

U.S. FIGURE SKATING
**SAFESPORT
PROGRAM
HANDBOOK**

MAY 14, 2019

 **US FIGURE SKATING**

SAFESPORT

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HANDBOOK**



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I. INTRODUCTION

PART 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Handbook is to clearly communicate the key principles of U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program and U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to athlete safety. The SafeSport rules and policies set forth in this Handbook, and as set forth in the [Code of the U.S. Center for SafeSport](#), apply to all U.S. Figure Skating Participants, as defined below. A violation of the SafeSport policies as found in this Handbook may be considered a violation of the U.S. Figure Skating Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics and/or GR 1.03, as found in the [General Rules of U.S. Figure Skating](#).

PART 2: DEFINITIONS

ADULT

Anyone 18 years of age or older.

ATHLETE

A U.S. Figure Skating Member who is participating in, or training to participate in, U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned activities such as competitions, test sessions, exhibitions, etc.

CHAPERONE

A Member who has successfully completed the SafeSport Training and passed the U.S. Figure Skating approved background check with a green-light finding prior to travel. A Chaperone ensures that Minor Athletes are supervised in accordance with this SafeSport Handbook by monitoring the activities of the Minor Athlete under his/her care. A Coach is prohibited from being a Chaperone unless the Coach is the parent or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete.

CLAIMANT

The person who is alleged to have experienced conduct that constitutes a violation of this Handbook or a Code violation.

COACH

Any Member who also meets U.S. Figure Skating's compliance requirements for being a Coach and/or Learn to Skate USA Instructor.

CODE

The rules, policies, procedures and practices of the U.S. Center for SafeSport. For the most up-to-date version of the Code, [click here](#). In the event of a discrepancy between any of the rules and policies set forth in this Handbook and the Code, the provisions of the Code shall govern.

COVERED INDIVIDUAL

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Any individual who U.S. Figure Skating determines is required to be SafeSport Compliant. (A complete list of Covered Individuals requiring SafeSport Compliance as determined by U.S. Figure Skating is on Page 10 of this Handbook.)

A Covered Individual includes:

- a) Adult Members who have regular contact with Minor Athletes;
- b) An Adult authorized by U.S. Figure Skating to have regular contact with or authority over a Minor Athlete; and,
- c) Adult staff and board members of U.S. Figure Skating and Member Clubs (with the exception of Adult staff and board members of Member Clubs who have no regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes).

LICENSED MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

A person with the knowledge, skill and experience in the field of medicine or other therapeutic modality who has the requisite education and current applicable national and state licensure required for practice in their respective field (such as MDs, DOs, PAs, ATCs, PTs and LMTs). A Licensed Medical Professional must register with U.S. Figure Skating and must complete the SafeSport Training and pass the U.S. Figure Skating-approved background check with a green-light finding prior to working with Athletes.

MEMBER

A person who meets the membership requirement(s) as outlined in Article V of the current U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook.

MEMBER CLUB

A figure skating club registered with U.S. Figure Skating. This includes interim, provisional and full-member clubs.

MINOR or CHILD

An individual under the age of 18 years old.

MISCONDUCT

Conduct that results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. The primary types of Misconduct in sport are emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, bullying, threats and harassment, and hazing. The willful failure to report Misconduct one observes may also be Misconduct.

PARTICIPANT

Any individual who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of the alleged Misconduct:

- a) A Member of U.S. Figure Skating;
- b) An employee of U.S. Figure Skating;
- c) Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating;
- d) Authorized, approved, or appointed by U.S. Figure Skating to have regular contact with Minor Athletes; and/or
- e) Identified by U.S. Figure Skating as being within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

PROGRAM

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A U.S. Figure Skating initiative or skating activity organized for the purpose of education, participation, recreation, or competition. A Member Club is not a Program.

RESPONDENT

A Participant who is alleged to have violated a provision of this Handbook or of the Code.

PART 3: THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the “Center”) is an independent nonprofit organization committed to ending all forms of abuse in sport. The U.S. Congress and the U.S. Olympic Committee have granted exclusive authority to the Center to respond to reports of sexual misconduct within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements. The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (S.534) designates the Center to serve as the independent national safe sport organization, with the responsibility for developing policies and procedures to prevent the emotional, physical and sexual abuse of amateur Athletes. The Center has exclusive authority over reports of sexual misconduct or conduct related to the underlying sexual misconduct, within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements. The Center’s website is www.safesport.org

The Center is located in Denver, Colorado and opened in March 2017. The Center’s Response and Resolution Office will investigate and resolve alleged policy violations of the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement’s National Governing Bodies, including U.S. Figure Skating, when the allegation identified is sexual abuse or misconduct. The U.S. Center for SafeSport has discretionary jurisdiction for all other types of SafeSport violations. For a link to the Center’s SafeSport Code, [click here](#). The U.S. Center for SafeSport also administers SafeSport Online Training available to National Governing Bodies.

II. ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICIES

U.S. Figure Skating established the following Athlete Protection Policies to help prevent sexual, emotional and physical misconduct of an Athlete or Participant at U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities. U.S. Figure Skating requires each Member Club and organizers of U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities to implement, monitor and report violations of the policies contained within this Handbook.

PART 1: TWO-DEEP LEADERSHIP

Two-Deep Leadership is one of the cornerstones of U.S. Figure Skating's Athlete Protection Policies. Two-Deep Leadership is a mandatory policy that requires at least one other person, preferably an Adult, be present at all times with an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete when the interaction between the Adult Participant and Minor Athlete is not within a public viewing area where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another Adult (i.e., "rule of 3"). Two-Deep Leadership helps prevent emotional and physical abuse by making it difficult for an Adult to isolate a Minor Athlete and avoid detection. For example, Two-Deep Leadership requirements are met when there is a Minor Athlete and at least two Participants or when there is a Minor Athlete and one Participant and at least one other Adult. Two-Deep Leadership is a policy that is intended to limit one-on-one interactions not only to help with the protection of Minor Athletes but also to help protect Adult Participants from false or unsubstantiated accusations.

PART 2: REQUIRED POLICIES FOR LIMITING ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH MINOR ATHLETES

Federal law, notably the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, requires reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions that are not observable and interruptible between a Minor Athlete and an Adult (who is not the minor's parent or permanent legal guardian) at U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events and activities by another Adult, except under emergency circumstances.

APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

A one-on-one meeting between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant may be necessary to address an Athlete's concerns, training program or competition schedule. This policy applies to all Adult Participants. The following are appropriate one-on-one interactions:

Meetings

Any meeting with a Minor Athlete must occur when others are present (Two-Deep Leadership), except under emergency circumstances. Individual one-on-one meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed by and at a distance from which another Adult can interrupt. If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door must remain unlocked and open and there must be another Adult who is able to observe and interrupt. If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the Adult Participant must inform and request that another Adult be present and ensure the door remains unlocked. If an office has a window, blinds and/or curtains should remain open during the meeting.

An example of a meeting where it may be necessary and/or appropriate to conduct a private closed-door meeting is between a Minor Athlete and a mental health professional to discuss confidential concerns. In these types of one-on-one interactions, the mental health professional must receive written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent or permanent legal guardian and the mental health professional must inform another staff member. In no case is it permissible to conduct a meeting with a Minor Athlete with the door locked.

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Individual training sessions

Individual training sessions between Minor Athletes and a Coach (or another Adult Participant) is a major component of figure skating. The Minor Athlete's training session must occur in a location where he or she may be easily observed and at a distance from which another Adult may interrupt. On-ice training at a public ice rink is an example of a permissible individual training session because it is in a public viewing area and interactions can be easily observed and, if necessary, interrupted by another Adult.

PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

While some one-on-one interactions may be necessary (such as individual training sessions), specific examples of prohibited one-on-one interactions provide Coaches, parents, Minor Athletes, and other Participants with clear rules and expectations for athlete safety. It is important for Member Clubs to communicate this Two-Deep Leadership policy to its Members and set clear boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior to protect Minor Athletes and all Participants. Except as set forth in the policy for appropriate one-on-one interactions, Minor Athletes cannot be left unattended or unsupervised during U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities.

Adult Participants are prohibited from being alone with a Minor Athlete in any room or facility unless:

- a) There is an emergency;
- b) The Adult Participant is the Minor Athlete's parent, immediate family member or permanent legal guardian; or,
- c) There is a specific exception to this policy contained elsewhere in this Handbook.

BILLETING/COHABITATION

Billeting is defined as a Minor Athlete living with a host, without a parent or permanent legal guardian, in a location away from a Minor Athlete's home. The host must not include anyone who was an Adult Participant within 18 months of the Minor Athlete moving in with the host. All Adults living in the host household are required to have successfully completed the SafeSport Training and a U.S. Figure Skating approved background check with a green-light finding prior to a Minor Athlete living with the host. A Minor Athlete shall not live in the same physical residence with an unrelated Adult Participant under any circumstances. Although not prohibited, an Adult Athlete residing with a Coach is not recommended because of the actual and perceived power imbalance between the Adult Athlete and a Coach.

PART 3: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

All electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about skating activities. This policy applies to all Adult Participants. Electronic communication shall include email, text messages, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and all other social media platforms.

U.S. Figure Skating recommends that the content of all electronic communication with a Minor Athlete should be saved by the Adult Participant for a period of three years and be readily available to share upon request with the Minor Athlete's family or a representative of the Member Club or U.S. Figure Skating. All electronic communication between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant shall meet Two-Deep Leadership requirements by including a third party (i.e., parent, permanent legal guardian, another Participant, another Athlete, team leader, etc.). It is recommended that the communication copy/include the Minor Athlete's parent or permanent legal guardian (even when the Minor Athlete initiates the electronic communication).

FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT AND SIMILAR SOCIAL MEDIA

Adult Participants are prohibited from having Minor Athletes join a personal social media page. Member Clubs should remind Minor Athletes that this is not permitted and that the Minor Athlete should not, for example, accept or initiate a “friend” request with an Adult Participant. Adult Participants and Minor Athletes are not permitted to “private message” or “instant message” each other privately. Adult Participants are encouraged to set their social media pages to private settings to avoid Minor Athletes’ attempts to friend, follow, or access their sites. Nothing in this policy is meant to prohibit a Member Club from utilizing social media to communicate to its Members and promote its program or from Adult Participants from “following” and “privately messaging” each other.

Member Clubs are required to have a signed Name and Likeness Consent and Release Agreement by the Minor Athlete’s parent or permanent legal guardian before any distribution, posting of photos, videos, images, etc. Sharing of a Minor Athlete’s contact information on any social media site is strictly prohibited.

PARENTAL/PERMANENT LEGAL GUARDIAN REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Member Clubs, Programs and Adult Participants must comply immediately with a request from a Minor Athlete’s parent or permanent legal guardian that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication. Failure to immediately comply with such a request is a violation of this Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy.

PART 4: LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

All Member Clubs and Programs are required to publish locker room/changing area policies and post at the facility locker room door during U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events or where the Member Club is responsible for locker room monitoring.

Clubs shall include the following information in their posting:

- Procedures for supervising and monitoring locker rooms and changing areas with at least one Participant.
- A policy statement prohibiting parents/permanent legal guardians from being in the locker rooms except for when it is necessary to assist their child under 11 years of age, are of the same sex and their presence is necessary to assist their child.
- A list of prohibited conduct, including all forms of abuse and misconduct prohibited by U.S. Figure Skating.
- Specific policies regarding the use of mobile digital devices (e.g., mobile phones, tablets, etc.) and prohibiting the use of all recording and photographic devices in locker rooms and changing areas.
- Coaches are prohibited from being in the locker room with a Minor Athlete unless the Coach is the parent or permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete under 11 years of age, are of the same sex and their presence is necessary to assist their child.

Locker rooms used for warm-up and that are intended to be co-ed will be labeled as such and require that the door be open at all times and shall not be used for undressing. In the event of a medical situation or emergency, U.S. Figure Skating officials working on behalf of the event (such as doctor, physical therapist, chief referee) or emergency medical personnel will be permitted into the locker room/changing area.

The use of any recording and photographic devices inside a locker room/changing area is strictly prohibited.

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Locker rooms and changing areas at U.S. Figure Skating competitive events are for Athletes only, will be labeled with regard to specific use and where identified will be gender specific. An exception can be made for Athletes under 11 years of age who will be allowed one parent or permanent legal guardian of the same sex to assist their child immediately prior to and after their skating event, where parental assistance is necessary. Coaches who are not the parent or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete will not be allowed in the locker room, regardless of the age of the Athlete.

- [Click here](#) for a sample locker room posting.
- [Click here](#) for a sample locker room posting for teams.

CO-ED LOCKER ROOMS

If the club activity or event consists of both female and male Athletes, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate locker room and changing arrangements made. Where possible, Member Clubs and Programs should have female and male Athletes dress/undress in separate locker rooms. If separate locker rooms are not available, the Athletes will take turns using the locker room to change or use the appropriate restroom within the facility.

PART 5: SAFESPORT TRAVEL POLICY

The purpose of U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Travel Policy is to provide guidance, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of Misconduct. All travel must strictly adhere to Two-Deep Leadership requirements.

LOCAL TRAVEL

Local travel occurs when a parent or permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete is responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the parent or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete to ensure the person transporting the Minor Athlete maintains all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicle, and compliance with all laws and the U.S. Center for SafeSport required policies.

In an effort to limit one-on-one interactions, Adult Participants shall not drive alone with a Minor Athlete unless the Adult Participant is an immediate family member or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete. Two-Deep Leadership must be adhered to at all times for local travel.

INDIVIDUAL OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

The nature of figure skating and its competition structure means that individual Minor Athletes may sometimes need to travel overnight without other Athletes. Under circumstances when a parent or permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete is responsible for making all travel arrangements, U.S. Figure Skating encourages limiting one-on-one time between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete by: 1) meeting Two-Deep Leadership Requirements by traveling with an additional Participant, such as a Chaperone or at least one other Minor Athlete; and, 2) inviting parents or permanent legal guardians to travel with their Minor Athlete.

Under circumstances where U.S. Figure Skating is responsible for making all travel arrangements for a Minor Athlete's overnight travel, U.S. Figure Skating will follow the organization's Travel and Expense Policy as well as this SafeSport Travel Policy and follow Two-Deep Leadership Requirements.

- [Click here](#) to read the U.S. Figure Skating's Travel and Expense Policy in its entirety.

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An Adult Participant is prohibited from sharing a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a Minor Athlete (unless the Adult Participant is the parent or permanent legal guardian, or sibling of that particular Minor Athlete or under the conditions of a Chaperone as defined under “Chaperone Responsibilities”). If rooms are connected, such as a hotel room with adjoining rooms, a lock must be in place from both rooms.

TEAM OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

U.S. Figure Skating requires a Member Club to make efforts to provide adequate supervision through participation of Adult Participants. For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance and Two-Deep Leadership requirements will be met at all times. Minor Athletes 13 years and older may share rooms, with two to four Minor Athletes assigned per room, depending on accommodations. Minor Athletes will share a hotel room with other Minor Athletes of the same gender and a similar age. It is recommended that meetings between Minor Athletes and Adult Participants do not occur in hotel rooms (but may occur in hotel lobbies or other meeting rooms). If an Adult Participant will be transporting Athletes, that Adult Participant shall abide by Two-Deep Leadership requirements, have a valid driver’s license, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicle and shall comply with all state laws and the policies set forth in this Handbook.

TEAM LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

A Team Leader is a U.S. Figure Skating-appointed Adult accompanying Team USA to an international competition. Among other responsibilities, Team Leaders ensure strict adherence to the policies contained in this Handbook. Specifically, Team Leaders are required to:

- Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel;
- Monitor adherence by Minor Athletes and other Participants to policies contained in this Handbook;
- Encourage Minor Athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communication with their parents or permanent legal guardians;
- Monitor Athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary;
- Ensure Athletes comply with hotel room assignments based on gender and age requirements;
- Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of Minor Athletes or be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Ensure that a Minor Athlete is not alone in a hotel room with any Adult who is not a family member or permanent legal guardian; and,
- Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations as set forth in this Handbook.

Chaperone Responsibilities

For Member Club or Program team travel, U.S. Figure Skating recommends that Minor Athletes 12 years of age or younger travel with a parent or permanent legal guardian. The Member Club or Program may appoint a Chaperone in the event a parent or permanent legal guardian is unable to travel and the parent or permanent legal guardian provides written consent to the use of a Chaperone. The Chaperone must successfully complete the SafeSport Training and pass the U.S. Figure Skating-approved background check with a green-light finding prior to travel.

Chaperones may share a hotel room with other Minor Athletes so long as:

- a) The Chaperone is the parent or permanent legal guardian of at least one of the Minor Athletes sharing the room.
- b) The Chaperone is the same gender as the other Minor Athletes in the room;
- c) There are no less than two and no more than three Minor Athletes, and;
- d) The hotel room has two or more beds.

PART 6: MEDICAL EVALUATIONS AND TREATMENTS

There are generally two types of medical professionals at a rink during U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events:

- Emergency Medical Staff, such as EMTs or other professionals contracted by the host club, may be rink-side during the event in case of an immediate medical emergency. These individuals will be stationed in public area that is observable where any activity between the EMT and the Athletes may be interrupted by another Adult in a timely manner. As such, these individuals do not have frequent or repeated access to Athletes and are not required to meet the SafeSport compliance requirements contained in this Handbook.
- Licensed Medical Professionals (MDs, DOs, PAs, ATCs, PTs and LMTs) available for injury and illness evaluation/treatment will be stationed in a “medical room” at the rink during an event, competition, training camp, etc. These individuals are available for Athletes to seek out regarding injuries and illness that are not an immediate health emergency and shall observe the guidelines provided below.

An individual evaluation or treatment may be necessary to address an Athlete’s physical injury or illness at an event or competition. Under these circumstances, Licensed Medical Professionals shall observe the following guidelines:

- All Licensed Medical Professionals must be SafeSport compliant pursuant to this Handbook (which includes passing a background check and completing SafeSport training) prior to having any contact with Athletes.
- Any individual evaluation or treatment performed by a Licensed Medical Professional shall meet Two-Deep Leadership requirements.
- Two-Deep Leadership requirements are met when there is either a third-party present or the evaluation/treatment takes place in a publicly visible open area that is observable and interruptible by another nearby Adult.
- Medical emergencies are exempted from the Two-Deep Leadership requirement.

There are times when it is appropriate for a Minor Athlete to receive a massage, manual therapy, icing, or other therapy from a Licensed Medical Professional.

- When possible and without compromising the Minor Athlete’s privacy, any massage, manual therapy, icing, or other therapy performed on a Minor Athlete shall be conducted in a public area where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another Adult and meet the requirements of Two-Deep Leadership where a more private location is necessary.
- Any massage or manual therapy must be provided by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional.
- Any massage, manual therapy, icing or other therapy should never involve touching of a Minor Athlete’s intimate areas.
- Even if a Coach is a licensed massage therapist, the Coach shall not perform a massage or manual therapy on a Minor Athlete.
- If traveling with their Minor Athlete, the parent or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete is encouraged to attend evaluations and treatments.

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III. SAFESPORT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

PART 1: U.S. FIGURE SKATING SAFESPORT PROGRAM COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

U.S. Figure Skating requires Covered Individuals to have successfully completed the SafeSport Training and a U.S. Figure Skating-approved background check with a green-light finding prior to participating in and/or preparing for U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events and activities. The Members Only landing page accessed through www.usfigureskating.org is the Covered Individuals portal to completing both the background check and the SafeSport Training requirements.

- Log into “Members Only” account and click on the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport logo to submit for a background check and complete the SafeSport Training Course.

As of May 14, 2019, the following chart outlines those required to complete SafeSport Training and Background Checks.

[Click here](#) for the most current chart.

COVERED INDIVIDUALS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE SAFESPORT TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECK (Must be 18 years or older as of July 1, 2019)		
ASSOCIATED WITH ACTIVITIES OVERSEEN BY U.S. FIGURE SKATING*	ASSOCIATED WITH ACTIVITIES OVERSEEN BY MEMBER CLUBS**	COACHES AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONALS***
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Figure Skating staff. • U.S. Figure Skating-hired independent contractors and/or vendors who have regular contact with Athletes. • U.S. Figure Skating Board Members. • U.S. Figure Skating Committee Chairs. • U.S. Figure Skating Officials. • Adult Participants appointed to travel with Team USA: ○ Faculty, staff, chaperones and lead volunteers for U.S. Figure Skating training camps. ○ Volunteer medical staff supporting U.S. Figure Skating national or international events. ○ S.T.A.R.S. anchors. <p><i>*U.S. Figure Skating responsible for cost of background checks</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All volunteers in any sanctioned events or club activities who have regular contact with Athletes. • Team Managers / Team Service personnel for synchronized skating and theatre on ice teams. • Locker room volunteers for all competitions, ice shows, club events, programs, etc. • Club SafeSport Compliance Chairs. <p><i>**U.S. Figure Skating is responsible for the cost of background checks for one SafeSport Compliance Chair per club. The club/individual is responsible for the cost of all others in this category.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All coaches who are U.S. Figure Skating Members. • Adult partners assisting in pair or dance tests with Minor Athletes. • All registered Learn to Skate USA instructors, coaches and directors. • Any professional service provider (i.e., sport psychologist, nutritionist, choreographer, etc.) wishing to obtain a credential for a U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned event. • Adult Athletes who are Covered Individuals. <p><i>***Those listed in this column are responsible for cost of background checks.</i></p>

PART 2: COVERED INDIVIDUAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

All Covered Individuals must successfully complete a background check and the SafeSport Core Training Course before having any contact with Minor Athletes. Any Covered Individual who does not have contact with a Minor Athlete must successfully complete a background check and the SafeSport Core Training Course no later than 45 days from beginning their new role as a Covered Individual.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks are performed on behalf of U.S. Figure Skating by the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI). NCSI is a third-party that specializes in providing background checks for Adults participating in youth sports. NCSI is responsible for interpreting results and reporting to U.S. Figure Skating. All personal identifying information for an applicant is provided directly to NCSI, therefore NCSI is responsible for complying with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained in the background search process.

- o [Click here](#) for more information on NCSI and the background check process.

NCSI will issue results to the applicant and U. S. Figure Skating based on a “red-light/green-light” system. A green-light finding means an individual meets the criteria established by NCSI. A red-light finding means that an individual did not meet the criteria established by NCSI and will not be allowed to assume a role as a Covered Individual or participate in U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities. If questions arise concerning a background search, the applicant will be contacted by NCSI and provided the opportunity to correct potential errors in the applicant’s record or provide additional information prior to issuing a red-light. If an individual receives a red-light determination from NCSI, the individual will have an opportunity to appeal the finding directly with U.S. Figure Skating or its designee. In such situations, the individual should contact Staff Counsel at U.S. Figure Skating for more information regarding the red-light appeals process.

Background checks for Covered Individuals will be required annually on or before the beginning of the U.S. Figure Skating membership year (July 1). Background checks typically take between 5-10 business days to receive a response from NCSI. In some instances, applicants receive a request for additional information. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants allow at least two weeks for completion of the background check prior to having contact with any Minor Athletes.

SAFESPORT TRAINING

The SafeSport Core Training Course is provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Once a Covered Individual completes the SafeSport Core Training Course, completion of the Center’s refresher course will be required by July 1, 2020, and annually thereafter.

VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

U.S. Figure Skating tracks the SafeSport compliance of Covered Individuals through an automated database that is updated daily. It is the responsibility of Member Clubs to verify that all Covered Individuals have met compliance requirements prior to participating in a sanctioned event (e.g., test sessions, competitions, ice shows, etc.). For non-qualifying events, the Chief Referee and LOC Chair are responsible for compliance verification.

- o [Click here](#) for information on compliance verification.

IV. TYPES OF MISCONDUCT

U.S. FIGURE SKATING CODE OF CONDUCT

U.S. Figure Skating will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment (including sexual harassment), misconduct, (including sexual, physical and emotional misconduct), bullying or hazing of any of its members including Coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, Athletes and volunteers — or any other persons — while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating (GR 1.03, Rulebook).

- [Click here](#) to read U.S. Figure Skating's Code of Conduct in its entirety.

In addition, it is a SafeSport violation for a Participant to violate any provision of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Code or Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) or other proactive policies adopted by the USOC.

- [Click here](#) for the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code.
- [Click here](#) for the most recent version of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's MAAPP.

In the event of a discrepancy between any definition of the misconduct addressed below and the Center's Code or MAAPP, the Center's Code or MAAPP definition shall take precedent.

There are six types of misconduct addressed in the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program:

- Sexual misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Emotional misconduct
- Bullying, threats and harassment
- Hazing
- Willful Toleration

PART 1: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is non-consensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an Athlete of any age and a Participant with evaluative, direct or indirect authority (called an "imbalance of power"). Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Touching offenses

- Unwanted touching by a Participant of the breasts, buttocks or genitalia of another Participant.
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team selection, scores, feedback, free lessons/ice time, etc.) for sexual acts.
- Sexual relations or intimacies between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete (and in some cases between an Adult Participant and an Adult Athlete, except in the event of a pre-existing relationship between spouses or life partners).

Non-touching offenses

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an Athlete or Participant, or other sexually harassing behavior.
- An Adult Participant discussing his or her sex life with a Minor Athlete or another Participant.
- An Adult Participant asking a Minor Athlete or another Participant about his or her sex life.
- An Adult Participant requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress image to a Minor Athlete or another Participant.
- Exposing Minor Athletes or other Participants to pornographic material.
- Sending Minor Athletes or other Participants sexually-explicit or suggestive digital or written messages or images (i.e., “sexting”).
- Deliberately exposing a Minor Athlete or other Participants to sexual acts.
- Deliberately exposing a Minor Athlete or other Participant to nudity.
- Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature.

Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an Adult. All sexual interaction between an Adult and a Minor is strictly prohibited. Sexual contact between two Minors can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, size or development.

GROOMING

Abusers may try to control their victims through a systematic process called grooming. An abuser grooms a victim by pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable and the abuser forms connections with their victims (and often the victim’s family). Since interactions between an abuser and a Child can occur in sport settings around other people, Participants are well positioned to observe and report grooming behavior.

Six Steps of Grooming

1. Targeting the victim: An abuser will identify a Child and determine his or her vulnerabilities.
2. Gaining trust: Through watching and gathering information about the Child, an abuser will become acquainted with his or her needs.
3. Filling a need: Abusers will often provide lavish gifts, extra attention and affection to forge a bond with their victims.
4. Isolating the Child: By developing a special relationship with the Child, an abuser creates situations in which he or she is alone with the Child.
5. Sexualizing the relationship: An abuser will desensitize a Child by talking to, taking photos of and even creating situations in which both the abuser and victim are touching or naked. The abuser then uses a Child’s curiosity and feelings of stimulation to engage in sexual activity.
6. Maintaining control: To ensure the Child’s continued participation and silence, abusers use secrecy and blame as well as other tactics. Victims sometimes continue the relationship out of fear or shame at the thought of having to tell someone about the abuse.

All questions or concerns related to suspicious or suspected grooming behavior shall be immediately reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport at safesport.org or call 720.531.0340.

PART 2: PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

Physical misconduct is physical contact with a Minor Athlete or Participant that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the Minor Athlete or Participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical misconduct may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit a Minor Athlete or Participant with objects or sports equipment. Physical misconduct includes providing alcohol to a Minor Athlete or Participant under the age of 21 and providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to an Athlete or Participant.

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving Athlete performance.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

Contact offenses:

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping a Minor Athlete or Participant.
- Intentionally hitting a Minor Athlete or Participant with objects or sporting equipment.
- Providing alcohol to a Minor Athlete or Participant under age 21.
- Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any Minor Athlete or Participant.

Non-contact offenses:

- Isolating a Minor Athlete or Participant in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space).
- Forcing a Minor Athlete or Participant to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose.
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.
- Encouraging or permitting a Minor Athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional after a serious injury (e.g., a concussion).
- Prescribed dieting or other weight-control shaming (e.g., public weigh-ins, caliper tests for humiliation purposes, encouraging disordered eating behaviors, or failure to act or intervene upon discovery of an eating disorder).

Physical contact in sport is inherent in instruction and training. Appropriate physical contact has two elements:

- The physical contact takes place in a public area where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another Adult. There is no potential for physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact.
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the Minor Athlete or Participant, not to meet an emotional or other need of an Adult Participant.

PART 3: EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT

Emotional misconduct involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a Minor Athlete or Participant. These behaviors may include verbal acts, physical acts or acts that deny attention or support. Emotional Misconduct is typically perpetuated by a person in a position of authority over a Minor Athlete.

EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT

- Verbal acts: A pattern of verbal behaviors that attack a Minor Athlete or Participant personally (e.g., calling them “worthless,” “fat” or “disgusting”); repeatedly and excessively yelling at a Minor Athlete or Participant in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- Physical acts: A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of a Minor Athlete or Participant; punching walls, windows or other objects with the purpose of intimidating the Minor Athlete or Participant.
- Acts that deny attention and support: A pattern of ignoring a Minor Athlete or Participant for extended periods of time or routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Minor Athlete or Participant from practice.

Note: A single incident, such as a verbal outburst, may be inappropriate, but does not constitute emotional misconduct, which requires a pattern of harmful behaviors over time.

PART 4: BULLYING, THREATS AND HARASSMENT

Bullying and threats can be written, verbal, physical or digitally transmitted expressions. Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person emotionally, physically or sexually. A threat is any intent to physically injure or harm someone.

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

- Verbal acts: Teasing, ridiculing, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.
- Physical acts: Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting or slapping; throwing objects such as sporting equipment at another Participant.
- Cyberbullying: Using digital communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, humiliate or socially exclude someone.

Bullying behavior is different from mean or rude behavior in the following ways:

- Mean is defined as purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone very infrequently.
- Rude is defined as intentionally saying or doing something that hurts someone else, infrequently.
- Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive and persistent behavior repeated over time.

The main distinction between “rude” and “mean” behavior has to do with intention. While rudeness is often unintentional, mean behavior very much aims to hurt or degrade someone. Mean and rude behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying shall be addressed at the club and or/local level, as they are not violations of the SafeSport policy.

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HARASSMENT

Harassment in sport includes any pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual Athlete or Participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability. It also can be the creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive.

Examples of harassment:

- Name-calling
- Taunts
- Threats
- Belittling

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment is a form of harassment prohibited by this policy. It shall be a violation for any Athlete or Participant to harass another Athlete or another Participant through conduct or communications of a sexual nature or to retaliate against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

If the U.S. Center for SafeSport does not exercise jurisdiction, U.S. Figure Skating will act in accordance with its rules and appropriate corrective action shall be taken. Corrective action includes taking all reasonable steps to end the harassment, to prevent harassment from recurring and to prevent retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment, even if the harasser and the Athlete or Participant being harassed are the same sex or gender and whether or not the Athlete or Participant resists or submits to the harasser, when:

- a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an Athlete or Participant's participation in any activity; or
- b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an Athlete or Participant is used as the basis for decisions affecting the Athlete or Participant; or
- c) Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive such that it limits an Athlete's or Participant's ability to participate in or benefit from a program or activity or it creates a hostile or abusive environment.

Any conduct of a sexual nature directed by one Athlete or Participant toward another Athlete or Participant is presumed to be unwelcome and shall constitute sexual harassment. Acts of verbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex or gender, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature, may also constitute sexual harassment. Legitimate non-sexual touching or other non-sexual conduct is not sexual harassment.

An Athlete, parent or permanent legal guardian of an Athlete or Participant who engages in any act of harassing or sexually harassing behavior is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, removal from the venue, suspension, permanent ban or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the harassing or sexually harassing behavior and/or result caused by such behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

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PART 5: HAZING

Hazing includes any conduct that is intimidating, humiliating, offensive or physically harmful that is typically an activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

Examples of hazing:

- Requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Tying, taping, or physically restraining an Athlete or Participant.
- Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature.
- Sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food.
- Social actions or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule.
- Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.

PART 6: WILLFUL TOLERATION

It is a violation of these SafeSport policies to willfully tolerate any misconduct where an Athlete or Participant observes or otherwise knows of misconduct but takes no action to report it on behalf of the affected Athlete or Participant.

V. REPORTING SAFESPORT CONCERNS

PART 1: MANDATORY REPORTING

All individuals, regardless of membership with U.S. Figure Skating, are encouraged to report suspected SafeSport violations to U.S. Figure Skating. Participants are required to report suspected child abuse and/or sexual misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport (or to U.S. Figure Skating) and local law enforcement. There are no fees for filing a SafeSport report with the U.S. Center for SafeSport or U.S. Figure Skating.

PART 2: REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The U.S. Center for SafeSport handles all reports of sexual misconduct. Make a report to the Center if you have suspicions or have heard allegations of sexual misconduct, such as child sex abuse, non-consensual sexual conduct, sexual harassment or intimate relationships involving an imbalance of power (i.e., an inappropriate relationship between a Coach and an Athlete, regardless of age).

- [Click here](#) (or go to safesport.org) to make an online report involving sexual abuse and misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- You may also call the U.S. Center for SafeSport at: 720.531.0340.

Reports to the U.S. Center for SafeSport may be made anonymously.

PART 3: REPORTING OTHER SAFESPORT VIOLATIONS

All questions or concerns regarding possible SafeSport violations other than sexual misconduct, such as failure to comply with the policies set forth in this Handbook and other misconduct such as emotional or physical misconduct, bullying, hazing or harassment should be made directly to U.S. Figure Skating.

- [Click here](#) or (go to USFigureSkating.org/SafeSport) to make an online report that does not involve sexual misconduct or abuse.
- You may also call U.S. Figure Skating at 719.635.5200.

Reports to U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Committee may also be made anonymously. U.S. Figure Skating will use reasonable efforts to maintain anonymity but cannot guarantee that a report will remain anonymous. Anonymous reporting may make it more challenging for U.S. Figure Skating to investigate or properly address misconduct or abuse, but U.S. Figure Skating recognizes that it may be difficult for a Claimant to report an allegation otherwise. U.S. Figure Skating strives to remove barriers to reporting.

SafeSport reports not under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport will be addressed pursuant to U.S. Figure Skating Ethics Committee Rules (ECR) 4.0 – 4.13. SafeSport reports will first be reviewed by the SafeSport Committee Chair. The SafeSport Committee Chair will determine if a Letter of Concern is appropriate. A Letter of Concern will identify the alleged infraction and will be confidentially sent to the Respondent. The Respondent will have an opportunity to file a written response addressed to the SafeSport Chair.

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If the SafeSport Chair determines that the report includes allegations of ethical violations, then the matter will be referred to the Ethics Committee Chair for a determination as to whether disciplinary proceedings should be initiated pursuant to ECR 4.08 – 4.10. A Respondent may appeal an Ethics Committee finding by filing a grievance pursuant to U.S. Figure Skating Grievance Committee Rule (GCR) 3.0 – 9.0. No filing fee will be charged for the appeal. The Ethics Chair has the option of filing a grievance against the Respondent pursuant to GCR 3.0 – 9.0 if the Chair determines that the allegations are severe enough to warrant a suspension or ban.

PART 4: BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS

A report of abuse, misconduct or a policy violation that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad-faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil and/or criminal proceedings.

PART 5: WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Regardless of whether the allegation(s) is proven, U.S. Figure Skating will support the Claimant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. U.S. Figure Skating will not allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish or in any way harm any individual(s) who report a concern in good faith. And such retaliatory actions against a Claimant may be grounds for disciplinary action.

VI. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

PART 1: MEMBER CLUBS AND PROGRAMS

- Shall adopt, monitor and enforce compliance of all U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport policies.
- Shall adopt, monitor and enforce compliance of the SafeSport policies requiring all designated Covered Individuals to have successfully completed the required background checks and SafeSport Training prior to such persons having access to Athletes or Participants.
- Shall promptly address any reports of abuse or possible misconduct and make certain that all such reports are completed as required under U.S. Figure Skating policies, the SafeSport Program, applicable U.S. Figure Skating rules and/or applicable law.
- Shall conduct reviews and evaluation of their Program to monitor and promote compliance with the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport policies.
- Shall designate a club member, preferably a board member, to hold the title of SafeSport Compliance Chair. In the absence of such designation, the SafeSport Compliance Chair shall be the club President. The SafeSport Compliance Chair must be a member of U.S. Figure Skating and must be fully compliant with SafeSport compliance requirements. (See job description below).
- Should have at least three Members within the club who have completed the SafeSport Training Course.

PART 2: CLUB SAFESPORT COMPLIANCE CHAIR

The Club SafeSport Compliance Chair is responsible for the implementation and coordination of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program within their local club. The SafeSport Compliance Chair will serve as the liaison for the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program and work within their local club to facilitate implementation of all aspects of the SafeSport Program.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

The Club SafeSport Compliance Chair must be a current member of U.S. Figure Skating in good standing, a home club member and preferably a board member of the respective club.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The SafeSport Compliance Chair will:

1. Complete all required SafeSport Training and the background check with a green-light outcome.
2. Serve as the Club's primary SafeSport contact for U.S. Figure Skating and oversee the implementation of SafeSport educational programs for all Club Members, their parents or permanent legal guardians and Coaches.
3. Oversee the drafting and implementation of club policies based upon the recommendations of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program.
4. Verify all Coaches participating in all Club and U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities are SafeSport compliant per U.S. Figure Skating rules and policies.

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5. Understand the complaint reporting process and refer all reports of a possible violation of SafeSport Policies directly to U.S. Figure Skating or the U.S. Center for SafeSport, as appropriate.
6. Participate in workshops/webinars as provided by U.S. Figure Skating, collect and share information about the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program and disseminate information on best practices to Club members.
7. Work as a liaison with U.S. Figure Skating's Chair of the SafeSport Committee, the Chair of the Ethics Committee and the Chair of the Grievance Committee.
8. Perform other functions as necessary in the fulfillment of U.S. Figure Skating's continuing efforts to foster a safe, healthy and positive environment for its Members and Athletes or Participants.