of misconduct that the U.S. Center for SafeSport has or takes over jurisdiction. Nothing in this Handbook should be interpreted to prevent a Club, USA Team Handball, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, or the USOPC from taking appropriate interim measures upon notice of an imminent threat of harm.

Any inquiries about the policies contained in this Safe Sport Policy Handbook should be directed to the USA Team Handball staff SafeSport contact: [SafeSport@usateamhandball.org](mailto:SafeSport@usateamhandball.org).

## Definitions

Key words or concepts used in this policy handbook are outlined below.

### **Athlete**

- Any individual who participates or competes as an athlete in a USA Team Handball sanctioned event and/or is a USA Team Handball athlete member.

### **The Center**

The U.S. Center for SafeSport.

The Center has jurisdiction over Covered Individuals, including those:

- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USATH
- USATH or the USOPC authorized, approves, or appoints to a position of authority over athletes or who will have frequent contact with athletes
- Identified by USATH as being within the Center's jurisdiction

### **Child, children, minor and youth**

- Any person under the age of 18. Here, "child," "children," "minor" and "youth" are used interchangeably. 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**

- A legal definition of child abuse exists in each state. To find guidelines concerning each state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway and to find statute information for a particular State, go to [http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/index.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/index.cfm)

### **Coach**

- Any adult that has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, training, or advising an athlete in the context of Team Handball.

### **The Code**

- The U.S. Center for SafeSport's rules, policies, and procedures, including, but not limited to, the document titled "SafeSport Code."

### **Covered Individual**

USA Team Handball Covered Individuals include:

- USA Team Handball Staff
- USA Team Handball Interns
- USA Team Handball Board Members
- USA Team Handball Certified Coaches
- USA Team Handball Event Directors
- USA Team Handball Certified Officials, including Competitive Rules Officials
- USA Team Handball, Team USA, and Elite Contracted Medical Personnel (i.e. doctors, trainers, chiropractors)
- USA Team Handball Elite Contracted Massage Therapists
- USA Team Handball Contractors who have direct contact with athletes
- USA Team Handball Elite National Team Athletes (age 18 and above)
- USA Team Handball Athletes in the USADA Registered Testing Pool (RTP)
- Any other individual that USA Team Handball formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have regular contact with any athlete, including coaches, not already listed above
- Adults at Clubs who have regular contact with athletes, and are so designated by the Club
- Staff and board members of Clubs

- Any other individual that a Club formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have regular contact with any athlete, including coaches, not already listed above, and are so designated by the Club
- Any non-athlete USA Team Handball authorizes to train, reside, or work at any Olympic Training Center, not already listed above

Any person who is a “Covered Individual” under these policies and/or the rules of the U.S. Center for SafeSport, or who is a USA Team Handball member, is subject to the rules, policies, and procedures of this Handbook and the U.S. Center for SafeSport and will submit, without reservation or condition, to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport for the resolution of any alleged violations of those rules, policies, or procedures, as they may be amended from time to time.

Non-U.S. Citizen training partners staying less than 14 days will be exempt from process.

**Local Affiliated Organization (sometimes referred to as an “LAO” or “Club”)**

- A registered USA Team Handball club, such as a high school, collegiate or local club.

**Misconduct**

- Conduct which results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm or is otherwise a violation of this Handbook or the Code. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: sexual misconduct, physical misconduct, emotional misconduct, bullying, harassment, and hazing.
- USA Team Handball follows the definitions of misconduct as outlined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s code published at: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-SafeSport-Code-04.15.19-Hyperlinked.pdf> .

## SafeSport Education Training

All USA Team Handball Covered Individuals must successfully complete awareness training concerning misconduct in sport. USA Team Handball will update categories of people included in the training and education policy as needed. USA Team Handball further recommends and urges all other members of USA Team Handball to complete the online SafeSport educational training as an awareness component of their membership. The requirements of training are outlined below:

1. Core Center for SafeSport Training
  - a. All Covered Individuals are required to complete training concerning child abuse and prevention. No later than February 1, 2020, current Covered Individuals must complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Training (i.e., the Center's online training or the Center's approved in-person training). The online training must be completed:
    - i. Before regular contact with an athlete who is a minor begins, or
    - ii. In any event, for Board Members only with no direct contact with minors of USA Team Handball, within the first 45 days of initial membership, or upon beginning a new role subjecting the Covered Individual to this policy
  - b. Training other than the Core Center for SafeSport Training does not satisfy this policy. USA Team Handball may, however, provide training in addition to the Core Center for SafeSport Training.
2. Refresher Course(s)
  - a. A refresher course is required on an annual basis effective the calendar year following the completion of the Core Center for SafeSport Training for each Covered Individual.
3. Minors
  - a. USA Team Handball shall – subject to parental consent – offer and give training annually to members who are minors regarding the prevention of child abuse. USA Team Handball shall track:
    - i. A description of the training(s)
    - ii. The date the training(s) was offered and given
    - iii. A description of how the training(s) was offered and given
4. Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP)
  - a. All applicable adults must read the and agree to the terms outlined in the MAAPP. Applicable adult is defined as: a Covered Organization, National Member Organization, and Local Affiliated Organization shall complete training concerning child abuse prevention:
    - i. Adult members at a Covered Organization, National Member Organization, or a Local Affiliated Organization who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
    - ii. An adult authorized by a Covered Organization, National Member Organization, or a Local Affiliated Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
    - iii. Adult staff and board members of a Covered Organization, National Member Organization, or a Local Affiliated Organization (with the exception of NMOs and LAOs whose adult staff and board members have no contact with or authority over minor athletes).

- b. A copy of the 2019 MAAPP is available for download on the USATH's Safe Sport page: <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-team-handball/safe-sport>
- 5. Exceptions
  - a. Exceptions to this Training & Education Policy may be made on a case-by-case basis for victims/survivors. USA Team Handball will work with the Center regarding appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities to satisfy the training requirements herein.
  - b. Requests for exceptions may be made directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport at [training@safesport.org](mailto:training@safesport.org) or to the appointed USA Team Handball Safe Sport staff member [SafeSport@usateamhandball.org](mailto:SafeSport@usateamhandball.org).

USA Team Handball will maintain accurate and up-to-date tracking of such approved training and education. Periodic checks for compliance will be completed for all individuals required to complete such training and education as specified above.

## Criminal Background Check

Aforementioned USA Team Handball Covered Individuals over the age of 18 who will come into contact with athletes are required to undergo a confidential background screening, at his or her expense, biannually with supplemental checks in the off-years. A successfully passed background screen is required prior to competition or contact with athletes. In the case for USA Team Handball Staff, a passed background screen is a condition of employment. For Board Members that do not have contact with athletes of USA Team Handball, a background screening is required prior to starting the new role.

A background screen is not required for a minor. An individual that turns 18 must undergo a background screening within 30 days after their 18th birthday.

USA Team Handball uses NCSI for its background checks. NCSI is the background check service recommended by the USOPC.

## Background Check Components

- A. All full background check screens will include at least the following search components:
  - 1. Social Security Number validation or suitable alternative identification verification process as determined by the background check vendor;
  - 2. Name and address history records;
  - 3. Two independent Multi-Jurisdictional Criminal Database searches covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
  - 4. Federal District Courts search for each name used and district where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable;
  - 5. County Criminal Records for each name used and county where the individual currently lives or has lived during the past seven years, going back the length of time records are available and reportable for each county searched;
  - 6. National Sex Offender Registry database search of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico;
  - 7. Multiple National Watch Lists;
  - 8. SafeSport Disciplinary Records once automated;



9. Comprehensive International Records search U.S. citizens who have lived outside of the United States for six consecutive months in any one country, during the past seven years; 7
  10. Motor Vehicle Records of at least a 3-year history in the state of licensure; (if driving is required for position);
- B. Supplemental Background Checks. All supplemental off-year background check screens will be conducted using at least the following search components:
1. Multi-Jurisdictional criminal database covering 50 states plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico
  2. Sex Offender Registry database searches of all available states, plus DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico; and
  3. SafeSport Disciplinary Records.

## **Training Sites**

Each USA Team Handball Training Site shall require criminal background checks in compliance with the background search components for those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to serve in a position of authority over athletes, or (b) to have regular contact with athletes.

The term “USA Team Handball Training Site” refers to any facility/location that is used by USA Team Handball or its national team athletes for competitions and/or training, recovery or coaching purposes.

## **Media**

Individuals affiliated with the media, who are authorized or credentialed by USA Team Handball to access a Training Site or attend a competition ran by USA Team Handball are required to undergo a criminal background check if they have unsupervised one-on-one interactions with athletes.

## **Third-Party Vendors/Contractors**

Contracts with third-party vendors/contractors that are (a) in a position of authority over or (b) in regular contact with athletes must include the background check requirements set forth in this policy. The contracts shall also specify that certification must be provided by the vendor/contractor upon request by USA Team Handball, to establish that the mandated background checks were conducted.

## **Partner Programs**

When partnering with community organizations for events, USA Team Handball shall ensure that the partnership agreement includes language regarding background check requirements. The agreements shall also specify that certification must be provided by the community organization upon request by USA Team Handball, to establish that the mandated background checks were conducted.

## **Failure and Red Lights**

The existence of a background screening resulting in a red light must be kept confidential between USA Team Handball, the club and the individual.

- A. Any USA Team Handball-initiated background check that results in a report of a disposition or resolution of a criminal proceeding, other than an adjudication of not guilty, for any of the below criminal offenses will be subject to USA Team Handball's policies and procedures to determine the individual's level of access and involvement. This shall include but is not limited to: an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation, a plea to the charge or a lesser included offense, a plea of no contest, any plea analogous to an Alford or Kennedy plea, the disposition of the proceeding through a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, deferred prosecution, disposition of supervision, conditional dismissal, juvenile delinquency adjudication, or similar arrangement, or the existence of an ongoing criminal investigation, a warrant for arrest, or any pending charges.
4. Any felony, as defined as any criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for more than one year.
  5. Any misdemeanor involving:
    - a) All sexual crimes, criminal offenses of a sexual nature to include but not limited to; rape, child molestation, sexual battery, lewd conduct, possession and distribution of child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, prostitution, indecent exposure, public indecency, and any sex offender registrant;
    - b) Any drug related offenses;
    - c) Harm to a minor and vulnerable person, including, but not limited to, offenses such as child abandonment, child endangerment/neglect/abuse, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and DUI with a minor;
    - d) Violence against a person (including crimes involving firearms and domestic violence);
    - e) Stalking, harassment, blackmail, violation of a protection order and/or threats;
    - f) Destruction of property, including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief; and
    - g) Animal abuse or neglect.
- B. USA Team Handball must comply with the USOPC Background Check Policy and Procedures as it relates to situations under which a secondary review of USA Team Handball determination will be conducted by the USOPC.

## Appeals

On notification of a red light, the individual has five days to submit their appeal in writing to the Chief Executive (or in the case of the Chief Executive, the President). USA Team Handball will reply within 28 days of any appeal.

For employees of USA Team Handball, the CEO and President shall hear the appeal of a background screening resulting in a red light, and his or her decision will be final with no right of further appeal.

For all others, the USA Team Handball Judicial Committee will hear the appeal and their decision will be final with no further right of appeal.

If an appeal is denied, the balance of any membership fees for a remaining term will be refunded and the individual will face a permanent ban from membership with USA Team Handball.

All directors and employees of USA Team Handball shall also undergo background screening every two years, with the same restrictions above imposed upon them if so applicable. All USA

Team Handball sanctioned event volunteers that will have significant exposure to minors will also be required to pass a background screening.

USA Team Handball will deem non-consent to a background check as a failure of the background check, and such individuals will be permanently expelled from and denied association or participation with USA Team Handball, unless and until a background check is completed.

USA Team Handball requests that all clubs work with USA Team Handball staff to help ensure that background screening is conducted on all covered individuals related to their club.

Clubs are responsible for supervising the program for events sanctioned in their area. USA Team Handball does this for the following reasons:

- To deter offenders from interest in USA Team Handball to the extent where known offenders do not have access to offend through the medium of USA Team Handball
- To deter offenders not yet caught from interest in USA Team Handball to facilitate their offending because USA Team Handball is taking steps to protect its members.

## **Definition of Abuse and Misconduct**

USA Team Handball defines athlete abuse as any non-accidental action that causes injury or harm to a USA Team Handball registered member athlete, including but not limited to sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, hazing, bullying, harassment and threats. USA Team Handball follows the definitions of misconduct as outlined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport's code published at: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-SafeSport-Code-04.15.19-Hyperlinked.pdf> .

## **Sexual Misconduct Policy**

USA Team Handball holds a firm policy that there shall be no sexual abuse of any individual involved in USA Team Handball by any employee, volunteer, coach, member or other participant.

Sexual Abuse occurs when the employee, volunteer, coach, member or other participant touches another person for the purposes of sexual gratification or arousal. Sexual abuse will also be deemed to have occurred when a minor touches an adult employee, volunteer, coach, member or other participant for the purposes of sexual gratification or arousal for either the recipient or the adult if the touching occurs with the consent of the adult.

Neither the consent of a minor, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual abuse did not take place at a USA Team Handball event, are considered defenses.

Sexual abuse may be between adults; this occurs where sexual interactions take place that are nonconsensual or involve force, coercion or manipulation regardless of the age of the victim. Sexual abuse may also be between two minors if there is a significant age difference between the two participants, regardless of the consent or otherwise of the minor(s) involved.

Sexual abuse may consist of one or more of sexual penetration, sexual touching, and non-contact sexual acts including but not limited to exposure, voyeurism, sending sexually explicit electronic messages or photos (by email or cell phone message or otherwise) to an individual,

exposure of persons to pornography, deliberate exposure of a person to sexual acts or deliberate exposure of a person to inappropriate nudity.

Upon proof of violation of USA Team Handball's Sexual Abuse policy the offender will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Physical Abuse Policy**

USA Team Handball holds a firm policy that there shall be no physical abuse of any person involved in USA Team Handball by any employee, volunteer, coach, member or other participant.

Physical abuse is defined as any physical contact that intentionally causes, or has the potential to cause, physical harm or bodily injury.

In addition to physical contact, physical abuse also includes the provision of alcohol to a person under the statutory law in that location, usually 21 in the United States. It also includes the provision of illegal drugs to any participant, regardless of age.

Physical abuse does not include reasonable demonstration of Team Handball techniques by a participant or coach designed as a part of fair play of the game according to the International Handball Federation Rulebook.

However, an individual may have been deemed to be in violation of this policy where there is intent to physically harm or cause bodily injury to an individual during the course of play.

Upon proof of violation of USA Team Handball's Physical Abuse policy the offender will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Emotional Abuse Policy**

USA Team Handball holds a firm policy that there shall be no emotional abuse of any person involved in USA Team Handball by any employee, volunteer, coach, member or other participant.

Emotional abuse is defined as a pattern of non-contact behavior towards any participant that results in or is designed to result in psychological or emotional harm towards any USA Team Handball participant inclusive of members, coaches, players, volunteers, employees or directors.

This pattern of behaviors may include for example, verbal attacks (such as name calling, degrading comments to them or about them or shouting at an individual in a manner that provides no motivational or other genuine playing reasoning). It may also consist of physical aggressive behavior short of physical abuse (e.g. punching walls or throwing sports equipment) that is designed to intimidate the individual.

Age appropriate coaching methods or team building are not considered emotional abuse.

It is noted that those who violate USA Team Handball's policy on Bullying, Threats and Harassment may or may not also violate USA Team Handball's emotional abuse policy.

Upon proof of violation of USA Team Handball's Emotional Abuse policy the offender will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is the use of manipulation or coercion to obtain control of another individual. Bullying involves a pattern of intentional behaviors, both physical and non-physical in nature which seeks to isolate or intimidate a participant.

Bullying extends to both physical intimidation including but not limited to punching, kicking or choking, verbal behaviors and additionally to the use of electronic media inclusive of social media and cell phones.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is a pattern of behaviors that seek to do one or more of the following;

Cause fear, humiliation, annoyance, offend, degrade, create a hostile environment, or reflect discrimination in any way.

Racial harassment is covered by this policy and includes the making of negative comments on any USA Team Handball member's gender, skin color or ethnicity inclusive of the display of offensive materials or symbols.

Sexual orientation harassment is covered by this policy. It is the USA Team Handball policy that participation in USA Team Handball is open to all regardless of sexual orientation.

Discrimination in any fashion on the basis of one's sexual orientation is expressly prohibited by USA Team Handball.

Sexual harassment is covered by this policy. It is considered a violation of this policy for any member, Director, Employee, or coach within USA Team Handball to harass a participant or fellow member through their conduct or through any type of communications. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct may constitute sexual harassment even when the harassment is by members of the same gender.

Upon proof of violation of USA Team Handball's Bullying, Threats & Harassment policy the offender will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Hazing and Team Initiation Ceremonies**

USA Team Handball expressly prohibits the practice of hazing and team initiation ceremonies designed to cause embarrassment, offend or otherwise degrade the victim. This policy extends to the hazing of any individual involved in USA Team Handball.

This prohibition does not prohibit team building activities designed to establish team bonds, and do not have potential to cause harm to a participant, coach, volunteer, director, employee or member of USA Team Handball. For example, acceptable behaviors may include a younger player or rookie bringing in equipment at the end of practice.

Upon proof of violation of USA Team Handball's Hazing policy the offender will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## Threats

A threat is an expressed wish to physically injure or cause harm to someone else. This may be expressed in any form – physically, verbally or via electronic means. Threats may be directed at a participant or alternatively may be directed via a third party.

Upon proof of violation of USA Team Handball's Threats policy the offender will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## Locker Room Policy

It is clear that USA Team Handball members and coaches are at higher risk from all forms of abuse within the confines of a team locker room. This locker room policy is mandatory for all teams under USA Team Handball, inclusive but not limited to practices, competition, etc.

USA Team Handball is concerned about activities between minors, between minors and adults, and with non-official and non-related adults having unsupervised access to locker rooms.

It is the express expectation of USA Team Handball that, for all teams with one or more minor athletes, there should be at least two background-checked individuals present at all times for the safety and protection of participants and coaches. Parents are permitted within the locker room but are not to be the sole individual present. No person who is not a parent, team official (with background check) or coach (with background check) is permitted in the locker room.

Any individual meetings between a coach and a minor shall require at least one further adult being present, being either the parent of the minor or alternatively another background checked and SafeSport trained adult.

It is the responsibility of the supervising adults to ensure that the locker room is appropriately secured and no further individuals are present in the locker room while practice, matches, etc. are underway.

The use of any device with a video or photographic capability is expressly prohibited in USA Team Handball dressing rooms both for practice and for matches. This includes but is not exclusive to Cell Phones, Tablet Computers and Laptops.

All Clubs are requested to make local locker room guidelines to support this policy and clearly display them as appropriate to all participants, coaches, volunteers and employees.

The coach of any team shall accept final responsibility for the satisfaction of the supervision and recording equipment requirement. Any locker room found to be in violation of this policy shall result in the coach being subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Similarly, any parent, administrator or other supervising body within a locker room found in violation of this policy or to be knowledgeable to such a violation shall also face similar disciplinary action.

## Travel & Overnights Policy

USA Team Handball recognizes that individuals are placed at increased risk in unfamiliar surroundings during travel and especially travel where an overnight stay is involved.

Where overnight stays involving minors occur, USA Team Handball requires that the following rules are adhered to:

- No coach, volunteer, director or employee shall share a sleeping arrangement of any sort with a minor.
- Players should, without fail, share arrangements with other players of the same gender, with two to four players assigned depending on availability of accommodations.
- Regular monitoring of curfews and rooms should be conducted by a party of two appropriately screened adults, working in tandem.
- The hotel or accommodation must be requested to block any and all adult channels including free to air adult channels where available.
- Individual meetings between any adult and minor must take place in a public place, such as a lobby and expressly not in a private area such as a hotel room.
- Team administrators and coaches must permit regular check-in calls to parents, and at the request of any participant allow further unscheduled check-in calls to home.
- Family members traveling with the party should be encouraged to use the same hotel as the team.
- A team chaperone of at least one person of the same gender of the team (properly screened) must accompany the party at all times.
- The properly screened adults must keep a written log of events happening during the overnight stay, available upon request to the inspection of the parents of minors involved.

USA Team Handball recognizes that teams often need to travel for practice, camps and for games. It is encouraged that teams keep travel to shorter distances so as to minimize the risk to individuals. However, USA Team Handball requires all participants, coaches, teams, volunteers, directors to adhere to the following rules:

- In all cases, parents have the right to transport their child, and have the player stay at a hotel of their choosing at their own expense.
- No coach, chaperone or supervising adult shall be at any time permitted to consume alcohol or drugs while performing their duties for USA Team Handball.
- No coach, employee, volunteer, director or chaperone will engage in travel without proper safety provisions as per state and federal law. This includes the possession of a clean driving license, proper insurance, a well maintained vehicle and that all adults in the party have passed a USA Team Handball national screening check.
- Teams should travel in groups rather than individual cars where possible.
- USA Team Handball recommends the provision of 1 properly screened adult for every five to seven minors.

Any USA Team Handball member found to be in violation of the USA Team Handball travel policy will be subject to a disciplinary process which may result in permanent exclusion from USA Team Handball.

## **Social Media & Electronic Communications**

As part of USA Team Handball's emphasis on participant safety, communications involving our minor participants should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication

concerning practice, event and administrative issues among coaches, administrators, athletes and their families is critical.

However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy helps reduce these risks.

All electronic communication between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team handball activities. Coaches, athletes and all administrators must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication. All content between coaches and athletes should be readily available to share with the public or families of the athlete or coach. If the athlete is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication should also copy or include the athlete's parents.

## Reporting Violations

It is of fundamental importance to USA Team Handball that individuals feel able to come forward and report abuse, or suspected abuse in a safe and, if requested, anonymous manner. All stakeholders in USA Team Handball should be aware of how to report abuse. USA Team Handball is committed to removing any and all barriers to the safe and effective reporting of abuse within USA Team Handball.

## Who Must Report

Any member, volunteer, participant, employee or Director of USA Team Handball must report both actual and perceived breaches of any policy outlined in this handbook or the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy. Where appropriate they should ensure they report to both the U.S. Center for SafeSport and additionally to the local law enforcement authorities.

It is vital that no individual hesitates in reporting either violations or perceived violations, DO NOT attempt to evaluate the credibility of any claim and instead refer to USA Team Handball and to the local authorities.

## To Whom to Report

Complaints of a **sexual nature** related to this policy should be reported directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport without delay.

SafeSport Report Online and Helpline  
<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/>  
(866) 200-0796

In addition to reporting any abuse to the U.S. Center on SafeSport, persons must also report suspected child physical or sexual abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authority. Members of USA Team Handball (inclusive of employees) should not under any circumstances attempt to evaluate credibility or validity of any sexual or physical abuse allegation before reporting to the relevant law enforcement authority.



Complaints of a **non-sexual nature** related to this policy should be reported directly to the U.S.A. Team Handball SafeSport customer service inbox of [SafeSport@usateamhandball.org](mailto:SafeSport@usateamhandball.org) or directly to the CEO.

Complaints of violations of the Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy should be reported directly to the U.S.A. Team Handball SafeSport customer service inbox of [SafeSport@usateamhandball.org](mailto:SafeSport@usateamhandball.org) or directly to the Administrative Manager.

## Anonymous Reporting

An individual has the absolute right, as far as the law allows, to report anonymously if they wish to do so, however it is strongly encouraged the following information is included in your report;

- Name of the complainant or complainants
- Type of Misconduct alleged
- Name or Names of the individuals alleged to be committing misconduct or misconducts
- Exact if known, approximate if not known dates of misconduct (there is no time limit on misconducts)
- Names of any other individuals who it is believed may have (any) information regarding the misconduct
- Summary of reasons to believe the misconduct has taken place

A copy of the USA Team Handball Reporting Form can be found at:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4U5UxLnZ9KXC-qep8AIY-frgKW48A9FvjZKpy9hYefIF9g/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4U5UxLnZ9KXC-qep8AIY-frgKW48A9FvjZKpy9hYefIF9g/viewform?usp=pp_url)

## Whistleblower Policy & Protection

Regardless of the outcome of an investigation, The U.S. Center for SafeSport will not tolerate any type of retaliation or victimization of any individual who comes forward to report misconduct in good faith. Any such action shall be considered itself a breach of the SafeSport strategy and subject to USA Team Handball disciplinary procedures, the punishment for which will presumptively be permanent expulsion from USA Team Handball.

## False Accusations

While nearly every State and U.S. territory imposes penalties, often in the form of a fine or imprisonment, on mandatory reporters who fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect as required by law. It should be noted that to prevent malicious or intentional reporting of cases that are not founded, many States and the U.S. Virgin Islands impose penalties against any person who files a report known to be false such as fines, charges, possible imprisonment and can be held liable for damages. (*Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2012). Penalties for failure to report and false reporting of child abuse and neglect. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.*)

## Bad Faith Allegations

USA Team Handball has a policy of no tolerance to Bad Faith Allegations. A report that is made in bad faith, is malicious or frivolous will be considered in breach of this policy. Individuals reporting in bad faith will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## Response to Reports

### Reporting to Law Enforcement and/or Child Protective Services

An independent investigation into child abuse, sexual or physical abuse, can be detrimental to any legal process or investigation. Therefore it is USA Team Handball policy to refer each report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

In some states, it is mandatory for a person holding any office (in this case, with USA Team Handball), to report any suspicions to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

### Immediate Suspension

When an allegation in breach of any element of the USA Team Handball SafeSport policy and the elements of such a violation are established through the complaint, the accused individual may face an immediate and precautionary suspension of their membership within USA Team Handball.

The individual may remain suspended until the outcome of a process involving the U.S. Center for SafeSport is completed. A hearing may occur pursuant to the USA Team Handball Bylaws under the supervision and control of the Judicial Committee, or until the completion of a law enforcement process. (For the avoidance of doubt, the individual will remain suspended until the judgment of Guilty or Not Guilty is passed by a Court of Law). Such suspension in no way implies guilt on the part of the accused but is made purely to provide precautionary protection to USA Team Handball members.

It is recognized that for minor violations of this policy (such as one of minor offenses against the Social Media policy) which are not likely to result in the permanent expulsion from USA Team Handball, the Chief Executive – in consultation with the Judicial Committee – may impose sanctions such as further training or temporary suspension of membership.

Where the decision of the Judicial committee is to permanently expel an individual, that individual has the right to make a written appeal to the Board of Directors of USA Team Handball, whose decision is final.

The appropriate sanction shall be up to the panel (or CEO) in each complaint and the panel will consider the following, in no particular order;

- Any legal proceedings and their outcome.
- If the individual poses a future risk to any person connected with USA Team Handball
- The seriousness of the offense or act.
- Age of the accused individual when the offense or act occurred.
- Any information produced by the accused individual, or on their behalf, to the effect of their rehabilitation and/or good conduct.
- The interests of USA Team Handball and its members, including Clubs.

A sanction may range from reprimand, formal warning, further training, temporary suspension of membership or permanent expulsion from USA Team Handball.

Where the sanction is less than permanent expulsion the individual or individuals will be expected to undergo further training to their appropriate conduct.

## Compliance

USA Team Handball national office is responsible for providing and communicating to all members in a timely manner the relevant documentation and training regarding USA Team Handball's SafeSport Policy, Procedures & Strategy.

USA Team Handball is responsible for keeping and publishing a current database of banned members under this program, and ensuring those individuals are prevented from participation in USA Team Handball activities.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for reviewing the USA Team Handball policy, in consultation with the Board of Directors, on an annual basis to ensure best practices are being followed regarding safety.

Currently, USA Team Handball manually checks background screening and SafeSport training compliance for each individual on a case by case basis. A membership platform that automatically displays membership information and also compliance with background checks and SafeSport training for any specific associated member will be in effect January 1, 2020.

## Enforcement

The enforcement of the policies contained in this handbook fall under the jurisdiction of the USA Team Handball CEO and Judicial Committee (with the exception of misconduct over which the U.S. Center for SafeSport has and/or takes jurisdiction over). As such, Article XIV of the USA Team Handball Bylaws governs the enforcement phase and set forth the penalties that may be imposed for any violation of this Safe Sport Policy Handbook, subject to any departures deemed reasonable and necessary by the USA Team Handball Judicial Committee. Complaints filed under this policy shall not be subject to filing fees as outlined in Section 14.4 of the USA Team Handball Bylaws.

USA Team Handball's Bylaws can be found at: <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Team-Handball/About/Governance/Corporate-Documents> .

Neither civil nor criminal statutes of limitation apply to reports of cases of misconduct under the jurisdiction of the USA Team Handball Safe Sport Hearing and Appeals Committee.

**Notwithstanding the above, USA Team Handball will mirror and reflect any sanctions imposed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, whether permanent or temporary.** Any person who is a USA Team Handball member or a "Covered Individual" under these policies and/or the rules of the U.S. Center for SafeSport, is subject to the rules, policies, and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and will submit, without reservation or condition, to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport for the resolution of any alleged violations of those rules, policies, or procedures, as they may be amended from time to time. Violations adjudicated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport may not be appealed through the USA Team Handball procedures referenced in this policy and are subject to the U.S. Center for SafeSport's rules, policies, and procedures.

## Monitoring

The most important element of this SafeSport Strategy is the ability for all Covered Individuals, not limited to but including members, employees, volunteers, and coaches to be actively involved in monitoring safety.

USA Team Handball will appoint a member of its staff to be responsible for the SafeSport Policy, Procedures and Strategy. This staff member will serve as the point of contact for the USOPC, U.S. Center for Safe Sport, Covered Individuals and non-covered individuals of USA Team Handball. The staff member will monitor and actively respond or take appropriate action for all inquiries sent to the USA Team Handball SafeSport customer service inbox of [SafeSport@usateamhandball.org](mailto:SafeSport@usateamhandball.org).

## Clubs

Each club which is a registered member club of USA Team Handball is requested to designate their responsible SafeSport officer(s) within the club, commencing on their next renewal of membership of USA Team Handball from the activation of this policy. The club shall provide in writing the name(s) and contact information of its SafeSport officer(s) to the designated USA Team Handball staff member. USA Team Handball is responsible for maintaining a current database of responsible contacts in the clubs.

This named individual will have responsibility for championing the USA Team Handball SafeSport strategy within the club, and for providing informational materials and training to constituents of the club.

Clubs are mandated to ensure:

- that each coach has undergone the required background screening and have proper USA Team Handball coaching accreditation before allowing contact with players
- that any individual involved in the operations of the club are USA Team Handball members AND have passed a current background check before having any contact with minors
- that all participants, including parents of minor participants, have access to Safe Sport training materials provided by The U.S. Center for SafeSport and USA Team Handball
- that each team and member adheres to USA Team Handball's Locker Room Policy, Social Media Policy and Travel Policy

Clubs should promptly report any violation of these policies to the designated USA Team Handball staff member.