

MINOR ATHLETE AND PARTICIPANT ABUSE PROTECTION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

These Minor Athlete and Participant Protection Policies and Guidelines apply to interactions under USA-WSWS’ jurisdiction with all minors, including athletes and other Participants. In addition to these Athlete and Participant Protection Policies and Guidelines, the above “Prohibited Conduct” provisions also apply to all interactions with minor athletes and other Participants.

Definitions:

The following **definitions** apply to these Minor Athlete Protection Policies and Guidelines:

“Adult Participant” is any Participant who is 18 years of age or older (see definition of Participant on p. 4).

“Minor Athlete” is an **athlete or other Participant** under 18 years of age, who participates in, or who has participated within the last 12 months in, an event, program, activity or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of USA-WSWS.

“Authority” exists when one person’s position over another person is such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, they have the power or right to direct, control, give orders to, or make decisions for that person. Also, see the Power Imbalance definition in the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s Code.

“Partial or Full Jurisdiction” includes any event (including all travel and lodging in connection with the event) sanctioned by USA-WSWS or conducted by any of its affiliated clubs. Also included are any facilities that may be owned, leased, rented or used by USA-WSWS or any of its affiliated clubs for practice, training, or competition.

“In-Program Contact” is any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete related to sport, including (but not limited to) sanctioned events and facilities, and also includes any practices, camps or clinics, training or instructional sessions, pre/post event meals or outings, team travel, 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.

“Local Affiliated Organization” means any regional, state or local club affiliated with USA-WSWS.

“Regular contact” means ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein an Adult Participant is in a role of direct and active engagement with any Minor Athlete. This includes coaches, and team managers, staff, physicians and trainers.

“USOPC” means the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

Exceptions:

“Close-in-Age” Exceptions apply to certain policies and allow for In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

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

Note: these exceptions (under these Minor Athlete and Participant Protection Policies and Guidelines) are different than any close-in-age exception in the SafeSport Policy and Code pertaining to misconduct.

“Dual Relationships” Exceptions apply to certain policies where the Adult Participant has a relationship with a Minor Athlete that is outside of the sport program. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian at least annually.

“Personal Care Assistant” Exceptions apply to Adult Participants working as Personal Care Assistants with a Minor Athlete, as set forth in these Minor Athlete and Participant Protection Policies and Guidelines. Personal Care Assistants are persons to assist an athlete requiring help with activities of daily living and preparation for athletic participation. The support can be provided by a Guide for Blind or visually impaired athletes, or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration, and toileting. Personal Care Assistants are different for every athlete and should be individualized to fit their specific needs. When assisting a Minor Athlete, Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants must be authorized by the athlete’s parent/guardian.

Note that many of these exceptions (Close-in-Age, Personal Care, or Dual Relationship exceptions) require parent/guardian consent. USA-WSWS recommends that parents and guardians take training on child abuse prevention before providing consent under these policies. A free parent course is available at <https://safesporttrained.org/#/public-dashboard>.

PROHIBITED AND RESTRICTED CONDUCT

One-on-one interactions:

Observable and Interruptible

1. All one-on-one In-program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, except in emergency circumstances.
2. 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:
 - A. When a Dual Relationship exists; or
 - B. When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - C. If a Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - a. The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA-WSWS for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - b. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and,
 - c. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA-WSWS' screening policy; or
 - d. In other circumstances specifically addressed in this policy that allow for certain one-on-one interactions if USA-WSWS receives parent/guardian consent.

Meetings and Training Sessions:

Observable and Interruptible

1. Adult Participants must follow the one-on-one interaction policy in all meetings and training sessions where Minor Athletes are present.

Individual Training Sessions

2. Individual Training Sessions:
 - A. One-on-one, In-Program, individual training sessions must be observable and interruptible except if:
 - a. A Dual Relationship exists; or
 - b. The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - c. A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant, and:

- i. The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA-WSWS for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - ii. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and,
 - iii. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA-WSWS’ screening policy.
- B. 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,
- C. Parents/guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

Meetings with Licensed Mental Health Care Professionals and Health Care Providers

- 3. Meetings with licensed mental health care professionals and health care providers (other than athletic trainers. Note: Athletic trainers who are covered under these policies must follow the “Athletic Training Modalities, Massages, and Rubdowns” policy).
 - A. If a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider meets one-on-one with a Minor Athlete at a sanctioned event or a facility, which is partially or fully under USA-WSWS’ jurisdiction, the meeting must be observable and interruptible except:
 - a. If the door remains unlocked; and
 - b. Another adult is present at the facility and notified that a meeting is occurring, although the Minor Athlete’s identity need not be disclosed; and
 - c. USA-WSWS is notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and
 - d. The provider obtains consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.

Athletic Training Modalities, Massages, and Rubdowns

Athletic Training Modality, Massage, or Rubdown

- 1. All In-Program athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of a Minor Athlete must:
 - A. Be observable and interruptible; and,
 - B. Have another Adult Participant physically present for the athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown; and
 - C. Have documented consent as explained below; and,

- D. Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered; and,
 - E. Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing.
2. The provider should narrate the steps in the massage, rubdown, or athletic training modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.
 3. Minor Athlete massages should only be provided by a licensed massage therapist.

Consent

4. Providers of athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns, or USA-WSWS or USOPC, when applicable, must obtain consent at least annually from Minor Athlete's parents/guardians before providing any athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns.
5. Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw consent at any time.

Locker Rooms and Changing Areas:

Observable and Interruptible

1. Adult Participants must ensure that all one-on-one In-Program Contact with Minor Athletes in a locker room, changing area, or similar space where Minor Athletes are present, is observable and interruptible, except if:
 - A. A Dual Relationship exists;
 - B. The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - C. A Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant and;
 - a. The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA-WSWS for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - b. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and,
 - c. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA-WSWS' screening policy.

Conduct in Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

2. No Adult Participant or Minor Athlete can use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in locker rooms, changing areas, or any other area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing.
3. Adult Participants must not change clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groins, or genitals to a Minor Athlete.
4. Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes unless:

- A. The Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age Exception; or
 - B. The shower is part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear.
5. Parents/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with Adult Participants during In-Program Contact. USA-WSWS and the Adult Participant(s) must abide by this request.

Media and Championship Celebrations in Locker Rooms

6. USA-WSWS may permit recording or photograph in locker rooms for the purpose of highlighting a sport or athletic accomplishment if:
- A. Parent/guardian consent has been obtained; and,
 - B. USA-WSWS approves the specific instance of recording or photograph; and,
 - C. Two or more Adult Participants are present; and
 - D. Everyone is fully clothed.

Personal Care Assistants

7. Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants are permitted to be with and assist Minor Athletes in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces where other Minor Athletes are present, if they meet the requirements in Section 1(C)(3) above.

Availability and Monitoring of Locker Rooms, changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

8. USA-WSWS must provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes that need to change clothes or undress at sanctioned events or facilities partially or fully under USA-WSWS' jurisdiction.
9. USA-WSWS must monitor the use of locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces to ensure compliance with these policies at sanctioned events or facilities partially or fully under USA-WSWS' jurisdiction.

Electronic Communications:

Open and Transparent

1. Under this Policy, electronic communications include, but are not limited to: phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching, texting, and social media.
2. All one-on-one electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Open and Transparent except when:
 - A. A Dual Relationship exists;
 - B. The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - C. A Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant and;

- a. The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA-WSWS for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - b. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and,
 - c. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA-WSWS’ screening policy.
3. 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.
 - A. If a Minor Athlete communicates with the Adult Participant first, the Adult Participant must follow this policy if the Adult Participant responds.
 4. Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

Team Communication

5. 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

6. All electronic communication originating from an Adult Participant to a Minor Athlete must be professional in nature unless an exception in Section 2 exists.

Requests to Discontinue, Other Requirements

7. Parents/guardians may request in writing that USA-WSWS or an Adult Participant subject to this policy not contact their Minor Athlete through any form of electronic communication. USA-WSWS and the Adult Participant must abide by any request to discontinue, absent emergency circumstances.
8. Electronic communications should generally be sent only between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM local time for the location of the Minor Athlete.

Transportation:

Transportation

1. An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:
 - A. A Dual Relationship exists;
 - B. The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - C. A Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant and;

- a. The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA-WSWS for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - b. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and,
 - c. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA-WSWS’ screening policy; or
 - D. 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.
2. Minor Athletes or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.
 3. An Adult Participant meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors.
 4. Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian is required for all transportation sanctioned by USA-WSWS (or any of its local affiliated organizations), the Pan American Sports Organization, USOPC, at least annually.

Lodging:

Hotel Rooms and Other Sleeping Arrangements

1. All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, and an Adult Participant cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete, except if:
 - A. A Dual Relationship exists;
 - B. The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
 - C. A Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant and;
 - a. The Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian has provided written consent to USA-WSWS for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - b. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and,
 - c. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA-WSWS’ screening policy.
2. Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually.

Monitoring or Room checks During In-Program Travel

3. If room checks are performed during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present for the room checks.

Additional Requirements for Lodging Authorized or Funded by USA-WSWS

4. Adult Participants traveling with any USA-WSWS sanctioned or sponsored activities, or otherwise subject to this policy, must agree to and sign USA-WSWS' lodging policy at least annually.
5. Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athletes are assumed to have Authority over Minor Athletes and thus must comply with the Education & Training requirements of this Policy.

Additional Policies:

1. Adult Participants who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete, should not give personal gifts to Minor Athletes except:
 - a. With the express consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian; or
 - b. If gifts are equally distributed to all athletes (such as on a team) and serve a motivational or educational purpose.
2. Adult Participants should not publicly share or post photos or videos of Minor Athletes if the Adult Participant has not obtained the consent of the Minor Athlete and their Parent/Guardian. Photographs or videos of Minor Athletes may only be taken in public view and must observe generally accepted standards of decency.
3. Adult Participants, who do not meet the close-in-age exception or have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete, should not have out-of-program contact with a Minor Athlete without the consent of the Minor Athlete's parent or guardian, even if the out-of-program contact is not one-on-one.