



**SAFESPORT**  
PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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## **INTRODUCTION**

U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members and to protect the opportunity of its members to participate in the sport in an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. The association will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of any of its members including athletes, coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, 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.

There are many positive reasons to participate in figure skating, but like all sports, it can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct: emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing. All forms of misconduct are unacceptable and in direct conflict with U.S. Figure Skating values and ideals.

Misconduct may damage an athlete's psychological well-being. Athletes who have been mistreated experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, and loss of self-esteem, misconduct also may have a negative impact on family, friends and the sport. Misconduct often hurts an athlete's competitive performance and may cause him or her to drop out of sport entirely.

This SafeSport Handbook, originally created by the U.S. Olympic Committee, [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org), and adapted by U.S. Figure Skating, includes various guidelines that apply to all U.S. Figure Skating clubs, programs, events and activities. It further includes the available and required training of coaches and select U.S. Figure Skating volunteers, officials and staff members on recognizing and reducing circumstances for potential abuse to occur; information on U.S. Figure Skating's required screening and background check program; the availability and procedures for any person to report suspected abuse or misconduct (including protections from any retaliation or repercussions for such reporting); the procedures and means by which U.S. Figure Skating and its member clubs and programs should respond to allegations of abuse and misconduct; and how U.S. Figure Skating and its member clubs and programs will monitor and supervise this program to help ensure its effectiveness.

As described more fully within this Handbook, each U.S. Figure Skating member club shall designate a club board member to hold the title of Club SafeSport Compliance Chair beginning July 1, 2013. The specific duties of the Club SafeSport Compliance Chair will include monitoring the SafeSport policies and procedures of the club, verifying coach compliance and being the initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, compiling information, and when appropriate, reporting such information to U.S. Figure Skating. Also, each club should have at least three members who have completed the SafeSport Program training course.

Through the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program, U.S. Figure Skating is committed to providing the safest possible environment for all participants.

### **For more information:**

Online - [www.usfigureskating.org/safesport](http://www.usfigureskating.org/safesport)

Contact - [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org)

**What is SafeSport?**

SafeSport is the Olympic community's initiative to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport. The six primary types of misconduct are:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct, and
- Sexual Misconduct, including Child Sexual Abuse

**Why SafeSport?**

Sport provides athletes with an opportunity to perform – on and off the field. Unfortunately, sport can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct and abuse. For example, studies indicate that as many as 1 in 8 athletes will be sexually abused within their sport. Misconduct is a critical issue in sport, and one which we all need a game plan to prevent.

**Who is affected by SafeSport?**

We all play a role in reducing misconduct and abuse in sport. SafeSport provides resources for all members of the sport community – organizations, coaches, parents and athletes – to identify misconduct, implement ways to reduce it and enact plans to respond to it.

**What tools are available from SafeSport?**

The SafeSport tools include written materials to help the community prevent misconduct in sport. For example, this U.S. Figure Skating adapted SafeSport Handbook, provides a starting place for all member clubs and programs to develop a SafeSport strategy and includes sample guidelines, forms and documents.

The tools also include the SafeSport Training, a video-based online training for coaches, staff and volunteers that addresses the six types of misconduct and provides an in-depth look at how to recognize, reduce and respond to child sexual abuse.

As a community, we have an opportunity to be part of the SafeSport solution. Start now by visiting [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org)



To all U.S. Figure Skating Member Club and Programs,

As a leader in youth sport, you have a role to play in creating and maintaining a safe sport environment. Sport provides many important lessons, including the value of hard work and fair play, the experience of dedicating yourself to a goal and the joy of competing, to name just a few. As we all know, the impact of sport extends far beyond the field of play and can help prepare kids to be successful in any field they choose.

The United States Olympic Committee is proud to dedicate its energy and resources to promoting safe training environments. However, no one individual or club is responsible for addressing issues of misconduct in sport. It's a team effort, and that team consists of sport clubs, coaches, parents and athletes. This responsibility requires constant vigilance; misconduct in sport threatens athletes and clubs as well as the fundamental value that sport contributes to our society.

In order to help you be successful in this critical area of responsibility, the USOC has developed a SafeSport program to provide information and resources so that all members of the sport community have the awareness, tools and support structure they need to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport. Please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org) to learn more about the proactive steps you can take to ensure that sport continues to deliver on its promise to athletes and the communities that nurture them.

I thank you for your support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.A. Blackmun".

Scott A. Blackmun

Chief Executive Officer

## DEFINITIONS

### Child, children, minor and youth

Anyone under the age of 18. Here, “child,” “children,” “minor” and “youth” are used interchangeably.

### Child physical abuse

- Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by contact behaviors, such as punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. Child physical abuse also may include non-contact physical misconduct as described in the Athlete Protection Policy.
- Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway ([www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)).

### Child sexual abuse

- Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a minor that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power or disparity in age, development or size, such that one child is the aggressor. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or electronic communications, exposure or voyeurism.
- Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway ([www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)).

### Misconduct

Conduct which results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing.

### Participants

Participants are minors who participate in a sport activity through a club or organization and athletes 18 years and older and officials.

Participant Safety Handbook As used here, a set of guidelines collecting policies and practices related to an organization’s strategy for recognizing, reducing and responding to child sexual abuse and other misconduct in sport.

## COMPONENTS OF THE SAFESPORT PROGRAM

U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program involves several component pieces:

- Policies Prohibiting Abuse and Misconduct
- Monitoring and Supervision of SafeSport Program
- Education and Awareness Training
- Screening of Coaches and Volunteers
- Responding to Reports of Abuse
- Reporting Concerns of Abuse



This document is a guide which may be useful to all U.S. Figure Skating member clubs and programs in developing their own policies. The Handbook should not be viewed as creating a legal standard of care or as a model of best practice.

U.S. Figure Skating views its member clubs and programs as independent businesses which do, and should, have their own business practices, policies and procedures.

## SECTION I | SAFESPORT POLICIES

U.S. Figure Skating is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring it promotes an environment free from abuse and misconduct. As part of this program, U.S. Figure Skating has implemented policies to address certain types of abuse and misconduct, and to reduce, monitor and govern areas where potential abuse and misconduct could occur.

The policies below address the following types of abuse and misconduct:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bullying, Threats and Harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

The SafeSport policies below set forth the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct and should be implemented to reduce the risks of potential abuse:

- Athlete Protection and Commitment to Safety
- Two-Deep Leadership and Appropriate Supervision
- Locker Room and Changing Room Policy
- Social Media, Mobile and Electronic Communications Policy
- Travel Guidelines
- Codes of Conduct for Skaters, Parents, Coaches and Club Board Members

All U.S. Figure Skating members shall familiarize themselves with each form of abuse and misconduct and shall refrain from engaging in such misconduct and/or violating any of these policies.

In the event that any U.S. Figure Skating member, club volunteer, official or staff observe inappropriate behaviors (i.e.,

policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse, or any other type of abuse or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each such person to immediately report their observations to the appropriate person as described in Section IV of this Handbook concerning Reporting.

In addition to reporting within U.S. Figure Skating, U.S. Figure Skating members and staff must also report suspected child physical or sexual abuse to appropriate law enforcement authorities as required under U.S. Figure Skating rules and under applicable law. One should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.



U.S. Figure Skating has ZERO TOLERANCE for abuse and misconduct. How U.S. Figure Skating and its member clubs and programs respond to an allegation of abuse or misconduct is described in Section V of this handbook concerning responding.

## What is Child Abuse?

A legal definition of child abuse exists in each state, which U.S. Figure Skating will adopt for purposes of enforcing this policy. A child is someone under the age of 18 or who has not attained the age of legal majority in the state in which he or she resides.

Child abuse can include physical contact or the threat of it that intentionally causes bodily harm or injury to a child. Examples include hitting, shaking, kicking, shoving a skater into a barrier; forcing an individual to skate knowing that he or she is injured; and mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment.

It can include touching for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification that involves a child, or forcing a child to pose for or watch pornographic materials. This includes rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism, and sexual exploitation.

Child abuse can include chronic attacks on a child's self-esteem. Examples include screaming or directing profanity at a child; exhibiting racism; threatening, stalking, hazing or isolating a child. It can include chronic inattention to a child's basic needs by a person responsible for the child's welfare. Examples include improper supervision, not providing adequate food or rest, inadequate medical or dental care, and unsafe equipment or facilities.

## Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Sexual Misconduct

Figure skating teaches lessons that reach beyond the ice arena, but its ability to do so depends on maintaining the bonds of trust, mentorship and mutual respect among members. These elements are undermined when sexual misconduct occurs in any sport setting. Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment and rape. Every member of the sport community, especially adult staff in positions of authority, can contribute to a sport environment free from sexual misconduct by working together and

being informed.

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no sexual abuse or misconduct of any minor involved in any of its member clubs and programs by coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents or volunteers.

Definition:

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority which is considered an imbalance of power. Last, 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.

Notes:

- An imbalance of power is always assumed between an athlete, regardless of age, and an adult in a position of authority (such as a coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer.)
- Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Sexual abuse of a minor occurs when an adult coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer touches a minor for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification of the minor or the coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer. Sexual abuse of a minor also occurs when a minor touches a coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of either the minor or coach, official, director, employee, parent, or volunteer, even if the touching occurs at the request or with the consent of the coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer.

Authority and Trust:

Once the unique coach-athlete relationship is established, the authority and trust on the part of the coach over the athlete shall be assumed, regardless of age. However, in some circumstances in regard to adult skaters, this assumption is rebuttable.

### Imbalance of Power:

Factors relevant to determining whether there is an imbalance of power include, but are not limited to: the nature and extent of the coach's supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the athlete being coached; the relationship between the parties; the parties' respective roles; the nature and duration of the sexual relations or intimacies; the age of the coach; the age of the athlete or participant; and whether the coach has engaged in a pattern of sexual interaction with other athletes or participants.

Sexual contact between children also can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or size that renders the younger child incapable of giving informed consent; if there is the existence of an aggressor; or where there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as exposure or voyeurism.

Neither consent of the minor to the sexual contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a U.S. Figure Skating function are defenses to a complaint of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may also occur between adults or to an adult. Sexual abuse includes sexual interactions that are nonconsensual or accomplished by force or threat of force, or coerced or manipulated, regardless of the age of the participants.

Sexual abuse may also include non-touching offenses, such as sexually harassing behaviors, an adult discussing his/her sex life with a minor, an adult asking a minor about his/her sex life, an adult requesting or sending nude or partial dress photo to minor; exposing minors to pornographic material, sending minors sexually explicit electronic messages or photos (e.g. "sexting"), deliberately exposing a minor to sexual acts, or deliberately exposing a minor to inappropriate nudity.

Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or child sexual abuse under applicable federal or state law constitutes sexual abuse under this policy.

Any U.S. Figure Skating member who engages in any act of sexual abuse or misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement

authorities.

### Examples of Sexual Misconduct

#### Touching offenses

- Fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback, free lessons/ice time, etc.) for sexual acts
- Genital contact – whether or not either party is clothed
- Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants

#### Non-touching offenses

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior
- Discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- Asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- Requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
- Exposing athletes to pornographic material
- Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., "sexting")
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
- Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature

These guidelines do not apply to a pre-existing relationship between spouses or life partners.

### Reporting Sexual Misconduct

It's critical for clubs, programs, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents to report suspicions or allegations of sexual misconduct to U.S. Figure Skating and appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **“Grooming” behaviors**

Offenders typically control their victims through a systematic process called “grooming” or seduction. Many offenders exploit a child’s vulnerabilities using a combination of tactics to gain the victim’s trust, lower inhibitions, and gain cooperation and “consent.” Since the initial stages of the grooming process can occur in public or group settings, offenders also take care to groom the community, which makes it easier to gain the trust of staff and administrators. The grooming process has six steps:

1. Targeting the victim – An offender will identify a child and determine his or her vulnerabilities.
2. Gaining trust – Through watching and gathering information about the child, an offender will become acquainted with his or her needs.
3. Filling a need – Offenders will often 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 offender creates situations in which he or she is alone with the child.
5. Sexualizing the relationship – An offender will desensitize a child by talking to, taking photos of and even creating situations in which both the offender and victim are touching or naked. The adult 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, offenders can 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.

Since interactions between a predator and child can occur in sport settings around other people, coaches, staff members or volunteers are well positioned to witness grooming behavior. Therefore, it’s critical for all members of the sport community to be on the alert for policy violations, suspicious behavior, or other signals that an individual might be a sexual predator. Offenders will use tickling, wrestling, horseplay, photography and giving gifts to push the boundaries of what’s acceptable and form connections with their victims.

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected grooming behavior should be directed

to the appropriate persons within U.S. Figure Skating as defined below.

## **Physical Abuse and Misconduct**

### How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Physical Abuse and Misconduct

Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity; in practices and competition, athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete - such as direct contact with coaches or other members, disciplinary actions, or punishment - is unacceptable. Physical misconduct can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and diet. Two of the best ways to promote safe conditions are to set clear boundaries and take a team approach to monitoring athletes and participants.

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no physical abuse or misconduct of any participant involved in any of its member clubs, programs and activities by any coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer.

Definition:

Physical abuse means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury.

Physical abuse also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit an athlete with objects or sports equipment.

In addition to physical contact or the threat of physical contact with a participant, physical abuse also includes the providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of 21 and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant.

It also includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault).

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

Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under applicable federal or state law constitutes physical abuse under this policy.

Any U.S. Figure Skating member who engages in any act of physical abuse is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

Examples of Physical Misconduct

**Contact offenses:**

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
- Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
- Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law)
- Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete
- Encouraging or permitting an 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 methods (e.g., public weigh-ins, caliper tests for humiliation purposes)

\*For further information please consult the U.S. Figure Skating Policy on Athlete Health and Well-Being

**Non-contact offenses:**

- Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space)
- Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface)
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

**Reporting Physical Misconduct**

It's critical for clubs, programs, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents to report suspicions or allegations of

physical misconduct to the proper officials and appropriate law enforcement officials.

**Physical Contact in Training and Instruction**

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

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.

With these elements in place, physical contact with athletes for the safety and instruction, celebration or consolation may be appropriate. In particular, coaches improve skills and make the training environment safer through appropriate physical contact.

**Emotional Abuse and Misconduct**

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no emotional abuse of any participant involved in any of its clubs, programs or activities by any coach, official, director, employee, parent, or volunteer.

Definition:

Emotional abuse involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a participant. These behaviors may include verbal acts, physical acts or acts that deny attention or support.

Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- Verbal Acts:

A pattern of verbal behaviors that attack a participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting) or repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants 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, participants; or punching walls, windows or other objects.

- Acts that Deny Attention and Support:

A pattern of ignoring a participant for extended periods of time or routinely or arbitrarily excluding participant from practice.

Emotional abuse does not include generally accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, motivation, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

A U.S. Figure Skating member who engages in any act of emotional abuse is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

Note: Bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing (defined on the next page) often involve some form of emotional misconduct.

Clarification – a single incident, e.g., a verbal outburst – while it may be inappropriate – does not constitute emotional misconduct, which requires a pattern of harmful behaviors over time.

## **Bullying, Threats and Harassment**

U.S. Figure Skating supports an environment for participation in figure skating conducive to the enjoyment of figure skating that is free from threats, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying, harassing or threatening behavior are regarded as unacceptable.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is the use of coercion to obtain control over another person or to be habitually cruel to another person. 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. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with all U.S. Figure Skating

sanctioned activities and events.

Examples of bullying prohibited by this policy include, without limitation, physical behaviors, such as punching, kicking or choking an athlete; and verbal and emotional behaviors, such as, the use of electronic communications (i.e., “cyber bullying”), to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate.

While other members are often the perpetrators of bullying, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A U.S. Figure Skating member or parent of a participant who engages in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

### **Threats**

A threat to harm others is defined as any written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted expression of intent to physically injure or harm someone. A threat may be communicated directly to the intended victim or communicated to a third party. Threatening behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with all U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned activities and events.

Any U.S. Figure Skating member or parent of a participant who engages in any act of threatening or harassing behavior is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the threatening behavior and/or resulting harm shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is defined in various sources such as case law, state legislation, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporation and workplace documents, and Human Rights Commission materials. U.S. Figure Skating has not adopted any specific

definition of harassment, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. The following, however, presents a general overview.

**Behavior:** 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 participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability.

**Environment:** Creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive. Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not. It includes, for example, name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed. Harassment includes child abuse.

Sexual Harassment is a form of harassment prohibited by this policy. It shall be a violation for any member, coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer, to harass a participant(s) through conduct or communications of a sexual nature or to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

U.S. Figure Skating shall investigate all indications, informal reports and formal grievances of sexual harassment by any athlete, coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer, 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 participant being harassed are the same sex and whether or not the participant resists or submits to the harasser, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a participant's participa-

tion in any activity; or

2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a participant is used as the basis for decisions affecting the participant; or
3. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive such that it limits a 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 a minor toward an adult or by an adult to a minor is presumed to be unwelcome and shall constitute sexual harassment. Acts of verbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex, 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.

It is also a violation of this policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the harassment or sexual harassment but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A U.S. Figure Skating participant or parent of a participant who engages in any act of harassing or sexually harassing behavior is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the harassing or sexually harassing behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

## Hazing

It is the policy of U.S. Figure Skating that there shall be no hazing of any participant involved in any of its member clubs, programs or teams by any member, coach, official, director, employee, parent, or volunteer.

**Definition:**

Hazing includes any conduct which is intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful. The hazing conduct 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 prohibited by this policy include, without limitation, requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs; tying,

taping, or physically restraining a 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.

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

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or promote team cohesion, so long as such activities do not have reasonable potential to cause emotional or physical distress to any participant.

It is also a violation of this policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the hazing but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A U.S. Figure Skating member or parent of a participant who violates this Hazing Policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension and referral to law enforcement authorities.

### **Willfully Tolerating Misconduct**

It is a violation of this Athlete Protection policy if a coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), staff member and/or volunteer.

### **Reporting**

Although these policies are designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Staff, members, volunteers and participants of each member club and program shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in the reporting policy. It is a clear violation of this policy if a club or program does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **Violations**

Violations of the Athlete Protection Policy shall be reported pursuant to our reporting policy and will be addressed under our disciplinary rules and procedure.

## SECTION II | ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are set forth to further help prevent misconduct in all U.S. Figure Skating related activities. U.S. Figure Skating strongly recommends each member club and program to develop and implement its own policies based upon the information within this SafeSport Handbook for the purposes of athlete protection and providing a safe environment for all to participate.

### Athlete Protection Policy

An athlete protection policy describes the organization's commitment to promoting athlete safety by describing acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

The absence of clear behavioral boundaries is a significant risk factor for misconduct. If inappropriate conduct is not clear to sport stakeholders, unacceptable situations might be tolerated and no disciplinary action taken. Unclear boundaries can also lead to inadvertent misconduct (e.g., where a coach models behavior that he or she experienced as an athlete without realizing its negative effects).

An Athlete Protection policy clarifies to all stakeholders that the organization is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes. It also emphasizes and sets forth standards of behavior that clearly outline unacceptable behaviors, minimize opportunities for misconduct, and help to prevent unfounded allegations.

#### Elements

- States commitment to athlete safety
- Describes to whom the policy applies (e.g., those individuals within the organization's control)
- Defines child sexual abuse and all other forms of misconduct in sport:
  - o Emotional, physical and sexual misconduct in sport
  - o Bullying, harassment and hazing in sport
  - o Prohibits all forms of misconduct in sport
- Meets or exceeds requirements of relevant standard of care or legislation

- States who shall/may report suspected misconduct
- States to whom a report should be made within the organization
- Describes how the organization will address violations of the Athlete Protection policy

### Commitment to Safety

In the event that a coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each member to immediately report his or her observations to the Club SafeSport Compliance Chair and take the appropriate action stated in applicable U.S. Figure Skating Rules.

#### Sample public statement –

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Members should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. Instead, it is the responsibility of each member to immediately report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to the appropriate people. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under U.S. Figure Skating's disciplinary rules and procedures.

[CLUB/PROGRAM] recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

### Supervision of Athletes and Participants

This policy describes U.S. Figure Skating's plan for advising the proper supervision of members and participants during all program activities and to minimize one-on-one interactions between a coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer. A plan for proper supervision raises awareness about those activities that pose a high risk for child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct, as well as ways to



minimize one-on-one interactions.

## Two-Deep Leadership

Two-deep leadership is a preventative method to minimize one-on-one interactions between minors and adults. Two-deep leadership means that at least two adults are present at all times with individual minors when off the ice. For example, it could be two club volunteers, two coaches, or a coach and parent of the skater. This two-deep strategy makes it more difficult to isolate a minor and avoid detection. This policy is intended to minimize one-on-one interactions not only for the protection of the minor but also to help protect coaches and volunteers from false accusations.

Appropriate one-on-one interactions with athletes or participants:

Individual meetings at the rink or during events and competitions

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or at an event or competition. Under these circumstances, coaches, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

- Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as the corner of the arena.
- If an individual meeting is to take place in an office or a locker room, the door should remain unlocked and open.
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary at a test session or competition, the coach, staff member and/or volunteer should inform another coach, staff member and/or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked.

## Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

Athletes and participants are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms, changing areas and restrooms due to various stages of dress/undress and because they are less supervised than at many other times. Athlete-to-athlete problems, such as sexual abuse and bullying, harassment, and hazing, often occur when a coach or other responsible adult is not in a position to observe. Adherence to a locker room

and changing areas policies enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct.

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to safety, U.S. Figure Skating encourages all member clubs and programs to publish and post locker room policies specific to the facilities and distribute them to parents and guardians of all minor participants and members.

Clubs should include the following information in their policy:

- Procedures for supervising and monitoring locker rooms and changing areas
- Permission or prohibition for parents to be in the locker rooms
- Prohibited conduct, including at least all forms of abuse and misconduct prohibited by U.S. Figure Skating
- Specific policies regarding the use of mobile electronic devices (e.g. mobile phones) and prohibiting the use of all recording and photographic devices

## Co-Ed Locker Rooms

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

Please note - the use of a designated locker room for warm-up purposes by co-eds is acceptable as long as there is no dressing/undressing occurring and the door remains open.

## **Social Media, Mobile and Electronic Communications Guidelines**

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's emphasis on participant safety, communications involving minor participants should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning activities, schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, members and their families, officials, and volunteers is critical.

U.S. Figure Skating encourages and supports members, member clubs, programs, and teams to take part in social media by posting, blogging and tweeting positive experiences in skating as a show of support of its members and for promotion of the club, its programs and events. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct.

All electronic communication of any kind between adults and minors, including use of social media, should be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about skating-related activities. The club, program or team should have a signed name and likeness consent and release agreement form (see SafeSport webpage for sample) by the minor's parent or legal guardian before any distribution or posting of photos, videos, images, etc. No contact information for any minor should be placed on any social media site.

Coaches, skaters and club volunteers must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowable electronic communication. All content between adults and minors should be readily available to share with the public or families of the minor member. If the member is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication should also copy or include a parent.

### **Social Media**

U.S. Figure Skating recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other electronic communications can be concerning where minor participants are involved. Coaches, especially, are cautioned from having their skaters joined

to their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media application.

As a best practice to facilitate communication, an official club, program or team page may be set up and members and parents may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page.

### **Email, Text Messaging and Similar Electronic Communication**

Coaches, volunteers and skaters may use email and text messaging to communicate among each other about non-personal matters. All email and text message content between adults and minors must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about club/skating-related activities. Emails and text messages from an adult to any minor participant should copy or include a parent.

### **Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communication or Imagery with Minors**

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by adults, the local club, program or team administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

### **Abuse and Misconduct**

Social media and other means of electronic communication can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, 'sexting', bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by a coach, official, director, employee, parent, skater or volunteer of a U.S. Figure Skating club or program will not be tolerated and are considered violations of U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program.

### **Reporting**

Infractions of U.S. Figure Skating's mobile and electronic communications policy should be reported to the appropriate person as described in Section V of this Handbook. A participant or parent of a participant who violates this social media, mobile and electronic communications policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

## Travel Guidelines

Travel guidelines direct how minors will be supervised during travel to and from practice and competitions and provide two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions.

During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar. Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct.

Adherence to travel guidelines helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

As part of U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to SafeSport, U.S. Figure Skating encourages its clubs and programs to have published practices for travel, when applicable. Travel is defined as overnight travel to a skating activity that is planned and supervised by the member club or program. Travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all members, parents, coaches and others involved.

Clubs should include the following in their Travel Guidelines:

- Club travel guidelines must be signed and agreed upon by all members, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.
- 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 of that particular athlete).
- When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have written permission from a parent or legal guardian in advance to travel alone with the coach.

### Individual Travel

The nature of figure skating and competition means that individual athletes may sometimes need to travel overnight without other athletes. Under these circumstances, we encourage:

1. Traveling with an additional coach or chaperone;
2. Inviting parents/guardians to travel with their athlete (for athletes under age 18).

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

### Team Travel (i.e. - Synchronized and Theatre On Ice teams)

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when the club or team sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that skaters can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the athletes. However, no coach, staff member, 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.

Appropriate adult-to-athlete ratios will depend on the age of athletes and other participants. Evaluate your program to determine your supervisory needs. The club or team shall make every effort to provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance. Athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. The club or team will also notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted. For instance, ask hotels to block pay per view channels and request an additional large room or suite so that members and athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms. Reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize.

Encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, encourage all athletes to contact parents and guardians regularly and allow for any unscheduled calls by either the athlete or parent/guardian.

### Mixed Gender and Mixed Age Travel

The club or team may be made up of male and female 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. Make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same sex. Regardless of gender, a coach should not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling of that particular athlete).

### **Chaperone Responsibilities**

Chaperones ensure that the athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers adhere to all policy guidelines. While these include the travel policy, it also includes all other relevant policies contained in club or team's Participant Safety Handbook.

Chaperones should monitor the activities of all coaches, staff members, volunteers and athletes. Specifically, chaperones may:

- familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel;
- monitor for adherences to club policies during team travel;
- encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communication with their parents/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 restrictions based on gender or age requirements;
- not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing duties;
- make certain that an athlete is not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member (this includes coaches, staff and chaperones);
- Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations to an administrator or the club's Club SafeSport Compliance Chair.

\*Please refer to the Team Manager's Manual on the Synchronized homepage for more information.

## Codes of Conduct

A code of conduct is a set of standards describing the behavior we expect of our own members especially when serving in different capacities within the organization – skater, parent, coach, official, or board member. It is meant to clarify our mission, values and principles, and linking them with standards of conduct we expect from our members.

U.S. Figure Skating encourages all member clubs and programs to develop and implement codes of conduct for its members. Below are examples for clubs and programs to use in creating, implementing and enforcing their own codes of conduct for skaters, parents, coaches, and board members.

The following are suggested approaches to addressing offenses to the codes of conduct- depending upon the seriousness of the offense. Adhere to the conflict resolution process should be outlined in the club's bylaws.

### *Violations and the manner in which they will be dealt with:*

Violations of any tenets will be addressed at the time they occur depending upon the seriousness of the offense by a member of the club board of directors following the procedures outlined in the conflict resolution or grievance process.

#### *First offense:*

Club member will be addressed verbally (in private) regarding the violation.

#### *Second offense:*

If there is a second violation, the member will be removed from the activity and given a written warning. A face-to-face meeting with the member and/or member's parent or legal guardian may be in order.

#### *Repeated offenses:*

If the member continually violates any tenet of the code of conduct, repeat offenses will be taken very seriously by the club board of directors. Discipline may include loss of club privileges for extended periods, and/or revocation of club membership.

Must be signed and dated.

CLUB NAME Code of Conduct Agreement Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [member's name printed], have read the Code of Conduct, and agree to uphold all guidelines and tenets of this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Skater's signature if 18 years or older*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent's or Legal Guardian's signature if under 18 years of age*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## U.S. Figure Skating Member Code of Conduct

### GR 1.02 Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct applies to all participants in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions and training camps:

I recognize that my participation in all activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions and training camps, is an honor and privilege that carries certain responsibilities. I agree to fully abide by the rules and guidelines set forth by U.S. Figure Skating or its properly designated agents. As a precondition to participation in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, I will adhere to the following tenets in good faith:

A. I will exhibit the highest standards of fairness, ethical behavior and genuine good sportsmanship in all of my relations with others.

B. I will not damage public or private property. I understand that I may be held financially responsible for damage deemed to be wantonly or willfully executed on my part, and that I may be subject to disciplinary action by U.S. Figure Skating.

C. I will not use or possess illegal drugs, and I will not engage in criminal activity. I understand that, if I am found to use or possess illegal drugs, or if I am found to engage in any criminal activity during any activity hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, I may be subject to criminal penalties as well as penalties imposed by U.S. Figure Skating.

D. I will adhere to the rules of U.S. Figure Skating and the host organization at all activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating.

E. I will comply with all applicable anti-doping rules including, but not limited to, ISU and USADA anti-doping rules.

F. I will conduct myself in a manner not detrimental to the welfare of figure skating. I understand that my actions reflect on U.S. Figure Skating and the sport of figure skating both positively and negatively. I understand that if my

acts, statements, or conduct are considered detrimental to the welfare of figure skating by the appropriate authority, I may be subject to penalties imposed by U.S. Figure Skating pursuant to GR 1.04.

G. I understand that the penalties that may be imposed may include, but are not limited to, loss of future international selections, loss of financial support from U.S. Figure Skating and its Memorial Fund, and loss of participation in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating.

H. I understand that all disciplinary proceedings will be conducted pursuant to Article XXV, Section 3, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws, and that my rights and remedies are derived therefrom.

## **For Club Customization: Sample Skater Code of Conduct**

As a member of our club, all skaters must adhere to this Code of Conduct at all times.

### **General Guidelines:**

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. This Skater Code of Conduct has been established to ensure the safety of all members using our ice to ensure quality practice time for all home club, associate, non-members and guests who purchase ice from the club and who participate in all club-related activities.

1. All skaters, regardless of whether they hold home club, associate, non-member or guest status must follow and uphold the tenets in this Skater Code of Conduct regarding behavior on and off the ice. All club members are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and be courteous toward their fellow skaters, coaches, parents of skaters, U.S. Figure Skating officials and guests.
2. Our club is committed to promoting a positive and friendly environment for all skaters. Remember 'The Golden Rule'—treat other people like you want to be treated—with respect.

### **Ice Etiquette and Safety:**

1. While in lesson or practice, it is the skater's responsibility to always be conscientious and aware of other skaters around them.
2. Skaters must skate with the flow of other skaters and familiarize themselves with the most commonly used areas for jumps and spins.
3. The only time a skater has the SOLE right of way is when they are skating their program to music. When you hear another member's music, please extend that person the courtesy and move out of their path momentarily. This only takes a moment and you will enjoy the same courtesy while you are performing your program.
4. Advanced skaters are expected to exhibit patience toward beginner members of the club. Remember, you were an inexperienced skater once, and it takes time for our fu-

ture generation to advance to the point where they are completely comfortable skating with all levels of skaters.

Unsafe or Discourteous Behavior:

Unsafe or discourteous behavior of any kind will not be tolerated.

For more information on Ice Usage and Etiquette Guidelines, refer to the SafeSport webpage.

## For Club Customization – Coaches’ Code of Ethics, Standards and Conduct

Mission Statement: To provide a standardized guideline of ethics, standards and conduct to ensure the quality, integrity and moral environment of U.S. Figure Skating, its member clubs and programs.

Purpose: CLUB/PROGRAM is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members’ physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. This information is intended to provide both the general principles and the decision rules to cover most situations encountered by coaches and instructors. It has, as its primary goal, the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom coaches work.

It is the individual responsibility of each coach to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Above all, coaches of young people can have great influence on developing athletes who are reliant on these coaches for the basic instruction and guidance necessary to reach the top levels. Coaches can have tremendous power over these athletes in their quest to the top. This power must not be abused. Therefore, we have set forth these codes of ethics and conduct to guide our coaches and protect our athletes for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

### General Principles:

- **Competence:** Coaches must strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work. They should recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They should provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training and/or experience. In those areas, where recognized professional standards do not yet exist, coaches must exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They shall maintain knowledge of relevant scientific and professional information related to the services they render, and they must recognize the need for ongoing education. Coaches should make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical and administrative resources.
- **Integrity:** Coaches should seek to promote integrity in their coaching profession. Coaches should always be honest, fair and respectful of others. They must not make representations about their qualifications, services, products, or fees that are false, misleading or deceptive. Coaches should strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they should attempt to clarify for relevant parties, the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Coaches must avoid conflicts of interest.
- **Professional Responsibility:** Coaches must uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different athletes. Coaches should consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their athletes, or other recipients of their services. Coaches should be concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues’ conduct. When appropriate, they should consult with their colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.
- **Respect for Participants and Dignity:** Coaches shall respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants. Coaches must be aware of cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socioeconomic status. Coaches must eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.
- **Concern for Others Welfare:** In their actions, coaches must consider the welfare and rights of their athletes and other participants. When conflicts occur among coaches’ obligations or concerns, they should attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Coaches shall be sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and should not exploit nor mislead other people during or after their relationship.
- **Responsible Coaching:** Coaches must be aware of their ethical responsibility to the community and the society in which they work and live. Coaches must comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport or activity. The coach shall



strive to serve as a leader and model in the development of appropriate conduct for the athlete both within and beyond the U.S. Figure Skating setting. The coach shall strive to use strategies in practice and competition that are designed to encourage play within the letter and spirit of the rules. The coach shall strive to keep the concepts of winning and losing in proper perspective. The coach shall strive to enforce policies and rules with fairness, consistency and an appreciation for individual differences.

**Ethical Standards:**

- **Compliance with Rule Requirements:** All coaches must complete all annual coaching member requirements set forth by U.S. Figure Skating Rules and the PSA that apply to them by the appropriate deadlines.
- **Competence:** Coaches should not undertake these duties until they have first obtained the proper training, study and advice that they are competent to do so.
- **Maintaining Expertise:** Coaches should maintain a level of expertise through continued education and experience and shall strive to acquire additional education and experience through sources available to them.
- **Respecting Others:** Coaches shall respect the rights of other's values, opinions and beliefs even if they differ from their own.
- **Nondiscrimination:** Coaches must not engage in discrimination based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status, or any other basis as proscribed by law.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Coaches must not, under any circumstances, engage in sexual harassment which includes solicitation, physical advances, verbal or non-verbal conduct which is sexual in nature and will respond to complaints of such a nature to respondents with dignity and respect.
- **Personal Problems or Conflicts:** Coaches should have a responsibility to be aware if there are personal problems or conflicts which may affect their ability to work with athletes. They should also be able to identify problems affecting their athletes, which could potentially create situations that place their athletes in harm or danger of in-

jury, and take the appropriate steps to remove the athlete from this environment.

Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3B, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

**Coaches Code of Conduct:**

- Must obey and abide by all U.S. Figure Skating published rules, regulations and procedures.
- Shall maintain exemplary standards of personal conduct.
- Must obey all state, national and international laws.
- Must not use alcohol, illegal drugs or substances, which could impair ability or judgment as a coach.
- Must refrain from using any profane or abusive language.
- Must not engage in sexual harassment or sexual misconduct with any athlete
- Must teach and support the athletes fairly and equitably.
- Never discriminate against any athlete

I understand that as a U.S. Figure Skating member coach, I have assumed certain responsibilities to prepare, develop and be an advocate and role model. I agree to the "Coaches Code of Conduct," have read the "Coaches Code of Conduct" and understand what is expected of me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\*Also refer to the PSA Code of Ethics and Tenets of Professionalism for more information.

## For Club Customization: U.S. Figure Skating Parent Code of Conduct

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

Preamble: The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, trustworthiness and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character" (Arizona Sports Summit Accord).

By signing below I hereby agree that:

1. I will encourage good sportsmanship by my actions, demonstrating positive support for all skaters, coaches, and officials at every practice, competition and test session.
2. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child and others ahead of my desire to win.
3. I will encourage my child to skate in a safe and healthy environment by maintaining a respectful and courteous attitude to others.
4. I will promptly inform my child's coach of any physical/mental disability or challenge affecting my child that may affect the safety of my child or others.
5. I will teach my child that doing his/her best is more important than winning.
6. I will do my best not to ridicule, bully, blame, or yell at my child or other skaters, coaches, officials or volunteers in response to a poor performance or for any other reason.
7. I will do my best to make skating fun at all times and will remember that my child participates in sports for his/her own enjoyment and satisfaction.
8. I will teach my child to treat other skaters, coaches, fans, volunteers, officials, and rink staff with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation or ability. I will also take action and report any acts of bullying, harassment or abuse to the appropriate authorities.
9. I will applaud any effort in both victory and defeat emphasizing positive accomplishments and learning from mistakes.
10. I will teach my child to resolve conflicts calmly and peacefully without resorting to hostility or violence.
11. I will be a positive role model for my child and others.
12. I will demand a figure skating environment for my child that is free of drug or alcohol abuse and agree that I will not use or provide to a third-party any illegal drug prohibited by applicable federal, state, or municipal law.
13. I will not assist or condone any athlete's use of a banned substance as described by the International Olympic Committee, International Skating Union, United States Olympic Committee, or U.S. Figure Skating, or, in case of athletes, to use such drugs or refuse to submit to properly conducted drug tests administered by one of these organizations.
14. I will expect my child's coach to be in compliance with all requirements of U.S. Figure Skating and the Professional Skaters Association, to continue their education and training through programs offered by U.S. Figure Skating, the Professional Skaters Association and other accredited organizations.
15. I will respect my child's coach and refrain from "side line" coaching my child or other skaters.
16. I agree to educate myself regarding the proper procedures to follow when establishing or terminating the coaching relationship and refrain from third-party solicitation as outlined on the PSA website.
17. I will respect the decisions of officials, their authority and decisions during competitions and test sessions and teach my child to do the same.
18. I will show appreciation and recognize the importance of volunteers and club officials. I will fulfill my responsibility to help my club with membership, special projects, competitions and test sessions.
19. I will become familiar with the rules of the U.S. Figure Skating and teach my child accordingly.
20. I will support and respect all skaters and their right to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



### **For Club Customization: U.S. Figure Skating Club Board Member Agreement**

As a board member of the club, I am fully committed and dedicated to the mission and have pledged to carry out this mission. I understand that my duties and responsibilities include the following:

[CLUB/PROGRAM] is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for members’ physical, emotional and social development and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

1. I will actively promote the club in a positive manner.
2. I understand my legal responsibilities for the club and those of my fellow board members. I am responsible for knowing and overseeing the implementation of policies and programs, including the SafeSport Program.
3. I accept the bylaws and operating principles and understand that I am morally responsible for the health and well-being of this club and adhering to the member code of conduct of U.S. Figure Skating.
4. I promise to be fiscally responsible for this organization. I will make myself aware and knowledgeable regarding our budget and finances and will take an active part in reviewing, approving, and monitoring the budget and fundraising to meet the goals of our club.
5. I will actively engage in fundraising for this organization. These may include individual solicitation, undertaking special events, and the like. I am making a good faith agreement to do my best and to raise as much money as I can.
6. I promise to treat my fellow board members and other club members with respect. When conflict occurs, I will respectfully disagree and work for a compromise that is in the best interest of the club.
7. I will attend board meetings, be available for phone consultation, and serve on at least one club committee. If I am not able to meet my obligations as a board member, I will offer my resignation.

In signing this document, I understand that no quotas are being set and that no rigid standards of measurement and achievement are being formed. Every board member is making a statement of faith about every other board mem-

ber. We trust each other to carry out the above agreements to the best of our abilities.

Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Club President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION III | SAFESPORT AWARENESS TRAINING

Education is a key component of any abuse and misconduct prevention strategy. Awareness training provides relevant participants with information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns. It is also a strong public statement that the organization places a priority on the safety of its participants.

U.S. Figure Skating's policies and procedures require all members to report abuse, misconduct, and violations of its safety policies (see Section IV, Reporting of Concerns of Abuse). To do so, members should have a basic understanding of sexual abusers and the strategies that offenders use to seduce their victims. Using a combination of attention, affection and gifts, offenders select a victim, win their trust (and the trust of child's caregiver or "gatekeeper"), manipulate the victim into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing abuse.

It is strongly encouraged that those participants who have direct contact with or supervision over minor participants, are responsible for enforcing child abuse and misconduct policies and are in managerial or supervisory roles of U.S. Figure Skating programs, shall complete appropriate awareness training about child physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct before having contact with youth participants.

To prevent child physical and sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct, the awareness training shall:

- Provide definitions for and effects of child physical and sexual abuse;
- Provide definitions for and effects of all forms of abuse and misconduct (emotional, physical, and sexual; bullying, harassment, and hazing);
- Identify risk opportunities for physical and sexual abuse;
- Address common myths about offenders;
- Outline patterns, behaviors, and methods of operation of sexual predators;
- Identify risk opportunities for abuse and misconduct in sport;

- Identify policies, practices, and procedures to recognize, reduce, and report misconduct.

The extent and content of the recommended training may vary for different types of participants, and U.S. Figure Skating's policy is that the following awareness training is strongly encouraged (note that U.S. Figure Skating may modify these requirements from time to time as it deems appropriate).

Each member club and program that is primarily and directly responsible for administering and supervising U.S. Figure Skating programs must be fully versed in U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program and possess the information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for physical and sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, and respond to concerns.

U.S. Figure Skating has adopted the United States Olympic Committee's SafeSport training materials, which include a series of online training videos, free of charge, in the following subjects that are available for the training of administrators, coaches, volunteers, board members, etc.:

- Lesson 1: The Coach-Athlete Relationship
- Lesson 2: Bullying & Harassment
- Lesson 3: Hazing
- Lesson 4: Emotional Misconduct
- Lesson 5: Physical Misconduct
- Lesson 6: Sexual Misconduct
- Lesson 7: Sexual Abuse
- Lesson 8: Grooming
- Lesson 9: Minimizing High-Risk Opportunities
- Lesson 10: Local Travel
- Lesson 11: Overnight Travel
- Lesson 12: Signs & Symptoms of Abuse
- Lesson 13: The Barriers to Reporting Abuse

## Lesson 14: Reporting and Responding to Misconduct & Abuse

The training videos in total are approximately 90 minutes long. Each member club is highly encouraged to have at least three representatives complete the online training each year including the Club SafeSport Compliance Chair. Upon successful completion of the online training, passing the section quizzes and final exam, each person will receive a certificate of completion. To find the link to register and complete the SafeSport video training, go to [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org), then to "Clubs," then "SafeSport." The training course is free of charge to U.S. Figure Skating representatives.

Each U.S. Figure Skating member club shall designate a club board member to hold the title of Club SafeSport Compliance Chair beginning July 1, 2013. The specific duties of the Club SafeSport Compliance Chair will include monitoring the SafeSport policies and procedures of the club, verifying coach compliance and being the initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, compiling information and when appropriate reporting such information to U.S. Figure Skating. Also, each club should have at least three persons within the club who have completed the SafeSport Program training course.

Certain jurisdictions in the United States have mandatory training and testing that may apply to those that work or volunteer with youth athletes. If state-mandated training and testing are in place, then the training and testing shall be consistent with relevant standards of care and state legislation.

## **SECTION IV | SCREENING AND BACKGROUND CHECK PROGRAM**

Purposes of a Screening Policy:

1. Protect U.S. Figure Skating participants from known offenders so that such known offenders cannot participate in U.S. Figure Skating programs and events.
2. Deter offenders who have not been caught from joining U.S. Figure Skating clubs and because the organization has a known policy against abuse.
3. Protect U.S. Figure Skating's reputation as a sport where participants are safe from abuse.
4. Help protect U.S. Figure Skating member clubs, programs, events and all members from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.

### **Screening**

Applicant screening processes identify applicants with characteristics that would increase the risk of harm if they were placed in a particular position. The screening process is based on the requirements of the position, the nature of the contact with athletes and participants and the legal limits placed on the use of screening tools. Sound, practical and responsible screening practices reduce the chance that athlete and participants will come in contact with potentially dangerous adults.

### **Elements of a comprehensive screening policy:**

1. States that applicants who will have routine contact with athletes must consent to and pass applicant screening process before working with athletes or other participants
2. States that, as appropriate to the position, function and access to athletes and participants, an applicant screening may include:
  - o an employment, contractor and/or volunteer application designed to reveal high-risk responses or behaviors, including information concerning past employment, contractor, or volunteer experience;
  - o reference checks, with questions designed to reveal high-risk behaviors or life patterns;

- o a face-to-face, telephone or video conference interview, with questions designed to reveal high-risk behaviors or life patterns;

3. Requires signed release from applicant which gives permission to others to provide relevant information freely. Requires signed consent and waiver form, providing permission for a criminal background check to be conducted regarding the applicant.

### **Applicant Screening Policy**

It is U.S. Figure Skating's recommendation that prior to a member club's and program's hiring or securing either staff or volunteers to work or assist in U.S. Figure Skating related activities, all applicants should consent to and pass a formal applicant screening process before performing or participating. Elements of the screening process include, as applicable, successful completion of an application, interview, reference check and criminal background check.

### **Education about Club's Protection Policy**

To deter applicants who may be at risk of abusing athletes or participants from applying for positions, U.S. Figure Skating strongly recommends that all member clubs and programs educate its applicants about its protection policies and offers applicants an early opt-out by:

- Requiring awareness training before placement and/or before working with athletes and participants;
- Informing applicants about policies and procedures relevant to prevention;
- Asking applicants to review and agree to our policies and procedures before proceeding with the process;
- Requiring applicants to sign a document acknowledging review of our policies and procedures.

### **Written Applications**

Each applicant for a position will complete an application form consisting of personal, identifying information and a general release with applicant's signature.

The written application will:

- Ask about previous work and volunteer experiences;
- Ask questions intended to illicit information concerning high-risk behaviors;
- Provide a written release for contacting personal references and performing a criminal background check, including an indemnification clause;
- Ask open-ended questions that encourage broad answers;
- Use disclosure statements to ask applicants about previous criminal arrests or convictions for sexual offenses, violence against youth and other violent criminal offenses or felonies.

### **Personal Interview**

Appropriate staff will interview applicants whose experience and credentials are considered a fit for available positions. During this interview, club/program representative will ask open-ended questions to encourage discussion, clarify responses and expand on the applicant's answers to questions from the written application.

### **References**

References of applicants will be contacted (either by phone or in writing) and asked specific questions regarding the applicant's professional experiences, demeanor and appropriateness for involvement with minor athletes and participants.

### **Release**

Each applicant will also provide a signed release, consistent with federal, state and local laws regulating employment practices, that allows references to speak freely about the applicant's qualifications without fear of reprisal and authorizing member club/program to obtain information concerning an applicant's past employment, volunteer experience and information provided by the applicant during the screening process (i.e., written application and personal interview).

## U.S. Figure Skating Background Check Policy

### 1. Introduction

U.S. Figure Skating requires background searches on individuals working directly with skaters to provide a safe and secure environment.

### 2. Designated Individuals to be Checked

Since July 1, 2008, background searches have been conducted on all coaches who want to be members of U.S. Figure Skating. All coaches shall have a background search completed as a condition of membership in U.S. Figure Skating. In addition, background searches shall be conducted on all individuals who are named to a U.S. Team for international competitions, ISU competitions and the Olympic Winter Games (including, but not limited to, team leaders, team doctors, team physiotherapists, and any other assigned official). In addition, it is strongly recommended that all members of the U.S. Figure Skating Board of Directors submit to a background check as soon as practical after each election.

### 3. Search Organization

The National Center for Safety Initiatives (“NCSI”) shall be the authorized search organization that performs background searches for U.S. Figure Skating. NCSI is a full-service screening organization that works in accordance with the Recommended Guidelines established by the National Council on Youth Sports (“NCYS”). NCSI operates as an independent company, but is owned and governed in partnership with NCYS.

In addition to conducting the background search, NCSI is responsible for interpreting the search results, communicating with the applicant regarding the search result, and reporting to US Figure Skating all search results. NCSI will also be responsible for complying with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained in the background search process.

### 4. Procedure for Registration for Background Check

NCSI has developed a background check authorization and disclosure form for U.S. Figure Skating via a secure website. NCSI will provide U.S. Figure Skating with the website information so U.S. Figure Skating can communicate with those individuals designated to be checked on how to access the

site and register for a background check. Designated individuals must complete the online background check authorization and disclosure form prior to participation as a U.S. Team member or, as applicable, prior to registration for membership in U.S. Figure Skating.

### 5. Information to be checked

All individuals screened for U.S. Figure Skating shall undergo a background check that includes:

- Two independent national databases;
- Sex offender registries of all available states;
- Social Security Number and address verification;
- Federal terrorist database search;
- Non-database (county courthouse runner) search of county criminal records in the jurisdiction of longest and most recent residence in the past five years; and
- International background checks for countries where the individual has lived, worked, or studied for three or more consecutive months during the past five years.

### 6. Findings

NCSI will issue results to the applicant and U.S. Figure Skating based on a “Red Light/Green Light” system. A “Green Light” or “meets the criteria” finding indicates an individual is suitable for participation in U.S. Figure Skating with regard to the background search. A “Red Light” finding means the individual “does not meet the criteria” and is not suitable for participation in U.S. Figure Skating with regard to the background search. 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.” In such situations, the U.S. Figure Skating Executive Director may also be contacted.

A conviction or disclosure from an applicant that contains the following information will be flagged as a “Red Light” or “does not meet the criteria”:

- Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement of greater than one year);
- Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against



a person;

- Any lesser crime in which sexual relations is an element, including “victimless” crimes of a sexual nature (including pornography);
- Any lesser crime involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol);
- Any lesser crime involving cruelty to animals; or
- Any sex offender registrant.
- Lesser crimes involving harm to minors.

Additionally, the following information will result in further investigation involving the applicant and the appropriate courts, which will lead to a determination of either a “Red Light” or a “Green Light”:

- An arrest of one or more of the criterion offenses with no disposition noted;
- Expunctions, restoration of rights, or pardons of a criterion offense;
- Any charge involving a child resulting in a disposition favorable to the applicant; or
- An arrest or conviction where it is not readily apparent if drugs or alcohol are involved.

The above criteria are contained within the guidelines developed by the National Council for Youth Sports (NCYS) and have been adopted by NCSI. The NCYS considers the criteria for a “Red Light” or “does not meet the criteria” findings to be consistent with the principles of the federal PROTECT Act of 2003.

#### 7. Review of Background Search Findings

Should an applicant contest the content of a record provided to the applicant as part of the U.S. Figure Skating background search, the applicant may seek an appeal of the record with NCSI pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Should an applicant contest a U.S. Figure Skating decision to deny membership or participation based on a “Red Light” finding resulting from the background search, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision to U.S. Figure Skating pursuant to a process established by U.S. Figure Skating

## **SECTION V | U.S. FIGURE SKATING POLICY ON HARASSMENT AND ABUSE**

### **U.S. Figure Skating Rule GR 1.03 states:**

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. The U.S. Figure Skating Policy Statement on Harassment and Abuse may be found in its entirety online at [usfigureskating.org](http://usfigureskating.org). Harassment of such nature between or among U.S. Figure Skating members shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics or Grievance Committee as soon as is practicably possible, per ECR 2.00 and GCR 2.00.

A. If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected, the observer should immediately contact either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report.

B. Any person who violates this rule, who fails to appropriately report or who makes a false report or otherwise violates U.S. Figure Skating's Policy on Harassment and Abuse will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article XXIV, Section 3, of U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

### **U.S. Figure Skating's Policy on Harassment and Abuse - Revised (November 2013)**

U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members and to protect the opportunity of its members to participate in our sport in an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. The association will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse 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.

#### **Definitions**

##### **1. Harassment**

Harassment is defined in various sources such as case law,

state legislation, sports

organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporation and workplace documents, and human rights commission materials. U.S. Figure Skating has not adopted any specific definition of harassment, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. The following, however, presents a general overview.

- **Behavior:** 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 participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability.
- **Environment:** Creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning, or offensive.

Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not. It includes, for example, name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual favors, as well as undue pressure to perform or succeed. Harassment includes child abuse.

##### **2. Child Abuse**

A legal definition of child abuse exists in each state. For purposes of enforcing this policy, U.S. Figure Skating adopts the legal definition of child abuse of the state(s) in which the child resides and where the incident of child abuse occurs. If there is a conflict between the state laws defining child abuse, the definition that provides the child with the greatest protection will be used for enforcing this policy. A child is someone under the age of 18 or who has not attained the age of legal majority in the state in which he or she resides.

Child abuse and misconduct can be physical, sexual or emotional in nature. Child physical abuse includes physical

contact - or the threat of it - that intentionally causes bodily harm or injury to a child. This includes, for example, hitting, shaking, kicking, shoving a skater into a barrier, etc., as well as forcing an individual to skate when he or she is injured, or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment. Child physical abuse also includes providing alcohol and drugs to a minor, knowingly permitting an athlete to return to sport prematurely following an injury, and chronic inattention to a child's basic needs and welfare.

Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity between an adult and a minor. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power or disparity in age, development or size, such that one child is the aggressor. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, and noncontact sexual acts such as taking and/or distributing sexual explicit photos or sending sexually suggestive written or electronic communications.

Child emotional abuse involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a participant. These behaviors may include, for example, patterns of verbal behavior attacking an athlete personally, or a pattern of ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time.

### **Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse**

1. Report the abuse to authorities.

In most states, you are obligated to bring this matter to the attention of local law enforcement or a public child welfare organization and make a report. In fact, not reporting the incidents in some states is against the law and the coach or witness could be liable for failure to report. Some states have a "Mandated Reporter Status." Be aware of your state laws and specific reporting requirements as people involved in certain occupations must report suspected child abuse. If you do not know which authorities to contact in your state, call the National Domestic Violence / Abuse Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233 or 1-800 787-3224 TDD). All calls to the hotline are confidential, and callers may remain anonymous if they wish. You may also call Victims Assistance Ministry at 1-800-355-2545 or seek help directly by contacting one of the Child Protective Services or one of the Law Enforcement Agencies in your area.

2. Report the abuse to U.S. Figure Skating. Notify the U.S. Figure Skating vice chair for SafeSport or safesport@usfigureskating.org.

3. Alert the rink management, if appropriate.

4. Alert at least one of the following: the Club President, Club SafeSport Compliance Chair, or other appropriate board member.

### **Procedures for Reporting Harassment**

Harassment, as defined herein, between or among U.S. Figure Skating members, shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics or Grievance Committee as soon as is practicably possible, per GR 1.03.

Depending on the nature and/or severity of the harassment, the reporter may also choose to contact a local law enforcement agency or seek assistance from a local or state human rights commission.

### **Violation of Harassment and Abuse Policy**

Any person in violation of this policy statement will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article XXV, Section 3 of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

Any person convicted of child abuse in a court of law shall be permanently banned from membership in U.S. Figure Skating and from participation in U.S. Figure Skating programs and activities, in accordance with the association's Code of Ethics.

### **Retaliations or Threats of Reprisal**

Retaliation or threats of reprisal against an individual for filing a complaint under this policy or for participating or assisting in any procedure under this policy will be considered harassment for the purpose of this policy.

### **Condemnation or Groundless Allegations**

If a person in authority knows or should reasonably have known that harassment or abuse may have occurred and fails to report it or take appropriate action as set out in this policy statement, that person may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action per Article XXV, Section 3, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

## **SECTION VI | REPORTING ABUSE, MISCONDUCT AND POLICY VIOLATIONS**

A reporting policy clarifies to all participants, staff, volunteers, responsible parties and members of the public that the organization understands its duty and responsibility to create a safe and positive environment for athletes. This statement also further reinforces the organization's commitment to athlete safety.

An effective reporting policy that results in reports of suspected abuse and misconduct, and does not in any way deter victims or witnesses from reporting abuse and misconduct, is a key element to preventing abuse and misconduct from occurring. Potential abusers will avoid involvement in a program where there is a likelihood that suspected abuse will be reported. When sport stakeholders are untrained about how and when to report suspected abuse, they may feel ill-prepared, powerless and lost when it comes to responding to and reporting misconduct. By providing this guidance on when and how to report suspected misconduct, U.S. Figure Skating seeks to remove barriers to disclosing misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse.

It is also critical that all members understand that they should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to U.S. Figure Skating or to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Reporting Abuse, Misconduct and Policy Violations is:

- The obligation of U.S. Figure Skating on members and member clubs to report suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct;
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality with respect to the complaint, complainant, victim, accused and other information related to the report and incident(s) until "notice" must be given about a suspension or the outcome of any proceedings;
- The circumstances in which an immediate or "summary" suspension is appropriate and the procedures following a summary suspension;
- A general summary of the procedures for a hearing under Grievance Procedures outlined in the U.S. Figure Skating rulebook.

**Upon a report or other notice of credible information or allegations that a person who is subject to the jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating:**

1. May have violated any of the provisions of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program Handbook
2. Violated any of the sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats and harassment, hazing policies or willful tolerance policies
3. Is subject to allegations of actual or suspected child physical or sexual abuse

U.S. Figure Skating will conduct an inquiry and/or initiate a disciplinary proceeding pursuant to Article XXV, section 3B, to determine the appropriate discipline that may be imposed.

### **Importance of Confidentially**

Any investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings must be kept confidential. An investigator shall not discuss the investigation with anyone except for the purposes of conducting the investigation, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities. Hearings should be closed and confidential, to the extent possible, other than for notification of the outcome. Participants in the hearing, including the hearing committee, complainant, victim, and witnesses (if any are permitted), should be requested and encouraged to keep the proceedings confidential, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities.

The hearing panel shall not discuss the testimony with anyone and shall deliberate among themselves until final resolution of the complaint, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities.

### **Reporting Process**

If you are aware of or suspect abuse of an athlete, you should do all of the following:

1. Report the abuse to authorities.

In most states, you are obligated to bring this matter to the attention of local law enforcement or public child welfare organization and make a report. In fact, not reporting incidents in some states is against the law and the coach

or witness could be liable. Some states have a “Mandated Reporter Status.” Be aware of your state laws and specific reporting requirements. If you do not know which authorities to contact in your state, call the National Domestic Violence / Abuse Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE | 1-800-799-7233 | 1-800-787-3224 TDD. All calls to the hotline are confidential, and callers may remain anonymous if they wish. You may also call Victims Assistance Ministry at (800) 355-2545 or seek help directly by contacting one of the Child Protective Services or one of the Law Enforcement Agencies in your area.

2. Report the abuse to U.S. Figure Skating. Notify the U.S. Figure Skating vice chair for SafeSport or [safesport@usfigureskating.org](mailto:safesport@usfigureskating.org) (see U.S. Figure Skating Rule GR 1.03) about the abuse situation. Rule GR 1.03 states:

GR 1.03 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. The U.S. Figure Skating Policy Statement on Harassment and Abuse may be found in its entirety online at [usfigureskating.org](http://usfigureskating.org). Harassment of such nature between or among U.S. Figure Skating members shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics or Grievance Committee as soon as is practicably possible, per ECR 2.00 and GCR 2.00.

A. If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected, the observer should immediately contact either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report.

B. Any person who violates this rule, who fails to appropriately report or who makes a false report or otherwise violates U.S. Figure Skating’s Policy on Harassment and Abuse will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article XXIV, Section 3, of U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

3. Alert the rink management, if appropriate, and,

4. Alert at least one of the following: the Club President, Club SafeSport Compliance Chair or other appropriate board member.

## **SECTION VII | MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF THE SAFESPORT PROGRAM**

The monitoring and supervision aspect of U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Program describes how U.S. Figure Skating member club and programs monitor, supervise and ensure that aspects of the SafeSport Program (i.e., implementation and enforcement of policies, training requirements, screening requirements, responding, reporting and adjudication procedures, etc.) are being followed, and how they may be improved, so that they result in a safe environment for all participants.

Member Clubs and Programs:

- Shall monitor and enforce compliance of all U.S. Figure Skating rules and implemented policies;
- Shall monitor that during all programs and activities, any and all coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, and volunteers that will have routine access to minor participants, have completed the required training and screening prior to such persons having access to athletes and participants;
- Shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the U.S. Figure Skating rules, SafeSport Program or applicable law;
- Shall conduct reviews and evaluation of their program to monitor and promote compliance with the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program;
- Shall designate a club board member to hold the title of Club SafeSport Compliance Chair beginning July 1, 2013. The specific duties of the Club SafeSport Compliance Chair will include monitoring the SafeSport policies and procedures of the club, verifying coach compliance and being the initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations, compiling information and when appropriate reporting such information to U.S. Figure Skating. See job description below;
- Should have at least three persons within the club who have completed the SafeSport Program training course (online video). This course is completely free of charge.

### **Club SafeSport Compliance Chair Job Description**

#### **General Description**

The Club SafeSport Compliance Chair will be responsible for the implementation and coordination of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport Program within their local club. The officer 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 Appointment and Requirements**

The officer must be a current member of U.S. Figure Skating in good standing and a home club member of the respective club.

#### **Responsibilities and Duties**

The Club SafeSport Compliance Chair will:

1. Serve as the primary contact for U.S. Figure Skating and oversee the implementation of effective educational programs for all members, their parents, and coaches, as provided by U.S. Figure Skating.
2. Oversee the drafting and implementing of club policies based upon the recommendations of the U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport program.
3. Verify all coaches participating in all club and U.S. Figure Skating events and activities are compliant per U.S. Figure Skating rules.
4. Understand the complaint reporting structure and refer all reports of a violation of the SafeSport Policies directly to the appropriate U.S. Figure Skating committee.
5. Participate in workshops/webinars as provided by U.S. Figure Skating, collect and share information about the SafeSport program and disseminate information on best practices.
6. Perform other functions as necessary in the fulfillment of U.S. Figure Skating's continuing efforts to foster safe, healthy and positive environments for its members.

## **APPENDIX I U.S. FIGURE SKATING RULES PERTAINING TO THE SAFESPORT PROGRAM**

### **GR 1.02 Code of Conduct**

The following code of conduct applies to all participants in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions and training camps:

I recognize that my participation in all activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, including but not limited to competitions, exhibitions and training camps, is an honor and privilege that carries certain responsibilities. I agree to fully abide by the rules and guidelines set forth by U.S. Figure Skating or its properly designated agents. As a precondition to participation in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, I will adhere to the following tenets in good faith:

A. I will exhibit the highest standards of fairness, ethical behavior and genuine good sportsmanship in all of my relations with others.

B. I will not damage public or private property. I understand that I may be held financially responsible for damage deemed to be wantonly or willfully executed on my part, and that I may be subject to disciplinary action by U.S. Figure Skating.

C. I will not use or possess illegal drugs, and I will not engage in criminal activity. I understand that, if I am found to use or possess illegal drugs, or if I am found to engage in any criminal activity during any activity hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating, I may be subject to criminal penalties as well as penalties imposed by U.S. Figure Skating.

D. I will adhere to the rules of U.S. Figure Skating and the host organization at all activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating.

E. I will comply with all applicable anti-doping rules including, but not limited to, ISU anti-doping rules.

F. I will conduct myself in a manner not detrimental to the welfare of figure skating. I understand that my actions reflect on U.S. Figure Skating and the sport of figure skating both positively and negatively. I understand that if my acts, statements, or conduct are considered detrimental to the

welfare of figure skating by the appropriate authority, I may be subject to penalties imposed by U.S. Figure Skating pursuant to GR 1.04.

G I understand that the penalties that may be imposed may include, but are not limited to, loss of future international selections, loss of financial support from U.S. Figure Skating and its Memorial Fund, and loss of participation in activities hosted, supported, sponsored or engaged in by U.S. Figure Skating.

H. I understand that all disciplinary proceedings will be conducted pursuant to Article XXIV, Section 3, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws, and that my rights and remedies are derived therefrom.

### **GR 1.03 - Reporting Procedures**

GR 1.03 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. The U.S. Figure Skating Policy Statement on Harassment and Abuse may be found in its entirety online at [usfigureskating.org](http://usfigureskating.org). Harassment of such nature between or among U.S. Figure Skating members shall be reported to the chair of the Ethics or Grievance Committee as soon as is practicably possible, per ECR 2.00 and GCR 2.00.

A. If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected, the observer should immediately contact either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report.

B. Any person who violates this rule, who fails to appropriately report or who makes a false report or otherwise violates U.S. Figure Skating's Policy on Harassment and Abuse will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Article XXIV, Section 3, of U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

### **Article XXV section 3, A and B - Grievance and Disciplinary Proceedings**

#### Suspension, Expulsion and Loss of Membership Privileges

Section 3 Grievance and Disciplinary Proceedings. All grievance and disciplinary procedures must be filed and resolved pursuant to the procedures outlined in this section and in the Grievance Committee Rules and Ethics Committee Rules. The forms and instructions for filing a grievance are available from U.S. Figure Skating Headquarters upon request of a member or member club.

#### A. Grievance Proceedings:

##### (i) Scope:

(a) Any U.S. Figure Skating member or member club aggrieved or harmed by the alleged violation of a U.S. Figure Skating bylaw or rule by any other U.S. Figure Skating member or member club may bring a grievance citing the alleged violation of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaw or rule.

(b) The member or member club must be a member in good standing both at the time the grievance is filed and at the time of the alleged violation of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaw or rule.

(c) Such grievance must include the allegation that violation of a specific U.S. Figure Skating bylaw or rule caused harm to the Grievant.

##### (ii) Time period: A grievance must be filed:

(a) Within 60 days of the occurrence of the alleged violation, or

(b) Within 60 days of the discovery of the alleged violation, or

(c) In the case of a minor, within 60 days after the minor's 18th birthday, whichever is later.

(iii) Requirements: The specific Grievance Statement filing requirements and hearing procedure guidelines for a grievance that proceeds under Section 3 (A) are found in the Grievance Committee Rules (GCR).

#### B. Disciplinary Proceedings:

(i) Scope: A vice president, by referral to the chair of the Eth-

ics Committee, or the chair of the Ethics Committee, after a referral by a vice president, or the chair of the Grievance Committee pursuant to applicable Grievance Committee or Ethics Committee Rules, may initiate disciplinary proceedings as to any matter arising under GR 1.01, GR 1.02 or GR 1.03.

(ii) Review: Upon referral of the matter by a vice president or the chair of the Grievance Committee, the chair of the Ethics Committee has 30 days to review the matter.

(a) If the chair of the Ethics Committee determines that further proceedings are not warranted, the chair of the Ethics Committee will so advise, in writing, the person initiating the disciplinary proceeding and the person(s), if any, who filed the complaint or grievance.

(b) If the chair of the Ethics Committee determines that further proceedings are warranted, the chair of the Ethics Committee will so advise, in writing, the person initiating the disciplinary proceeding and indicate either:

1. That such person or the person(s), if any, who filed the complaint or grievance may file a Grievance Statement (in which case the person who files the Grievance Statement will be the "Grievant") or

2. Alternatively, and at the discretion of the chair of the Ethics Committee, that the chair of the Ethics Committee has decided to file a Grievance Statement (in which case U.S. Figure Skating will be the "Grievant" with the chair of the Ethics Committee acting on behalf of U.S. Figure Skating).

(iii) The specific Grievance Statement filing requirements and hearing procedure guidelines for a "Disciplinary Proceeding" under this Section 3 (B) are found in the Ethics Committee Rules (ECR).

### **MR 5.11 Coach Compliance**

In order for a coach to be granted access to work within U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned activities, each coach must complete the following requirements on an annual basis:

A. Must be a current full member of U.S. Figure Skating – either through a member club or as an individual member;

B. Must complete the coach registration process through the U.S. Figure Skating Members Only site, submit proper payment for the annual registration fee of \$30, and success-



fully pass the background screen, if 18 years of age or older.

C. Must complete the appropriate CER courses (A, B, C or D) depending on the highest level of coach's students. See rule MR 5.12.

D. Must submit proof of current general liability insurance with limits of \$1 million per occurrence/\$5 million aggregate.

E. Must be a PSA member if coaching skaters/teams in qualifying events at U.S. Figure Skating qualifying competitions. See rule 1022.

Basic Skills Instructors: Any person, 18 and older, instructing in a U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program must have successfully passed the annual background screen and be registered as a Basic Skills instructor member.

For deadline and penalties, see rules MR 5.13 and MR 5.14.

### **ECR 2.00 Ethics Committee**

#### ECR 2.00 Jurisdiction and Responsibility

ECR 2.01 Jurisdiction: Unless and until a grievance or disciplinary matter has been referred to the Grievance Committee pursuant to Article XXV of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws, the Ethics Committee shall have jurisdiction over all matters arising under U.S. Figure Skating's Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct.

ECR 2.02 Responsibility: It shall be the responsibility of the Ethics Committee to interpret, administer and apply U.S. Figure Skating's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, including the development of principles of ethical behavior and conflict of interest applicable to U.S. Figure Skating members and member clubs and the administration of U.S. Figure Skating's conflict of interest annual disclosure process in accordance with GR 1.01.

### **GCR 2.00 Grievance Committee**

#### GCR 2.00 Responsibility and Jurisdiction

GCR 2.01 The Grievance Committee is responsible for maintaining and administering the various grievance and hearing rules and processes provided under U.S. Figure Skating bylaws and rules and providing standard hearing and complaint procedures for resolving grievances in a prompt and equitable manner for its members.

GCR 2.02 The Grievance Committee has jurisdiction over:

A. All grievances filed under Article XXV of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.

B. All disciplinary proceedings brought under Article XXV of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.