



WWSA SAFE SPORTS & MISCONDUCT POLICY

The Watchung Hills Soccer Association is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes' physical, emotional and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. The Association has zero tolerance for abuse or misconduct. All participants in the soccer community should play an active role in creating an environment that is free from emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, and from all forms of discrimination. The Board of Directors recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved to support the use of motivational training methods that avoid misconduct. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, conduct which results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct.

The Association further finds it important to set standards for professional boundaries, minimize the appearance of impropriety, and prohibit grooming tactics. As detailed in Appendix I, "Prevention Against Misconduct," the Association has created standards that must be followed by all employees, coaches, volunteers, covered adults, and vendors when undertaking: (i) one-on-one interaction with an athlete, (ii) travel for team purposes, (iii) social media/electronic communication with athletes, (iv) photography of athletes, (v) giving gifts to athletes, (vi) being in a locker room/changing area when athletes are present, (vii) massage/icing/taping of an athlete, and (viii) stretching and other physical contact of an athlete. Prior to undertaking any of the aforementioned, all employees, coaches, volunteers, covered adults, and vendors must review and ensure compliance with Appendix I, "Prevention Against Misconduct," and New Jersey Youth Soccer's Policy to Limit One-on-One Interaction.

The Association also is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from all forms of abuse, misconduct, bullying and hazing. All coaches, volunteers, employees, athletes, and covered adults¹ shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which includes, but is not limited to:

1. Child sexual abuse
2. Sexual misconduct

¹ The term "Covered Adults" refer to those adults (aged 18 and older) who are authorized directly or indirectly by the Association to have: (1) routine and/or regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor; (2) authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; or (3) authority over those adults who have routine and/or regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor. A more detailed definition can be found in New Jersey Youth Soccer's Definitions for Terms Included in Program Policy.



3. Emotional misconduct
4. Physical misconduct
5. Bullying
6. Harassment
7. Hazing
8. Race, Religion, or National Origin Harassment

Additional information, including definitions and examples of these forms of abuse, misconduct, bullying and hazing, can be found in Appendix II, “Types of Misconduct” and New Jersey Youth Soccer’s Prohibited Conduct Policy.

All coaches, volunteers, employees, athletes, and covered adults are responsible for ensuring and preventing all forms of misconduct and have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing any and all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a violation of this policy.

New Jersey Youth Soccer’s Policies

The Association is a member of New Jersey Youth Soccer. As a member organization, the Association has adopted all of New Jersey Youth Soccer’s policies. These policies are important for ensuring all athletes’ safety and security. As a result, all coaches, volunteers, employees, athletes, and covered adults must review and follow the requirements set forth in New Jersey Youth Soccer’s policies. These include, but are not limited to, [Statement on Athlete and Participant Safety Program](#), [Background Screening Policy](#), [Mandatory Reporting Policy](#), [Training and Education Policy](#), [Prohibited Conduct Policy](#), [Policy to Limit One-on-One Interactions](#), [Policy on Monitoring and Enforcement](#), and [Definitions for Terms Included in Program](#). A copy of these policies, which may be modified from time-to-time by New Jersey Youth Soccer, are available on its website: <http://www.njyouthsoccer.com./safe-soccer>.

Training

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act (“Safe Sports Act”) requires that certain employees be provided certain training. All coaches, volunteers, covered adults, and employees required to receive this training must complete it in a timely fashion. Further details regarding mandatory training can be found in New Jersey Youth Soccer’s Training and Education Policy.

Reporting

Violations of this policy must be reported to the Board of Directors immediately. Depending on the nature of the allegation, violations may also need to be reported to the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency. Further information regarding reporting



can be found in New Jersey Youth Soccer's Mandatory Reporting Policy.

New Jersey is a mandatory reporting State. This means that any person with reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected must report those concerns immediately.² All coaches, covered adults, volunteers, and employees are required to immediately report to the Board of Directors: (i) every suspected violation of this policy, and (ii) all suspicions or allegations of child abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct. All individuals also will be required to report violations of this policy or allegations of child abuse to the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency and/or the appropriate law enforcement authority. The Board of Directors will take a report under this policy that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report, including an anonymous, in-person, verbal, or written report. To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, the Board of Directors will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

The Association encourages a culture of respect and open communication in which all participants feel comfortable reporting concerns, whether the concerns involve suspected abuse or any other misconduct. Every individual is encouraged to raise concerns to coaches, referees, and Association employees and board members. Regardless of outcome, the Board of Directors will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. The Board of Directors will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of this policy and grounds for disciplinary action.

Discipline

Any individual or group of individuals found in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, as determined by the Board of Directors. Disciplinary action may include individual disciplinary action (including suspension, probation, or removal from the team), team disciplinary action, or termination of the team. Depending on the circumstances, the Board of Directors also may consider remedial measures designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the problem, and/or protect and provide support for the

² Child sexual abuse also may occur at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. If a coach, covered adult, volunteer, or employee has any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, it must be reported immediately to the Board of Directors and/or the appropriate law enforcement authority.



victim(s). If the reported complaint indicates that an individual’s continued employment, membership or participation poses a risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm, the Board of Directors may wish – within its sole discretion – to suspend the accused individual pending final resolution of the complaint to eliminate any danger to an athlete, sport participant or other individual.

Safe Sports Act

On February 14th, 2018, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (“Safe Sports Act”) was signed into law to protect amateur athletes from misconduct and abuse. Where applicable and required by law, the Watchung Hills Soccer Association, and its coaches, covered adults, volunteers, and vendors, shall comply with the legal requirements of the Safe Sports Act. This includes, but is not limited to, all reporting requirements, training requirements, and procedural requirements.

Modifications

All of the Association’s policies will always be subject to modification, amendment and further development by the Association, in its discretion. Limited exceptions to these policies may be granted by the Association on a case-by-case basis where appropriate, provided that such exceptions do not materially impact the safety of any minor athlete.



APPENDIX I

PREVENTION AGAINST MISCONDUCT

The Watchung Hills Soccer Association finds it important to set standards for professional boundaries, minimize the appearance of impropriety, and prohibit grooming tactics. As a result, all employees, coaches, volunteers, covered adults, and vendors are required to ensure the compliance of the following.

One-on-one interaction. An unrelated adult shall not be alone with an athlete at a facility under the jurisdiction of the applicable amateur sports organization, without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances. More specifically, one-on-one interactions between a Minor Participant and a Covered Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) during Association sanctioned activities and competitions are permitted, if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult. Isolated, one-on-one interactions between a Minor Participant and a Covered Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) during Association sanctioned activities and competitions are prohibited, except under emergency circumstances. Meetings between a Covered Adult and a Minor Participant during Association sanctioned activities and competitions should only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings should occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult. If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office should remain unlocked and open. If available, it should occur in an office that (if available) has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting. If a mental health care professional meets with a Minor Participant during Association sanctioned activities and competitions, 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 Association sanctioned activity or competition, (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to Association. Individual training sessions between Covered Adults and Minor Participants are permitted during Association sanctioned activities and competitions if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. The Covered Adult should obtain the written permission of the Minor Participant's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers should be allowed to observe the training session. Permission for individual training sessions should be obtained at least every six months. When one-on-one interactions between Covered Adults and Minor Participants occur during Association sanctioned activities and competitions, adults should 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. Covered Adults are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated Minor Participants in settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home, restaurants, and individual



transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact. Such arrangements are nonetheless strongly discouraged.

Travel. When traveling for team purposes, an unrelated Adult shall not be alone with an athlete, without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances. Unrelated adults should not share or be alone in a sleeping room with an athlete.

Local Travel: Local travel consists of travel to training, practice, and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s). Covered Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, should not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated Minor Participant, absent emergency circumstances, and may only drive with at least two other Minor Participants or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minor Participant's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel. The Association encourages parents/legal guardians to pick up their child, a Minor Participant, first and drop off their child, a Minor Participant, last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

Team Travel: When only one Covered Adult and one Minor Participant travel to a competition, the Minor Participant should have his/her legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with the Covered Adult. Covered Adults should not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a Minor Participant (unless the Covered Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the Minor Participant). Meetings should be conducted consistent with the Association's policy for one-on-one interactions - i.e., any such meeting should be observable and interruptible. Meetings should not be conducted in a hotel room. Team travel policies should be signed and agreed to by all Minor Participants, parents, and Covered Adults traveling with the Association. Covered Adults who travel with the Association should successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with the organization's policies. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and observable and interruptible environments should be maintained.

Social Media/Electronic Communication/Photography. All electronic or mobile communications between an unrelated adult and an athlete should be made openly and publicly; for example, with a copy to the parent/guardian and/or the entire team transmitted simultaneously. Parents and guardians have the right to request that their child not be



contacted in any form of electronic communications. If a Minor Participant communicates to the Covered Adult privately first, the Covered Adult should respond to the Minor Participant with a copy to another Covered Adult or the minor's legal guardian. Photographs or videos may only be taken (i) in public view; (ii) if they observe generally accepted standards of decency; and (iii) are both appropriate for and in the best interest of the athlete. A Covered Adult communicating electronically to the entire team should copy another Covered Adult. Covered Adults are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications with Minor Participants, except under emergency circumstances. Covered Adults are not permitted to "private message," "instant message," "direct message", or send photos via Snapchat or Instagram to a Minor Participant privately. Covered Adults are not permitted to maintain social media connections with Minor Participants; such Covered Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from Minor Participants and existing social media connections with Minor Participants should be discontinued. Electronic communications should only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The Association monitors its respective social media pages and will remove any posts that violate the organization's policies and practices for appropriate behavior. The Association will inform the legal guardian of a Minor Participant of any prohibited posts, as well as the organization's administrator(s).

Gifts. Gift-giving or providing special favors or privileges to individual athletes is prohibited, unless explicit consent is provided by the athlete's parent/guardian.

Locker Rooms/Changing Areas. Interactions between an adult and athlete 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 athlete in such room. Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras in locker rooms, rest rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces during Association sanctioned activities and competitions is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by Association and two or more adults are present. Under no circumstances should an unrelated Covered Adult during Association sanctioned activities and competitions be undressed (disrobed or partial or full nudity where private body parts are exposed) in front of Minor Participants. At no time are unrelated Covered Adults permitted to be alone with a Minor Participant in a locker room, rest room, or changing area during Association sanctioned activities and competitions, except under emergency circumstances. If any Association sanctioned activities and competitions require the use of a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, Association, where applicable, and/or Association member organizations, where applicable, should designate times for use by Covered Adults, if any. The Association, where applicable, will regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms, rest rooms, and changing areas at facilities at which Association sanctioned activities and competitions are taking place to ensure compliance with these policies. Adults make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room



or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, the Association, where applicable, should check on the athlete's whereabouts. The Association will 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. If this is necessary, parents should let a coach or administrator know about this in advance.

Massage/Icing/Taping. Any rubdown or massage performed on an athlete by an unrelated adult must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only an athlete and the adult in the room. It must be done by a licensed massage therapist. Even if the coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach should not perform a massage of a Minor Participant under any circumstances. Icing and taping must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only an athlete and the adult in the room. Icing and taping near the intimate areas of the body is not permitted by any unrelated adult – unless it is done by a licensed medical professional – and must never be done with only an athlete and unrelated adult in the room.

Stretching and Other Physical Contact. Adults should take care to prevent any compromising positions while stretching or closely interacting with athletes. Adults must avoid: (i) laying or sitting on top of the athlete; (ii) facing the athlete while he/she is in a static straddle position (iii) lap sitting; and/or iv) pats on the bottom. Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., spotting, catching) is permissible. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment on the part of the athlete, participant or coach, does not violate this policy.