



# ATHLETE SAFETY POLICY FOR YOUTH SPORTS

This Athlete Safety Policy is available to MinistrySafe and Abuse Prevention Systems members at [www.MinistrySafe.com](http://www.MinistrySafe.com) or [www.AbusePreventionSystems.com](http://www.AbusePreventionSystems.com).

To access policy forms, click the 'Resources' link from your MinistrySafe or Abuse Prevention Systems Control Panel.

**This sample form contains color-coded prompts and instructions to allow Program Administrators to tailor this form for specific application.** Because there is no 'one size fits all' policy form, the authors have attempted to provide guidance on as many matters as possible. It is expected that Program Administrators **will modify these policy documents** to fit the programs, positions, facilities and other factors that make each youth sports program unique.

Red type is instructional and should be removed from a final draft of your policy document.

Yellow highlights relate to positions or titles assigned to persons with supervisory responsibility (i.e. Head Coach or Administrator). Modify this document to include the correct title associated with the responsibility described for YOUR program. Remove the highlights from your final policy document.

Blue highlights relate to specific state reporting requirements. The reporting requirement for the state of Texas is listed in this form. Remove the highlights from your final policy document.

Green type relates to state reporting requirements and policy language options depending on specific state law requirements.

**Athletics Volunteer:**

Welcome to MyProgram!

At MyProgram, we take our responsibility to keep young athletes safe very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which athletes may receive the benefits unique to sports participation, preparation and competition.

The policy statements and guidelines in the Athlete Safety Policy are intended to facilitate the mission of MyProgram and the creation of a safe environment for athletes, coaches and volunteers. The following policies have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this Athlete Safety Policy, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

***MyProgram***

# MyProgram

## Athlete Safety Policy

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## Zero Tolerance for Abuse

### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

MyProgram has **zero tolerance for abuse** in all MyProgram youth sports activities. It is the responsibility of every coach and volunteer at MyProgram to act in the best interest of athletes.

### **Overview of the MyProgram Safety System**

Because we care for athletes and desire to protect them, MyProgram requires all coaches and volunteers to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** *before interaction with athletes*.

#### **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

MyProgram requires that all coaches and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Coaches and volunteers are required to report any policy violation to his or her direct supervisor, administrator or a member of the MyProgram Safety Committee. All such reports received by supervisors or administrators are to be subsequently reported to the MyProgram Safety Committee.

Coaches and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' an athlete for sexual abuse. The 'grooming process' is used by an abuser to select an athlete, win the athlete's trust (and the trust of the athlete's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the athlete into sexual activity and keep the athlete from disclosing the abuse.

To equip MyProgram faculty, coaches and coaches with information necessary to protect athletes from sexual abuse, MyProgram requires Sexual Abuse Awareness Training for all coaches, administrators and volunteers provided live or online through Abuse Prevention Systems ([www.AbusePreventionSystems.com](http://www.AbusePreventionSystems.com)) or MinistrySafe ([www.MinistrySafe.com](http://www.MinistrySafe.com)). This training will be renewed every \_\_ year(s).

\*Best practice: Require/provide training **ANNUALLY** to coaches and volunteers working or volunteering in athletic programs.

#### **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Coaches and volunteers are required to complete the MyProgram Screening Process, which requires:

- A completed Application (including signed authorization for criminal background check);
- A completed Safety Application;
- A face-to-face interview;
- References provided by the applicant.

\* Additional steps may be required, based on applicant's level of responsibility and access to athlete.

(Example: An Athletic Director requires a deeper 'screen' than a volunteer whose access to athletes is structured and limited.)



\*Best Practice: screen all volunteers (Safety Application, signed authorization for criminal background check, interview and references).

### **STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures**

Coaches and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this document and sign the last page indicating he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

### **STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check**

MyProgram requires that all coaches and volunteers undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

\*This policy segment is intended to clearly communicate to an *inappropriate applicant* that protective barriers are in place at MyProgram, providing an 'opt-out opportunity' for would-be abusers.

In addition, this segment describes reporting and training requirements meant to equip coaches and volunteers to recognize abuser characteristics and behaviors, and report.

## **Other Training and Education**

In addition to Sexual Abuse Awareness Training, coaches and volunteers participating in MyProgram athletics programs will receive periodic training relating to other forms of misconduct, including:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct, and
- Sexual misconduct.

## **Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse**

### **REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

Given MyProgram's **zero tolerance for abuse**, MyProgram encourages a culture of communication regarding matters that place athletes at risk.

MyProgram is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for athletes. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the MyProgram Safety Committee Chair, and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

MyProgram supports and encourages a culture of communication related to abuse or suspected abuse of athletes. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between athletes, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to a coach, supervisor or a member of the MyProgram Safety Committee.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' athletes for abuse, it is possible a coach or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Coaches and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the MyProgram Safety Committee.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

MyProgram coaches and volunteers who supervise other leaders are charged with the diligent enforcement of all MyProgram policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal from MyProgram activities. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the MyProgram Safety Committee.

These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within a youth sports organization.

### **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

In order to maintain a safe environment for athletes, MyProgram coaches and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse or should be directed to a coach or a member of the MyProgram Safety Committee.

These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within the youth sports organization.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by MyProgram to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all MyProgram activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act may be prohibited from future participation as a coach or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves athletes at MyProgram.

Failure to report a prohibited act to supervisory personnel as designated in this policy is a violation of this policy and grounds for dismissal. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any MyProgram activities.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

**MyProgram does not investigate suspicions or allegations of physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

Coaches and volunteers at MyProgram are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior to a supervisor or a member of the MyProgram Safety Committee.

These positions or titles may vary depending on the structure of reporting relationships within the youth sports organization.

**(Relevant state)** law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **Optional Policy Language depending on state law or desired practice:**

State laws vary concerning mandatory reporters and mandatory reporting requirements. Teachers and nurses, for example, are usually listed as mandatory reporters. Further, state laws are changing reporting requirements – usually expanding the list of mandatory reporters and shortening the 'reasonable' time periods for a report. In 2013, the state of Texas modified Chapter 261.101(b) of the Texas Family Code (reporting statute) such that 'professionals' (teachers, nurses, doctors, day care employees, more) must personally make a report to the appropriate authorities ... "a professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report".

The reporting process should be clearly outlined in the policy AND comply with relevant state law. Administrators should periodically check state reporting requirements for modification of reporting requirements.

### **Option 1.**

A staff member or volunteer *may* report to an immediate supervisor, Head Coach or Athletic Director, and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies. [does not comply with Texas Family Code 261.101(b)] In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate [state] authorities.

### **Option 2.**

A staff member or volunteer must report to the appropriate [state] authorities. After having done so, the staff member or volunteer must notify an immediate supervisor, Head Coach or Athletic Director. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate [state] authorities.

### **Option 3.**

A staff member or volunteer will immediately notify an immediate supervisor, Head Coach or Athletic Director. Together with the immediate supervisor, Head Coach or Athletic Director, the staff member or volunteer will make a report to the appropriate [state] authorities. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate [state] authorities.

Coaches and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a coach or volunteer, a member of the MyProgram Safety Committee will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. These positions and titles may vary depending on the structure or reporting relationships within the youth sports organization. State reporting requirements vary state by state, with most including the language above. Research your state's law for specific reporting requirements for your sports organization.

## **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

The MyProgram Safety Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of MyProgram when a report of abuse occurs.

Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously, and will be reported in accordance with this policy to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If appropriate, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400), or Child Protective Services (817-321-8680) will be notified.

\*This policy provision may be modified depending on other policies and state reporting requirements. State reporting requirements vary state by state, with most including an aggressive reporting requirement meant to encourage reports of suspicions of abuse. Research your state law for specific reporting requirements. Specific *internal* reporting requirements should be clearly outlined and communicated to coaches and volunteers, and referenced here.

## **Prohibited Substances and Activities**

### **INTOXICANTS**

Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while participating in MyProgram athletic events. Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to athletes.

### **TOBACCO**

MyProgram is a tobacco-free program. MyProgram requires coaches and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products while in the presence of athletes or their parents. MyProgram coaches and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to athletes.

### **NUDITY**

Coaches and volunteers at MyProgram should never be nude in the presence of athletes in their program.

### **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with athletes. Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any athlete. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging, Facebook, and online chat rooms or other social media.

### **POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

MyProgram coaches and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, videos, etc.) while in the presence of athletes.

## **Physical Contact with Athletes**

Appropriate physical contact between athletes and coaches or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct in athletics – as well as false allegations of abuse.

### **APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT**

MyProgram adheres to the following principles and guidelines in regarding physical contact with athletes:

#### **Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact**

Physical contact with athletes – for safety, consolation and celebration – has multiple criteria that make it both safe and appropriate. These include:

1. The physical contact takes place in public;
2. There is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact;
3. The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

#### **Safety**

The safety of our athletes is paramount, and in many instances we make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

1. Spotting an athlete so that he or she will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment;
2. Positioning an athlete's body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill, gets a better sense of where his or her body is in space, or improves balance and coordination;
3. Making athletes aware that he or she may be in harm's way due to other practicing athletes, or equipment use;
4. Releasing muscle cramps.

Sports are physical by definition. We recognize participants often express a joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

1. Greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs;
2. Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, "jump-arounds" and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

#### **Consolation**

It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes, publicly:

1. Embracing a crying athlete – in a public place or circumstance;
2. Putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down ("side hugs");
3. Lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and "dusting them off" to encourage them to continue competition.



## PROHIBITED PHYSICAL CONTACT

Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately under MyProgram's Reporting Policy include, without limitation:

1. Asking or having an athlete sit in the lap of a coach or volunteer;
2. Lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact;
3. Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete;
4. "Cuddling" or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay;
5. Playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., butt-pats, tickling or "horseplay" wrestling);
6. Continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not;
7. Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

The above physical contact is prohibited between adult and athlete AND athlete and athlete. Coaches and volunteers must model the behavior expected from athletes.

## VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy must be reported to a supervisor, MyProgram administrator, the Athletic Director or member of the Participant Safety Committee. Violations will be addressed under MyProgram's Disciplinary Rules and Procedure. Some forms of physical contact may constitute physical or sexual abuse that **must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

## Misconduct

### **BULLYING**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at MyProgram and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. MyProgram is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any athlete who is aware of bullying behavior is expected to tell a coach or volunteer of the MyProgram Director.

Objectives of the MyProgram's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To clearly communicate that MyProgram will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents a suitable understanding of those behaviors that constitute 'bullying'.
3. To make it known to athletes, coaches and volunteers that a policy and protocol exist should bullying issues arise.
4. To clearly communicate how to report bullying behavior.
5. To communicate to athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents that MyProgram takes bullying seriously, and will immediately investigate and address all reports of bullying.

### **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that

1. Are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance;
2. Offend or degrade;
3. Create a hostile environment;
4. Reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or mental or physical disability; or
5. Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Examples of harassment prohibited by MyProgram include, without limitation:

**Physical offenses.** Behaviors that include

1. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete or participant;
2. Throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects including sporting equipment.

**Non-physical offenses.** Behaviors that include

1. Making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits;
2. Displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; and
3. Withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits.



## HAZING

Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for

1. A athlete joining a group or
2. A athlete being socially accepted by a group's members; or
3. Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

Examples of hazing prohibited by MyProgram include, without limitation:

1. Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring an athlete to consume alcohol or illegal drugs;
2. Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete;
3. Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature;
4. Sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food;
5. Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule;
6. Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault; and
7. Excessive training requirements directed at a particular athlete or a group of athletes.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

## WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT

It is a violation of the Athlete Safety Policy if a coach, coach or volunteer knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s).

## REPORTING

Although these policies are designed to reduce athlete sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. MyProgram's coaches and volunteers will follow the reporting procedures set forth in MyProgram's Reporting Policy.

## PEER-TO-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE

Approximately 1/3 of all reported sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children or minors. Coaches and volunteer have an obligation to report peer-to-peer sexual abuse, in accord with state mandatory reporting requirements. Whether sexual interaction between athletes constitutes 'sexual abuse' depends on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the athletes, and whether there is an imbalance of power between the parties, including physical or intellectual disabilities. **If you have concern that an interaction between athletes may constitute sexual abuse, report the interaction to appropriate law enforcement authorities and a coach, volunteer, the MyProgram Administrator or a member of MyProgram's Participant Safety Committee immediately. All such reports received by supervisors or administrators are to be subsequently reported to the MyProgram Safety Committee.**

**Peer-to peer sexual abuse risk is highest:**

1. Any location that is less easily seen.
2. Any time athletes are unclothed or changing clothes, for any reason.

Due to this risk, coaches and volunteers will be aware of locations in MyProgram facilities, as well as practice and competition locations, where this risk is higher, including restrooms, changing areas, locker rooms and areas less easily seen or supervised. These areas will be patrolled or supervised regularly by coaches and volunteers, where possible.

## Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of inappropriate touch or talk in locker rooms and changing areas.

### **FACILITIES**

The following is a description of our practice and competition facilities to allow athletes and their families to plan their use:

We practice at: [address]

This location has: [describe locker room situation]

Sample locker room descriptions:

1. No locker room or changing facilities. Athletes will be expected to come dressed for practice and to change and shower at home.
2. A changing area that is shared with the general public. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with MyProgram in the changing area at the time of practice.
3. A changing area and locker room dedicated to our athletes and teams.

Our home competitions will be held at: [location address(es)]

The location has: [describe locker room situation]

### **MONITORING**

MyProgram has predictable and limited use of locker rooms and changing areas (e.g., immediately before and following practices and competitions). This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside of locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make athletes uncomfortable and may even place our coaches at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

We conduct a sweep of the locker rooms and changing areas before athletes arrive, post coaches directly outside of the locker rooms and changing areas during periods of use, and leave the doors open only when adequate privacy is still possible. Coaches and volunteers conduct regular sweeps inside these areas as well, with women checking on female-designated areas, and men checking on male-designated areas.

**-OR-**

MyProgram has staggered practices, with different groups arriving and departing throughout the day. It is therefore not practical to constantly monitor locker rooms and changing areas over this extended course of time. While we do not post coaches and volunteers inside or at the doors of the locker rooms and changing areas, we do make occasional sweeps of these areas. Coaches and volunteers conduct these sweeps, with women checking on female-designated areas, and men checking on male-designated areas.

Coaches and staff members 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, we will check on the athlete's whereabouts.

Given the potential discomfort of having non-coaches and non-athletes in the locker rooms and changing areas, we discourage parents from entering those areas unless it is truly necessary. Under such circumstances, only a same-sex parent should go into a locker room and changing area.

If an athlete needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear (for example, a athlete under the age of eight), or an athlete's disability warrants assistance, we ask that parents let the coach or volunteer know beforehand that he or she will be helping the athlete.

### **MIXED-GENDER TEAMS**

If a MyProgram team consists of both male and female athletes, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. Where possible, MyProgram has male and female players dress/undress in separate locker rooms and then convene in a single dressing room before the game or team meeting. Once the game is finished, the players may come to one locker room, and then male and female players proceed to their separate dressing rooms to undress and shower (separately), if available. If separate locker rooms are not available, the athletes will take turns using the locker room to change.

### **USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES**

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk of other forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. As a result, **there will be no use of a device's recording capabilities in the locker rooms or changing areas.**

The following message will be printed and posted in any area where undressing may occur (i.e. locker room, bathroom, changing area):

**The use of photo or video recording devices are  
STRICTLY PROHIBITED  
in this locker room/bathroom**

## Local and Team Travel

Travel will be a standard aspect of our competitive season and MyProgram has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of abuse and misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

We distinguish between travel to training, practice and local competition (**“local travel”**), and team travel involving a coordinated overnight stay (**“team travel”**).

### **Local Travel**

Local travel occurs when MyProgram does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. For local travel, athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances it is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) to ensure the person transporting the 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 state laws.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, MyProgram coaches and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and should drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the athlete's parent or guardian, in advance of travel. In any case where a coach and/or volunteer is involved in the athlete's local travel, a parental release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that coaches, coaches and/or volunteers are not alone with an athlete or participant, by, e.g., picking up athletes in groups.

Coaches and volunteers who are also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). We encourage guardians to pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/guardians of any minor athlete who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

### **Team Travel**

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when MyProgram sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that our teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with athletes. However, no coach or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including valid drivers' licenses, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicles and compliance with all state laws.

MyProgram makes efforts to provide adequate supervision through coaches, volunteers and other adult chaperones.

[Appropriate adult-to-athlete ratios will depend on the age of athletes and other participants. Evaluate your program to determine your supervisory needs.]

For team travel, MyProgram will book hotel accommodations and air travel in advance.

MyProgram will prioritize the choice of hotel accommodations that have rooms accessed from within the building, as opposed to street access ('hotel' vs. 'motel' access).

Athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. MyProgram will notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted. For example, MyProgram will ask hotels to block pay-per-view channels and will request an additional large room or suite such that athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms (of the coach or an athlete); MyProgram will reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize.

To ensure the propriety of athletes and to protect coaches and volunteers, there will be no male athletes in the rooms of female athletes, and no female athletes in the rooms of male athlete (unless the other athlete is a sibling of the other athlete).

When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, etc., athletes will stay in groups of no less than three persons. Athletes who are 12 years of age and under will be accompanied by an adult chaperone.

Athletes are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Athletes are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered, without the permission/knowledge of the coach, volunteer or chaperone.

We encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, we encourage all athletes to call parents and guardians regularly. MyProgram will allow unscheduled calls to the athlete by a parent/guardian.

#### **INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL [for sport involving individual competition & travel]**

It is possible that a particular competition may require individual athletes to travel overnight without other athletes (i.e. golf). Under these circumstances, *MyProgram encourages minimizing one-on-one time between a coach and athlete by:*

1. *Traveling with an additional coach or chaperon;*
2. *Inviting parents/guardians to travel with their athlete.*

[Each program should determine this policy segment in advance of travel.]

For individual travel, MyProgram will attempt to provide alternative guidelines. Depending on the nature of the travel and competition, these guidelines may include:

1. Compressing the travel schedule to reduce the number of nights athletes are away from home;
2. Providing regular organizational check-in phone calls to the traveling athlete and coach;
3. Encouraging more frequent and unscheduled check-in phone calls initiated by parents/guardians (for minor athletes);
4. Complying with reasonable parental requests when the athlete is away from home without a guardian.



When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, *the athlete must have his or her parents' or legal guardian's written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.*

[Each program should determine this policy segment in advance of travel.]

### **TRAVEL NOTIFICATION**

MyProgram will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Notice will include the dates, location and duration of competition. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays. MyProgram will designate a contact person for team travel to help with travel details and provide information to parents.

MyProgram will post specific travel itineraries when they become available. These will include a more detailed, hour-by-hour itinerary as well as contact information for team travel chaperones.

[Each program should determine this policy segment in advance of travel.]

### **MIXED-GENDER AND MIXED-AGE TRAVEL**

MyProgram is made up of male and female athlete athletes across various ages. Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same sex and age group. Athletes will also be grouped by age and sex for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone. We will make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same sex. However, we rely on parents to serve as chaperones and may be limited in providing this match.

Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).

### **COACH AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

During team travel, coaches and volunteers will help athletes, fellow coaches and volunteers adhere to policy guidelines, including, without limitation, the Travel Policy, Locker Rooms and Changing Areas Policy and Reporting Policy.

If a coach or volunteer transports an athlete in their private car for team travel, a copy of the coach's or coach's valid driver's license is required.

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches and volunteers will monitor the activities of athletes, fellow coaches and volunteers during team travel. Coaches and coaches will:

1. Prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/guardians of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14;
2. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel;
3. Conform to, and monitor for others' adherence, the Athlete Protection Policy and all other MyProgram policies during team travel;
4. Encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled

- communications with their parents/guardians;
- 5. Help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible);
- 6. Assist with team travel logistical needs (as possible);
- 7. Support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions based on age and competition schedule, as listed in travel itinerary;
- 8. Ensure athletes are complying with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age requirements;
- 9. Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel rooms with any adult apart from a family member, including coaches, volunteers and chaperones;
- 10. Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing any program or coaching duty;
- 11. Immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations;
- 12. Notify parents before taking any significant disciplinary action against a minor athlete if the athlete is traveling without his or her parents.

## **CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Chaperones accompany team travel to ensure that the athletes, coaches and volunteers adhere to MyProgram's policy guidelines, including the travel policy and all other relevant policies contained in MyProgram's Athlete Safety Policy.

If a chaperone has not undergone a criminal background check, MyProgram's screening system and sexual abuse awareness training, the chaperone will not be permitted to have any one-to-one interaction with athletes or youth participants. If a chaperone has completed sexual abuse awareness training and MyProgram's screening system (including criminal background check), he or she may have appropriate one-to-one interaction as outlined in MyProgram's Athlete Safety Policy.

If a chaperone will be operating a private car for team travel, a copy of the chaperone's valid driver's license is required.

Chaperones will monitor the activities of all coaches, volunteers and athletes during team travel. Specifically, chaperones will:

- 1. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel;
- 2. Monitor for adherences to MyProgram's policies during team travel;
- 3. Encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/guardians;
- 4. Help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible);
- 5. Assist coaches, volunteers and other chaperones with team travel logistical needs (as possible);
- 6. Monitor athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions based on age and competition schedule, as listed in travel itinerary;
- 7. Ensure athletes comply with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age requirements;
- 8. Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors, or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their chaperone duties;
- 9. Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member, including coaches, volunteers and chaperones;



10. Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations to a MyProgram administrator or a member of MyProgram's Safety Committee.

## **Electronic Communications & Social Media**

All electronic communications between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete's family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the athlete's parents or guardians.

### **FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES**

Coaches may not have athletes join a personal social media page. All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind shared among athletes or between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

### **TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA**

Coaches and athletes may "follow" each other. Coaches cannot "re-tweet" athlete message posts. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter. All posts between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### **EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

*Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. All email content between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Where possible, the athlete's parent should be copied on e-mail communications. Email communication between coaches and athletes is allowed during the hours of 7am until 9pm.*

[Each program should determine this policy segment in advance.]

### **TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes. All texts between a coach and an athlete must be a group text – the text should include another athlete, volunteer, a parent, or another coach/assistant. All texts between coach and athletes must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. All texts between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours of 7am until 9pm.

### **ELECTRONIC IMAGERY**

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be used for athlete instruction (i.e. practice and game films), team videos, program associated websites, or offered to the athletes' families seasonally on disc or other electronic form. It is the default policy of MyProgram to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the program. Imagery must not be contrary to any rules as outlined in MyProgram's Athlete Safety Policy.

### **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE**

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The parent or guardian of an athlete may request in writing that their athlete not be contacted by coaches through any electronic communication. Additionally, a parent or guardian of an athlete may request in writing that photographs or videography of their athlete not be posted on program or program associated websites, understanding that group photography or videography may render this impracticable.

### **MISCONDUCT**

Social media and electronic communication can be used inappropriately. (e.g., emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communication by coaches, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated.

Electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

1. Drugs or alcohol use;
2. Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language or sexual activity;
3. An adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
4. Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.

Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationships, family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

## **Parental Contact and Involvement**

### **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents of athletes will be contacted if their athlete becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in MyProgram athletic activities.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are encouraged to attend any and all athletic programs or activities in which their athlete is involved at MyProgram (see Athlete/Parent Policy). A parent accompanied by an athlete to any MyProgram athletic practice or activity is responsible for their athlete's safety. Parents must follow instructions given by coaches.

A parent who desires to participate in MyProgram's athletic program such that he or she will have ongoing contact with athletes other than his/her own will be required to complete MyProgram's Volunteer Application Process.

## **Athlete Safety Policy – Safety in Youth Sports**

### **Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of MyProgram's Athlete Safety Policy and understand the importance of the matters set forth within this document. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service in athletic programs at MyProgram.

I understand that the Athlete Safety Policy may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by MyProgram.

[Consider use of the following if applicant is a volunteer]

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my position description. Ideally, I will serve in this position for the full term specified in the position description. I understand that I am serving as a volunteer and that I may choose to end this service at any time. (If possible, I agree to provide two weeks' notice to the head coach or my supervisor).

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy statement in no way express or imply a contractual relationship between MyProgram and me. As I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as policy guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Athlete Safety Policy.

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Coach or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Coach or Volunteer's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[This page to remain attached to the Athletics Safety Policy]

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Coach or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Coach or Volunteer's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the MyProgram Administrator]

