

USA Wrestling Safe Sport Policy

(Revised: April 28, 2017)

USA Wrestling (“USAW”) is committed to providing safe and positive training and competition environments for its members, athletes, participants, coaches, officials, volunteers and staff, free of misconduct, abuse and harassment in any form. USAW promotes good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all members, athletes, participants, coaches, officials, volunteers and staff. USAW advocates building strong self-images among youth participants. Athletes with a strong self-image may be less likely targets for misconduct, abuse or harassment; similarly, they may be less likely to engage in misconduct or to abuse, harass, bully, or haze others around them. All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with Olympic ideals.

USAW has established this Safe Sport Policy for application to its members, athletes, participants, coaches, officials, volunteers (including Directors, Officers and committee members of USAW and its state associations), and staff (application of this Safe Sport Policy extends to any person that is elected or appointed to a position of authority over athletes or who has frequent contact with athletes, including event staff, medical personnel, chaperones, and any other contracted individual working with or around athletes). All such persons are referred to in this Safe Sport Policy as “Covered Individuals.” Covered Individuals must observe and adhere to the provisions of this Safe Sport Policy. In addition, parents, spectators and other invitees attending or participating in the programs, activities and events of USAW who may not be Covered Individuals are expected to observe and adhere to the provisions of this Safe Sport Policy.

As a member organization of the United States Olympic Committee (the “USOC”), USAW and Covered Individuals are required to comply with the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (the “SafeSport Code”) of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “Center”), including the related SafeSport Practices and Procedures for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (the “Safe Sport Practices and Procedures”) and the Supplemental Rules for U.S. Olympic and Paralympic SafeSport Arbitrations (the “Supplemental Rules”). The SafeSport Code serves as the benchmark by which the Center and USAW determines whether a Safe Sport Policy violation has occurred.

The SafeSport Code outlines prohibited conduct related to:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Hazing

The SafeSport Code (along with definitions and examples of misconduct and reporting guidelines) and the SafeSport Practices and Procedures and the Supplemental Rules, as well as other policies, procedures and rules of the Center, as any shall be amended from time-to-time, are incorporated into this Safe Sport Policy of USAW by this cross-reference. The Center may update the SafeSport Code, the SafeSport Practices and Procedures, the Supplemental Rules, and any of its other policies, procedures and rules, at any time and the changes are effective when published. The most current SafeSport Code and related policies, procedures and rules of the Center can be found at the Center website at www.safesport.org.

For Safe Sport matters involving prohibited conduct that falls within the jurisdiction of the Center, the Center will investigate and adjudicate complaints and will determine resolutions and sanctioning for any violation. The Center has the exclusive authority to investigate and resolve conduct involving sexual misconduct, as well as prohibited conduct under the Safe Sport Code that is reasonably related to the underlying allegation of sexual misconduct. A decision concerning a safe sport violation adjudicated by the Center shall not be reviewable through the USA

Wrestling Safe Sport Policy or the internal grievance procedures of USA Wrestling. The report and referral of a matter to the Center shall not supersede any local, state, or federal reporting requirements or jurisdiction.

If USA Wrestling receives a complaint or a report of prohibited conduct that is not within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Center, USA Wrestling may refer such matter to the Center for investigation and adjudication pursuant to the discretionary jurisdiction of the Center. If the Center does not accept jurisdiction, or if USA Wrestling does not make such a referral, the matter shall be administered under the provisions of this Safe Sport Policy and the applicable provisions and procedures of USA Wrestling's By-Laws pertaining to matters of eligibility or internal grievances, as appropriate under the circumstances of the matter.

Other USAW policies, procedures and codes, including, but not limited to, Codes of Conduct and the USAW Background Screening Policy, may deal with these and other forms of conduct that are prohibited and that are subject to action by USAW for violation of such policies, procedures and codes.

1. Misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. USAW does not accept sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing or any similar forms of misconduct from any person towards athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, staff, parents, spectators or any other persons.
2. To further protect USAW youth participants, as well as our coaches, officials, volunteers, and staff, no adult person should allow him/herself to be alone with a child or with any group of children in a private setting during or while they are participating in sponsored activities of USAW, its state associations, or its member clubs. In particular, in such circumstances, coaches or other adult members of the organization should:
 - a. Not drive alone with a child participant in the car.
 - b. Not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms, or any other private room.
 - c. Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching with assistance from another adult or athlete.
 - d. Have private conversations with youth participants within view of others instead of a private office.
 - e. Not socialize individually with the participants outside of sponsored activities.

When staying overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of the same gender and similar age group, with chaperones in separate but nearby rooms.

Interaction with athletes should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy such as the locker room, restroom or changing area. A second adult should be present for any necessary interaction between an adult and an athlete in any such room. The use of recording devices of any kind in any such room is strictly prohibited.

Photography or videography of athletes must observe generally accepted standards and be appropriate for and in the best interest of the athlete. Without the consent of the athlete, or the parent or legal guardian of a minor athlete, an athlete may not be photographed or filmed and no images of an athlete may be posted publicly or privately.

With respect to social media activities, all e-mails, texts, and posts must be transparent, professional and related solely to athlete activities or events. Covered Individuals should avoid out-of-program contact with athletes on social media. For example, general communication regarding an athlete's activity or event via a club's social media account is acceptable, but private communication via a coach's and/or an athlete's personal social media account is not acceptable. Covered Individuals are to distribute electronic and mobile communications to minor athletes openly and publicly; for example, with a copy to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or to the entire team transmitted simultaneously. Parents and guardians have the right to request that (a) their child not be contacted in any form of electronic communications, or (b) certain information about their child that they designate not be distributed in any form of electronic communications.

USAW encourages parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, practices and other events. The more the parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.

3. Dating or sexual relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances have inherent dangers when they occur between supervisors, team leaders, coaches, officials or other members of USAW in positions of authority and any person for whom there is a professional responsibility. These dangers can include:
 - a. Athletes, employees or others may feel coerced into an unwanted relationship because they fear that refusal to enter or stay in the relationship will adversely affect their employment, sport opportunity or ability to participate in USAW events or programs.
 - b. Conflicts of interest may arise when supervisors or officials are required to evaluate performance or make personnel decisions with respect to an individual with whom they are having a romantic relationship.
 - c. The perception that employees, coaches, officials or athletes who are involved in a romantic relationship with a person having professional, supervisory or promotional responsibility for them might receive an unfair advantage.

For these reasons, such relationships are inappropriate.

4. It is a violation of this Safe Sport Policy:
 - a. For any Covered Individual or other person to engage in any form of misconduct as identified by the SafeSport Code or this Safe Sport Policy, including harassment of any kind based on age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship, religion, race, disability, or national or ethnic origin.
 - b. For any Covered Individual or other person to engage in any such conduct towards any person participating in any event, training camp or competition conducted or sanctioned by USAW or the USOC.
 - c. For a person who knows of misconduct to not take any action to report it. Willfully tolerating misconduct is unacceptable and a violation of this Policy.
 - d. For any person to make a false, frivolous or malicious complaint of misconduct (as contrasted with complaints which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith).
 - e. To retaliate, or threaten retaliation or reprisal, against an individual for reporting a matter under this Safe Sport Policy.
5. Any person who is subject to this Safe Sport Policy and who violates it is subject to discipline or other action as may be within the purview and jurisdiction of the Center and USAW, including but not limited to suspension or termination of membership in USAW or of any other position in which the person serves in USAW.
6. Any person who is accused of, charged with, pleads guilty to, or is found guilty of, sexual or physical abuse or harassment may be asked to resign voluntarily or may, after written notice that is reasonable under the circumstances, be suspended until the matter is investigated and resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the USAW, its state associations, its member clubs, and its members, and could be harmful to the participants in training activities and/or competitions. A person who is accused but later cleared of the charges, may apply to have a suspension lifted or, if applicable, to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no assurance is made that the person will be reinstated to his/her former position.
7. Education and familiarity with respect to safe sport principles and policies is critical. Every coach and official who wishes to become a member of USA Wrestling, as well as USAW staff members, (i) will be required to review and become familiar with this Safe Sport Policy and (ii) must acknowledge and affirm compliance with this requirement on an annual basis. As USAW education programs for coaches, officials and staff are updated, USA Wrestling will incorporate Safe Sport Policy modules in each.

Reporting:

8. USAW recognizes that it can be difficult to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made verbally or in writing.
9. USAW will timely respond to any and all allegations of misconduct in matters that are within the purview and jurisdiction of USAW. USAW expects that allegations of misconduct that are properly within the purview and jurisdiction of officials or persons at other levels or of other organizations will be timely responded to and dealt with as appropriate. This information should be communicated to the appropriate authorities for investigation and should be reviewed by appropriate officials, with timely notification to the alleged offender of such allegations. All suspected criminal activity, including any suspected sexual abuse of a minor, must be reported to the appropriate local, state or federal law enforcement and child protective service authorities immediately.
10. To report suspected violations of this Safe Sport Policy to USAW, information should be submitted to Les Gutches, USAW Associate Executive Director for Programs and Performance, at (719) 598-8181 (ext. 662), or on a confidential basis at 6155 Lehman Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80918 or by e-mail at lgutches@usawrestling.org. Upon receiving notice of a suspected violation of this Safe Sport Policy, the following will occur:
 - a. In the event USAW receives a complaint or a report that is required to be referred to the Center, USAW will report and refer such matter to the Center and the Center shall have jurisdiction and authority over such matter; provided, however, that such referral shall not supersede any local, state or federal reporting requirements or jurisdiction. The person reporting to USAW will be informed that allegations of sexual misconduct must be reported to the Center and that suspected child abuse must be reported to legal authorities unless they are aware that authorities have already been notified.
 - b. For matters not within the jurisdiction and authority of the Center, USA Wrestling staff, or an assigned agent of USA Wrestling, will review matters and investigate as determined to be reasonable, necessary and appropriate.
 - c. In cases where sufficient evidence to demonstrate probable cause that a violation exists, both the reporting party and the accused will be given notice of the results of the investigation and an opportunity to provide written response to the claim and information developed from the investigation.
 - d. All such information and written statements will be forwarded to USA Wrestling's Executive Committee for resolution consistent with applicable provisions and procedures of USAW's By-Laws pertaining to matters of eligibility or internal grievances, as appropriate under the circumstances of the matter. The Executive Committee may adjudicate and resolve the matter, or delegate adjudication and resolution to a Sport Committee or other body within USAW as the Executive Committee deems appropriate.
 - e. Any discipline imposed as a result of the adjudication of a matter, whether by the Center or by USAW, will be enforced by USAW, its state associations, and/or member clubs, as appropriate under the circumstances.