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Disclaimer

This quick reference guide is designed to help gymnastics clubs take action to establish and maintain a safe environment for all participants in the clubs' activities and events. It is not a handbook with every possible detail about the topic of safe environments, nor has any attempt been made to ensure its compliance with applicable law throughout the United States. Rather, it is designed solely as a resource that shares evolving "best practices" that clubs can use in assessing, formulating, reviewing and revising their own safe environment policies, procedures and protocols. Because USA Gymnastics lacks both the authority and resources to enforce policies or practices in gymnastics clubs and clubs are responsible for their own employment matters (such as hiring and discipline of employees), responsibility for risk management remains with the local gymnastics clubs and gymnastics professionals.

Laws vary by state, and clubs should consult their legal counsel to make sure their policies and efforts to provide a safe environment comport with applicable federal law, state law and existing standards of care.

This guide does not provide legal advice.

Once the United States Center for Safe Sport is launched and establishes its jurisdiction, USA Gymnastics members and its Member Clubs may be required to follow its policies, procedures and protocols.

1 "Best practices" are sometimes defined as a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has been proven to reliably lead to a desired result. "Best practices" evolve over time as improvements are discovered.

Some of the content for this guide was provided by USA Gymnastics' education partners: United States Olympic Committee SafeSport Program, Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention, Darkness to Light and Stop It Now! USA Gymnastics acknowledges and thanks Michael Taylor, his contributions to this guide.
Introduction

USA Gymnastics began its Clubs Care Campaign in the fall of 2012 to raise awareness in the gymnastics community about inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct. It has provided important and helpful information, tools, resources, checklists, action steps and more so clubs can establish and maintain a safe environment for all gymnastics participants.

Why? Because we need to eliminate the opportunity. Inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct thrive on privacy. Making sure there is zero opportunity for this type of conduct to occur in a club’s programs, activities and events is one of the most important steps a club can take to provide a safe environment. Eliminating privacy is necessary to keep your students safe.

Why? Because safe environments for athletes are also safe environments for coaches, staff, and volunteers. The welfare of all gymnastics participants is of paramount concern, and taking a zero opportunity/zero tolerance approach will also benefit clubs and all those who work with and for them. Providing a safe gymnastics environment is necessary to keep yourself safe.

Why? Because it is the right thing to do. When any member, participant, coach, official, volunteer or staff member is subjected to abuse, whether physical or sexual, it undermines the mission of USA Gymnastics and is inconsistent with the best interest of the sport of gymnastics and of the athletes USA Gymnastics serves. Unfortunately, societal issues exist in sport, and child sexual abuse statistics are alarming.

Inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct have no place in gymnastics. Turning awareness of the issue into preventive action is necessary to keep your sport safe.

This quick reference guide for clubs pulls together much of the information, prevention strategies, etc. that have been distributed through the campaign. New in the guide are template gymnastics-oriented policies that clubs can customize to fit their specific business needs.

USA Gymnastics is proud to publish this resource in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, acknowledging the pivotal role clubs play in preventing abuse in sport.
STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Gymnastics clubs that effectively manage their environment adopt, communicate and enforce **standards of behavior**. Standards of behavior are clear expectations for how coaches, staff and volunteers interact with children. They allow for interactions that are warm, encouraging and appropriate, but prohibit dangerous, harmful or inappropriate interactions. Standards of behavior are necessary and important because they lessen the likelihood that an abusive situation could develop.

Standards of behavior are included in, and provide the foundation for, your safe environment/athlete protection-related policies. Five common standards of behavior include:

- Elimination of privacy
- Boundaries if physical contact is a necessary part of the activity
- Travel/transportation guidelines
- Limitations on electronic, social and out-of-program interactions
- Parental monitoring

These general standards of behavior should be adopted by gymnastics clubs and tailored to promote the safest environment possible for your specific activities and events. For example:

**Eliminate Privacy – Avoid Being Alone with Child.**
Gymnastics is a sport that lends itself to one-on-one situations between a coach and an athlete. Avoid being alone with a child or any group of children in a private setting (e.g., locker room, bathroom, office, vehicle, hotel or residence), and avoid being alone with a child or any group of children in any place that is inappropriate to the coach-athlete relationship. When a one-on-one situation is necessary, such as private coaching lessons or conversations, conduct the activity within the view and earshot of another adult. Interactions should always be observable and interruptible.

**Establish Boundaries for Necessary Physical Contact.**
Gymnastics creates opportunities for physical contact between a coach and an athlete. Physical contact is acceptable when it is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a gymnastics skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., spotting, catching). However, care should be taken to ensure that such contact is not invasive of sensitive areas of the body.

**Set Travel/Transportation Guidelines.**
Team travel presents a risk for athletes because opportunities for an adult to isolate him/her increase and the athlete may depend on the adult more due to unfamiliar surroundings. Even local travel presents a risk because there are controllable periods of one-on-one time that can be used to groom or abuse an athlete. Be sure to have a detailed itinerary and transportation plan that is communicated to parents. For overnight travel, have a policy about room assignments and bed checks; encourage communication between the athlete and his/her parents/guardians; and reserve a common area space for social gatherings so sleeping rooms are not used for that purpose. For local travel, have parents transport their own children if possible.

**Prohibit Electronic, Social and Out-of-Program Interactions.**
Communications and interactions that are inappropriate to the coach-athlete relationship should be prohibited. Prohibit staff from contacting athletes, including personal contact, email, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular/regular phone calls, social networking pages or other communication vehicles, for any reason not related to club business, such as invitations to meals or family gatherings or requests for babysitting. When it comes to club-related communications, never communicate one-on-one with athletes outside the presence of others. Rather, club-related communication to all athletes should also be directed to the parents/guardians. If club-related communication is directed to a particular athlete necessarily, send a copy to the parent/guardian simultaneously.

**Encourage Parental Monitoring.**
Parents play an important role in keeping their children safe while participating in sports and other extracurricular activities. Clubs should encourage parents to become as active as reasonably possible in the activity/event and be alert for anything out of the ordinary (for example, an “unattached adult” – one who is not at the club’s program, activity or event with a specific child). Educate parents on how to report suspicious behaviors and respond immediately when reports are made. Welcome parents’ questions and be prepared to discuss all the steps the club is taking to promote a safe environment for their children.
Maintaining a safe environment for our athletes is a paramount concern for all of us involved in the sport. Therefore, it is “mission critical” for gymnastics clubs to

1. **establish** their own standards of behavior;
2. clearly **communicate** their standards to coaches, staff, volunteers and parents;
3. consistently and uniformly **enforce** their standards; and
4. immediately **address** any reported or observed violation consistent with their policies and practices.

- When establishing or reviewing your standards of behavior, think about the interactions between coaches/staff/volunteers and gymnasts that you have observed occurring in your gym.
- Objectively speaking, do they put the gymnast at risk of being hurt, or a coach, staff member or volunteer at risk of being falsely accused of inappropriate behavior?
- Think about the following interactions and whether your standards of behavior would permit or prohibit them: full frontal lap sitting; hugs; tickling; picture taking; giving rides home; babysitting; tutoring; gift giving; gym sleepovers.

### Child Protection: KEEPING ALL KIDS SAFE

**Awareness + Action = Prevention**

**Keep YOUR STUDENTS safe**
Physical contact is acceptable when it is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a gymnastics skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., spotting, catching). However, care should be taken to ensure that such contact is not invasive of sensitive areas of the body.

**Keep YOURSELF safe**
Electronic communication (texting, emailing) regarding club/team information should be directed to parents/guardians.

**Keep YOUR SPORT safe**
Avoid being alone with a child. Conduct all activities within the eyeshot and earshot of others.

**Play your role in preventing child sexual abuse**
Protecting children and providing them with safe spaces in which they can learn, play and grow is central to the mission of every youth-serving organization, including USA Gymnastics and its Member Clubs. Learn more at usagym.org/ClubsCare.

- Monitor the club’s programs, activities and events for compliance with the standards of behavior.
- When new programs, activities or events are planned, include risk prevention strategies in your planning.
GROOMING AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

Clubs and coaches can take steps that will help prevent sexual abuse. One current prevention technique is understanding, watching for and interrupting predatory tactics, such as “grooming.”

**Grooming**
Abusers can use a subtle and gradual process known as grooming on children and their families. Grooming is a systematic process typically done over weeks, months or years to slowly lure and manipulate children into abuse.

There is no “checklist” that can be used to identify an offender. However, there are red flags that can help clubs and coaches recognize predatory behaviors that may lead to abuse. Common grooming techniques can include the following:

- Befriending the youngster and their family to slowly gain trust.
- Giving gifts, money, trips, and/or performing special favors for youngster.
- Promoting the notion that the relationship with the boy or girl is special.
- Encouraging harmless secrets, laying the foundation for future sexual secrets.
- Taking pictures/video of the child.
- Communicating with the boy or girl excessively; texting, emailing or calling.
- Desensitizing the child through nonsexual touching, “accidental” touching of privates and/or walking in on bathroom or dressing time.
- Testing a child’s boundaries by using inappropriate language and/or telling dirty jokes.
- Playing body contact games with children; tickling, backrubs or wrestling.
- Making alcohol/drugs available to the youth.
- Introducing pornography to initiate sexual interest or normalize the behavior.
- Offering to babysit, including overnight trips or sleepovers.

Individual behaviors may occur that can seem like grooming without being part of a predatory process. They certainly require attention, but do not necessarily mean the person is abusive. It is important to understand these red flags so that gymnastics professionals can closely observe such individuals and, when needed, intervene to disrupt and/or report abuse in an effort to protect the athlete.

**Signs of Abuse**
In addition to understanding grooming, watching for signs of abuse can help distinguish between a proper coach-athlete relationship and predatory behavior.

Physical signs of sexual abuse are usually not observable (especially to adults other than parents, guardians and health professionals), but may include pain, injury, bleeding, discharge or disease in the private parts and/or mouth.

Behavioral and emotional signs are typically more evident and can include:

- Sudden withdrawal from close ties.
- Disinterest or sudden inability to concentrate.
- Uncharacteristically aggressive or disruptive behavior.
- Sudden change in eating habits; drastic weight loss or gain.
- Marked fear or reluctance to be at a certain place, or alone with a certain person.
- Repeated health complaints, e.g., stomach aches, headaches.
- Depression, lethargy and weepiness.
- Noticeable change in dress; may include baggy, dark clothing.
- Interest in or knowledge of sexual matters beyond the boy’s or girl’s years.
- Using sexual language or acting out sexually.
- Touching other kids sexually.

Follow up if you see such signs, especially multiple signs.

Training coaches and staff to recognize grooming techniques and signs of abuse is a critical step in abuse prevention. That awareness can then be turned into action:

1. **empower** coaches and staff to speak up and not to dismiss questionable interactions or behavior, and
2. promptly and thoroughly **follow up** on any issues raised.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

- Learn about child sexual abuse, grooming techniques, signs of abuse and reporting procedures.
- Review your policies and procedures to determine whether they prohibit or discourage grooming opportunities.
- Follow-up on any report of suspicious behaviors.
Clubs should have policies describing how they intend to provide a safe environment for all participants involved in their programs, activities and events. Policies are important communication tools for coaches, staff and volunteers so they understand what is expected of them and what conduct is prohibited. They set the ground rules by which the conduct of coaches, staff and volunteers can be evaluated. They help educate parents about the steps clubs can take to provide a safe environment and how parents can assist in making sport safe.

Having a policy in which clear behavioral boundaries are established is, itself, a “best practice” clubs should take to avoid unacceptable situations, inadvertent misconduct or the failure to discipline and remove coaches/staff/volunteers who engage in inappropriate behavior.

USA Gymnastics member clubs are required to have a policy consistent with USA Gymnastics’ Participant Welfare Policy that affirms their commitment to the welfare of gymnastics participants in their organization and includes, at minimum:

- A description of conduct that will not be tolerated.
- Standards of behavior for their staff and volunteers that promote participant welfare.
- A process for receiving and handling complaints regarding conduct that violates their policy.

In order to be effective, policies should be:

- Clearly written and easy to understand.
- Readily available and distributed to all participants in a club’s activities and events, including coaches, staff, volunteers and parents.
- Reviewed and updated annually.
- Communicated clearly as part of the hiring/orientation process.
- Uniformly and consistently implemented and enforced.

Providing a safe environment and protecting athletes from harm while participating in gymnastics programs, activities and events are among the most important things a club should do. In so doing, clubs are also protecting coaches, staff members or volunteers from false accusations. Questions to ask and answer when developing a safe environment/athlete protection policy include:

1. What commitment will my club make to providing a safe environment for all who participate in our activities and events?
2. What does my club consider prohibited conduct?
3. How will my club encourage reporting suspicious behaviors?
4. How will my club address reports of suspicious behaviors?
5. How will my club disseminate the policy to coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and prospective coaches/staff/volunteers?

Appendix Resources

B Template Safe Environment/Athlete Protection Policy

- Post your safe environment/athlete protection policy on your club website and include it in your staff handbook/employee manual.
- Review the policy annually with your club’s team in team meetings and booster club meetings, and include it in your team handbook.
- Ensure your safe environment/athlete protection policy complies with the requirements for USA Gymnastics member clubs.
- Follow-up on any report of conduct that may be inconsistent with the policy.
Team Travel
In order to create and maintain a safe gymnastics travel environment, coaches, staff, volunteers and parents should be aware of the risks athletes can face during team travel (coordinated group travel for training camps, meets, etc.) so they can be vigilant in their efforts to prevent a situation where misconduct or abuse could occur.

- Overnight travel can present a risk for athletes because opportunities for an adult to isolate an athlete may increase and the athlete may depend on the adult more due to the unfamiliar surroundings.
- Local travel presents a risk for athletes because there may be controllable periods of one-on-one time that can be used to groom or abuse an athlete.

Overnight and Local Travel Policies
Clubs should have local and overnight travel policies that include risk-prevention strategies designed to keep all athletes safe when traveling as part of a team, such as:

Make sure your coaches, staff, volunteers, and parents are aware of your policies so they know what to expect during team travel.

Travel Plans Should be Consistent with your Policies
Once travel policies are in place, it is vital to use them when making your team travel plans so that the safety measures outlined in the policies are followed. Special attention should also be paid to the arrangements made for first-time or younger travelers because they may not be aware of appropriate boundaries and look to a coach or other adult for guidance.

Communicating your Travel Plans and Policies
Parents play a critical role in reducing risks during team travel. Therefore, it is essential that you clearly communicate your team travel plans and policies in advance so they have a chance to ask questions about, become comfortable with, and make arrangements consistent with your club’s policies. Encourage parents to discuss general travel safety with their children, such as not roaming the halls or sitting in the lobby of a hotel alone.

By focusing on safety during team travel activities, clubs with the assistance of coaches, chaperones and parents can help reduce the opportunities for grooming or abuse of an athlete during travel.
Electronic Communication

As electronic communication and social media become preferred communication media, clubs should have a policy about how technology tools will and will not be used with respect to coaches, staff and athletes. This is important given that some persons use such technology to engage in online or other electronic sexual solicitation.

As with face-to-face situations, clubs should take steps to eliminate privacy in electronic communications, including:

- All club-related communication should be directed to the parents/guardians.
- If club-related communication is necessarily directed to a child, a copy should be sent to the parent/guardian simultaneously.
- Staff should be prohibited from contacting athletes for any reason not related to club business, including personal contacts, email, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular/regular phone, social networking pages or other communication vehicles.
- If it is appropriate for staff to share their personal contact information, it should be given to the parent/guardian.

During team travel, personal contact information may be shared with athletes who have communication devices so long as:
- use is restricted to travel-related communication; and
- athletes simultaneously copy a parent/guardian on all such communication.

- Advise parents that while engaging with an official club page or account through social media is acceptable, coaches, staff and volunteers should not be individually “friended” or the like via any personal social media account.

Electronic communication often increases with team travel, particularly with regard to travel details (for example, where the carpool is meeting or the time for meeting in the hotel lobby for dinner). The same electronic communication precautions should be taken.

Locker Rooms/Restrooms

It can be easier to conceal on-site abuse because contact at a usual training or practice facility can send fewer signals that something out of the ordinary is taking place. Additionally, when athletes are changing clothes, showering, toilet- ing or otherwise unclothed, they are less likely to run away to avoid abuse.

Whenever possible, have separate locker/restroom facilities for boys and girls, and separate the locker/restroom facilities for coaches and staff from those used by athletes. Assign a staff member to keep an eye on locker rooms and restrooms. When traveling and/or at meets, direct gymnasts to enter the locker rooms and restrooms in groups of at least two at all times. Conduct regular sweeps of the locker room and restroom areas to avoid having a child alone with an adult or older athlete in a typically private area of the facility.

Appendix Resources

C Template Team Travel Policy
D Template Electronic Communication Policy
E Template Locker Room/Restroom Policy

Q: WHAT CAN I DO?

- Plan team travel so as to reduce the possibilities for grooming or abuse to occur.
- Conduct specific training of chaperones prior to traveling.
- Establish a general email to receive copies of all coach/staff communication to parents and athletes (e.g., communication@gymclub.com).
- Schedule staff sweeps, conducted in pairs, of locker rooms/restrooms at regular, frequent intervals and have assigned staff sign-off that the sweep has been completed.
Successful club owners recognize that the people who work in the gym are critical in managing a safe environment. Issues can be avoided, or handled as effectively as possible, if the right people are in the right places at the right times doing the right jobs. Therefore, it is important to have a hiring/screening process in place so clubs can identify prospective employees (and volunteers) who share, support and work consistently with the club’s commitment to a safe environment.

A comprehensive background screening process should be implemented and consistently followed by all clubs not only to select the best possible candidates, but also to screen out those who may expose the club or its constituencies to various risks, including the risk of abuse of students or others. Effective screening and hiring practices generally should include:

**Employment Application** – The application should include past work history, volunteer involvement, educational background, previous addresses, and criminal convictions (excluding conviction information protected by law from disclosure). Your application should also include a statement about your club’s zero tolerance for abuse.

**Interviews** – Each applicant should be interviewed by at least two separate staff. Interview formats should be standardized and documented. Candidates should be asked to read and ask questions about your standards of behavior and all safe environment policies during the interview.

**Personal and Professional Reference Checks** – A minimum of three reference checks that include past employers and family members should be required for every applicant. Use a standardized list of questions and always include questions about an applicant’s ability and suitability to work with children.

**Criminal Background Checks** – Use law enforcement or an agency that provides background screening services. (National Center for Safety Initiatives is one such service. You can visit them at [www.NCSISafe.com](http://www.NCSISafe.com).) These services will use databases that include local, county, and state records and will also search sex offender lists. Clubs should understand that background checks are not fool proof as no single national database exists that includes all criminal activity. **Note: Many background checks are covered by the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), which requires certain notice and consent forms. In addition, various federal, state, and local laws restrict employers’ ability to make hiring or other employment decisions based on arrests and certain types of convictions. Clubs should always consult with counsel to ensure legal compliance.** (For general information, visit [https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/using-consumer-reports-what-employers-need-know](https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/using-consumer-reports-what-employers-need-know).)

**USA Gymnastics Membership** – Check USA Gymnastics’ list of Permanently Ineligible members prior to employment and annually ([www.usagym.org/ineligible](http://www.usagym.org/ineligible)).

**Sex Offender Registry** – Check the applicable federal or state sex offender registries prior to employment and annually. A search may be conducted at [www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov).
Web Searches – Social media and Google searches can be a useful tool in learning more about an applicant. However, some jurisdictions limit employers’ ability to consider various types of off-duty conduct. Also, as noted above, various jurisdictions restrict employers’ ability to consider arrests and certain types of convictions.

Questions a club might ask a potential employee or volunteer to screen out those who have abused or are at risk to abuse include:

- Have you ever been convicted of or entered a plea of guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or indictment in any jurisdiction directly or indirectly related to sexual misconduct, child abuse or laws designed to protect minors?  
  **Note:** In some jurisdictions, this question must be limited or rephrased to ensure the applicant does not disclose conviction information protected by law.
- Are you listed on any state or federal sexual offender list or registry, or have you been declared a sex offender in any applicable state or federal jurisdiction?
- Is additional information, such as a different name or nickname necessary in order to check professional or personal references?
- Has any action ever been taken (e.g., complaint filed, investigation conducted, reprimand, probation, suspension, expulsion) with respect to your USA Gymnastics membership?

Appendix Resources

F  Template Employee and Volunteer Screening Policy
G  Sample Application for Employment/Volunteering
H  Sample Hiring/Screening Checklist

What Can I Do?

- Thoroughly screen each prospective employee before offering employment or prospective volunteer before offering an assignment.
- Consider how frequently staff/volunteers will be rescreened.
No matter how thorough, clear and well thought out your safe environment/athlete protection policy and standards of behavior are, they will not prevent or effectively address sexual misconduct and inappropriate behavior if no one knows about them or they are not implemented.

Coaches, staff and volunteers should be trained with respect to:

- Your club’s safe environment/athlete protection-related policies.
- Your club’s standards of behavior.
- The consequences for violations of policies or standards.
- Grooming techniques and signs of abuse.
- Your club’s procedures for reporting suspicious behavior.
- Your state’s mandatory reporting obligations.

Training should occur:

- Before prospective coaches/staff are employed or volunteers are assigned by distributing a copy of your policies and standards as part of the hiring/screen process and inviting candidates to ask questions or express concerns before they are hired or assigned.
- During new employee/volunteer orientation.
- At staff meetings no less frequently than annually.

Encourage and empower coaches, staff and volunteers to:

- Conform their behavior to the club’s policies and standards so as to prevent the possibility of false accusations.
- Speak up if they see the use of grooming techniques, troubling or suspicious conduct, or conduct that does not appear to comply with the policies and standards.
- Suggest revisions to the policies or standards if they see ways to improve or enhance the safety of the club’s programs, activities or events.

Implementation of a safe gymnastics environment depends in large measure on coaches, staff and volunteers following the club’s policies and standards while working with the athletes a club serves. Training is a necessity for successful implementation.
USA Gymnastics’ Participant Welfare Policy, Code of Ethical Conduct and Bylaws clearly and unequivocally prohibit sexual abuse and misconduct, thereby establishing zero tolerance for that type of behavior in our sport. Each member of the gymnastics community must be willing to report suspicious behaviors in order to keep your students, yourself and your sport safe.

**Reporting Violations of Safe Environment/Athlete Protection Policy or Standards of Behavior**

Suspicious behaviors may be violations of your club’s safe environment/athlete protection-related policies and/or standards of behavior but not rise to the level requiring a report to the authorities of child abuse or suspected abuse. For example, a coach texts an athlete without simultaneously copying his/her parents, or all coaches exit the gym after the last practice of the night leaving one staff member with one athlete whose parent is late picking him or her up.

Clubs should have a procedure for receiving and responding to reports of potential policy violations when this type of conduct occurs.

**Reporting Suspected Abuse to Legal Authorities**

You should be familiar with the law in your state requiring reports of child abuse to the authorities; your state government’s website can be a good place to start. The Administration of Children & Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which can be accessed at [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/). The Gateway includes information on mandatory reporting along with specific state laws.

If you are aware of child abuse, report to law enforcement immediately. If for any reason you suspect child abuse, including behavior you observe or information that is disclosed to you, you should consult counsel immediately about whether you are required to report to law enforcement. The costs of consulting counsel are very small compared to the possible costs to the athlete and others for not acting promptly and responsibly. The law in your state likely requires a citizen to report suspected child abuse whether or not the citizen has proof that the abuse occurred. The authorities will determine whether there is enough information to proceed with an investigation. Having basic information such as the names and ages of the alleged victim and perpetrator and a general description of the alleged or suspected abuse will help you report. But you should not try to investigate on your own. Rather, that is the role of law enforcement personnel. The law typically requires such reports to be made to the authorities very promptly, and it may impose criminal sanctions on those who fail to make a required report. Therefore, you should approach the issue of reporting to the authorities with the utmost seriousness.

**Reporting/Response Policy**

It is important that your club have a reporting/response policy:

1. **distribute the policy** to coaches, staff, volunteers and parents;
2. **encourage and empower** them to report suspected abuse and policy violations to the club and/or the legal authorities;
3. **describe the reporting procedure** so they know whom to contact; and
4. **describe the response procedure** that the club will use for each report. The response procedure should provide for consideration of whether it is necessary or appropriate to make a report to USA Gymnastics pursuant to Article 10 of its Bylaws.

While it is our hope that preventive strategies will reduce the need to make a report of misconduct, a club must be prepared to address a situation if it arises.

**Appendix Resources**

- Template Reporting Policy
- Sample Club Incident Report

**Q. WHAT CAN I DO?**

- Learn your legal reporting requirements.
- Designate who in your club will receive reports of suspicious behaviors.
- Add Child Protective Services’ phone number to your club phone list.
- Familiarize yourself with how to make a misconduct report to USA Gymnastics.
To be successful in preventing sexual misconduct and inappropriate behavior, clubs must talk about it. Sexual misconduct and inappropriate behavior thrive in secrecy. One of the best things clubs can do is openly and frequently address the topic so that all concerned become more comfortable bringing this issue out of the shadows.

Talking about it does not mean your club has an issue now or had an issue in the past – rather, it conveys to the families you serve that your club takes the issue seriously, is proactively taking preventive measures, and is ready to address any issue that comes up, all to keep your students, yourself and your sport safe.

Communications with Parents

Clubs should be prepared to answer questions from parents about their efforts to provide a safe gymnastics environment. How would your club answer the following parent inquiries:

- Do you conduct criminal background checks on your employees?
- Do you allow children to be alone with adults?
- Who addresses suspicious behaviors?
- Are unattached adults permitted in your gym?
- Can I hire my child’s coach as a babysitter?
- Is there any area in the gym where I won’t be able to see my child?

- During annual registration, distribute a copy of your policy to the parents so they understand your prevention efforts, expectations for coach/staff/volunteer behavior, and reporting mechanisms.
- Invite parents to actively monitor the activities/events in your club.
- Encourage and empower parents to speak up if they see troubling or suspicious conduct, or conduct that does not appear to comply with the club’s policies and standards.
- Encourage parents to gain additional resources at www.USAGymClub.com/we-care.
- Encourage parents to take the U.S. Olympic Committee’s online SafeSport training program at http://safesport.org/take-the-training.
Appendix

This appendix contains resources, checklists, tools, samples and policy templates. Clubs can use them to assess their existing environment and to develop, review and revise their own safe environment policies, procedures and protocols. Clubs should use their own judgment in customizing a safe environment plan that fits their specific business needs and complies with any applicable laws. Here again, clubs should consult their own legal counsel in developing their safe environment plan and their policies.
Resources – Children’s Advocacy Organizations

American Humane Association
1400 16th Street NW • Suite 360
Washington, DC 20036
Toll free: 800-227-4645
www.americanhumane.org

Childhelp, USA
National Headquarters
15757 N. 78th Street, Suite B
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
Phone: 480-922-8212
Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD
www.childhelpusa.org

Child Lures Prevention / Teen Lures Prevention
5166 Shelburne Road
Shelburne, Vermont 05482
Phone: 1-800-552-2197
www.childluresprevention.com

Child Welfare Information Gateway
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Children’s Bureau/ACYF
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW
Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20024
Toll free: 800-394-3366
www.childwelfare.gov

Darkness to Light
7 Radcliffe Street, Suite 200
Charleston, SC 29403
Phone: 843-965-5444
National Helpline: 866-FOR-LIGHT
www.d2l.org

The Kempe Foundation for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
The Gary Pavilion at Children’s Hospital Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus
13123 E. 16th Avenue, B390
Aurora, CO 80045
www.kempe.org

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Charles B. Wang International Children’s Building
699 Prince Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: 703-224-2150
Hotline: 1-800-THE-LOST
www.missingkids.com
www.safetocompete.org

Prevent Child Abuse America
228 South Wabash Avenue
10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: 312-663-3520
www.preventchildabuse.org

SafeSport
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
www.safesport.org

Stop It Now!
351 Pleasant Street, Suite B-319
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: 413-587-3500
Helpline: 1-888-PREVENT
www.stopitnow.org/usagym
CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all coaches, staff, volunteers, athletes and parents, as well as, promoting an environment that is free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been set forth to promote a safe gymnastics environment, both solely and in partnership with other necessary parties, including staff, volunteers, parents, and athletes.

CLUB has “zero tolerance” for abuse, including inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct, in its programs, activities and events. All coaches, staff and volunteers shall abide by and adhere to all CLUB policies, standards, rules, procedures and guidelines pertaining to safe environments/athlete protection.

Definition of Abuse
[this is an example; CLUB should seek counsel and customize the definition of abuse]

Abuse, including child abuse, is defined in various sources, such as state statutes, case law, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human rights commission materials. CLUB has not adopted any specific definition of abuse; rather, it has chosen to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. Nonetheless, in general, the following conduct may be considered abusive:

Physical Abuse
1. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes the participant to sustain bodily harm, including without limitation striking, hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, shoving, forcing an athlete to train or compete when injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment.
2. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury.
3. Giving alcohol or inappropriate drugs to a participant.
4. Any violation of applicable law.

Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a gymnastics skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., spotting, catching) does not constitute physical abuse. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact particularly that which arises out of error on the part of the gymnast or coach, does not constitute physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse
1. Rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism or sexual exploitation.
2. Any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, unwanted physical contact, unwelcome advances or requests for sexual favors.
3. Any form of wanton or obscene gesturing, lewd remarks or indecent exposure.
4. Sexual abuse of a minor includes without limitation:
   - Touching a minor participant for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either person.
   - A minor participant touching any person, if the touching occurs at the request of or with the consent of such other person, for the sexual arousal or gratification of either person.
5. Neither consent of the participant to the sexual abuse or contact, mistake as to the participant’s age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a gymnastics function is a defense to a complaint of sexual abuse.

6. Sexual abuse also includes sexual misconduct described in the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct, including:
   - Soliciting or engaging in sexual relations with any minor.
   - Engaging in any behavior that utilizes the influence of a professional member’s position as coach, judge or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete.
   - Engaging in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
7. Any violation of applicable law involving sexual misconduct or child abuse, or that is specifically designed to protect minors.
Standards of Behavior
[these are examples; CLUB should customize the standards of behavior]

To promote a safe gymnastics environment for CLUB activities and events, and to lessen the likelihood of an abusive situation, coaches, staff and volunteers must adhere to the following Standards of Behavior, as well as, sound teaching and training.

- Children are to be supervised at all times, including:
  - Children who are dropped off early; and
  - Children who are not picked up immediately after class.
- CLUB personnel will never be alone with a child; two adults (one of whom may be a parent) are required to be present at all times.
  - This includes all travel situations, before and after classes and workouts, “private” lessons, etc.
- All interactions (practices, workouts, competitions, lessons, classes, meetings, etc.) with a child shall be observable and interruptible at all times.
- Care should be taken to ensure that such physical contact is not invasive of sensitive areas of the body.
- Children may only be picked up from the CLUB by a parent or other person designated by a parent.
- Parents are encouraged to become as active as reasonably possible in the activity/event.
- Out-of-program contact with athletes, such as babysitting, tutoring and ride giving, is prohibited.
- Gift-giving or providing special favors or privileges to individual athletes is prohibited.
- Lap-sitting, tickling, back rubs, wrestling and other incidents of body contact that are inconsistent with the coach-athlete relationship are prohibited.
- Provision of alcohol or inappropriate drugs to athletes is prohibited.
- Electronic and social media communications with athletes are subject to CLUB’s Electronic Communications Policy.
- Travel with and transportation of athletes are subject to CLUB’s Team Travel Policy.
- Safety in the locker rooms/restrooms is subject to CLUB’s Locker Room/Restrooms Policy.

Reporting
Any suspected violation of this policy or CLUB’s other safe environment/athlete protection-related policies, standards, rules, procedures and guidelines should be reported and will be addressed pursuant to CLUB’s Reporting Policy. Violations could result in progressive discipline up to and including immediate termination.

Other
A copy of this policy shall be placed in conspicuous locations in locker rooms/ changing areas, restrooms, front desk reception area, and employee notification area, and posted on CLUB’s website and social media pages/accounts.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

______________________________
Date

______________________________
Employee Signature
CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all, and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Because travel to and from practices, and during the season to and from competitions, is a daily part of gymnastics life, CLUB has established this Team Travel Policy to establish clear boundaries, minimize one-on-one interactions, and protect the welfare of our athletes, parents and coaches/staff during team-related travel. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

Team Travel involves coordinated group travel to a competition.

• Overnight travel presents a risk for athletes because opportunities for an adult to isolate an athlete increase and the athlete may depend on the adult more due to the unfamiliar surroundings.

• Local travel (defined as travel to daily training or individual athlete travel to a local meet) presents a risk for athletes because there may be controllable periods of one-on-one time that can be used to groom or abuse an athlete.

Team Travel

Travel for competitive team members coordinated by CLUB (or Booster Club) can involve travel to local invitationals, state or regional meets, or to national-level events. Depending on the number of athletes competing and the destination, travel may be by car or airplane, and can involve overnight stays.

Because of the age of the athletes and greater distances, coaches, staff, and parents/chaperones will often travel with the athletes. CLUB will identify an appropriate athlete-to-chaperone ratio based on the type of travel. No adult/chaperone 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 applicable laws.

Overnight Travel

For team member travel, CLUB will book hotels and air travel in advance. Team members will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. Coach-Athlete meetings do not occur in hotel rooms, and CLUB will reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize.

CLUB encourages family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, CLUB encourages all athletes to contact parents, at a minimum, on a daily basis.

Travel Notification

All transportation plans must be communicated to parents with reasonable advance notice, including the dates, location and duration of competition. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a dedicated CLUB contact person. CLUB will provide to all parents, coaches and team members specific travel itineraries and include the detailed competition schedule, as well as contact information for designated team travel chaperones.

Mixed Gender and Mixed-Age Travel

CLUB’s competitive team has male and female athletes across various ages. Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same sex and age group and will also be grouped by age and sex for the purposes of assigning appropriate chaperones. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent of that particular athlete).

Coach/Staff Responsibilities

When not training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches will monitor the activities of athletes, fellow coaches and athletes. Coaches and staff will:

• Prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 18.

• Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel.

• Encourage athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents.

• Help athletes be on time for all team commitments.

• Assist with team travel logistical needs.

• Support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary.

• Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room.
with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff and chaperones.
• Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their coaching duties.
• Notify parents before taking any disciplinary action against a minor athlete if the athlete is traveling without his or her parents.

Chaperone Responsibilities
Chaperones will monitor the activities of all coaches, and athletes during team travel. Specifically, chaperones will:
• 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 communications with their parents.
• Help athletes be on time for all team commitments.
• Assist coaches, staff and other volunteers with team travel logistical needs.
• 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 bracket requirements.
• Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their chaperone duties.
• Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches and chaperones.

Individual Travel for Team
The nature of our sport and competition structure means that individual athletes may sometimes need to travel overnight without other athletes. Under these circumstances, we encourage minimizing one-on-one time between a coach and athlete by:
• Traveling with an additional coach or coach of the same gender, if possible.
• Inviting parents to travel with the athlete.

Additional consideration should be given to:
• Compressing the travel schedule to reduce the number of nights away from home.
• Regularly scheduled check-in phone calls to the traveling athlete and coach.
• Encouraging more frequent and unscheduled check-in phone calls initiated by parents (for minor athletes).
• Complying with reasonable parental requests when a child is a way from home without a guardian.

Communication with Parents During Team Travel
CLUB is committed to communicating with parents during team travel:
• Parents will be provided with the cell phone numbers for all of the adults on the trip for emergency contact as well as information for all hotels and venues.
• Athletes are encouraged to use their cell phones and other forms of electronic communication during trips and encouraged to send information to their parents—especially regular updates from the road and changes to schedules.
• Dedicated times will be established for athletes to contact their parents. A CLUB provided cell phone might be made available for athletes who don’t have their own cell phone.
• Any changes to the detailed travel itinerary as well as progress (such as reaching the airport/hotel, etc.) will be provided by CLUB as soon as reasonably possible.
• An e-mail or text group, Facebook page, Skype, Google+ Group, etc. can be established for broadcasting information to parents as a group and set a schedule for broadcasting travel progress to parents.

Local Travel
CLUB does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for local travel. Athletes or their parents are responsible for making all local travel arrangements. In these instances it is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents to ensure the person transporting the athlete maintains all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver’s license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

It is preferred that parents transport their own athletes locally. When that is not possible, pre-arranged carpools are acceptable when multiple adults share the transportation responsibilities. Parents should pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement, or athletes should be picked up in groups at a designated public pick-up and drop-off location to ensure adults are not alone with a single athlete.

Other
Any violation of the Team Travel Policy could result in progressive discipline up to and including immediate termination.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Date

Employee Signature
CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all, and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been adopted regarding the electronic communications of all CLUB personnel.

### Use of Electronic Communication/Social Media for CLUB Business

- Social media and electronic communications (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, snapchat, texts, emails, blogs and web postings) provide an opportunity for misconduct to occur. Therefore, CLUB does not permit individual or private communication from coaches, staff, volunteers and administrators to gymnasts via these communication media.

- All e-mails, texts, and posts must be professional and related solely to the CLUB’s activities or events.

- All coaches, staff, volunteers and administrators are to distribute electronic and mobile communications to gymnasts openly and publicly, with a copy to the parents transmitted simultaneously.

- Coaches, staff, volunteers and administrators shall not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ any gymnasts or his/her parent, nor allow friending, following or the equivalent from a gymnast or parent on any personal social media account. Gymnasts and parents may only engage with an official CLUB page or account.

- No private information regarding the CLUB or any of its gymnasts may be distributed in any format.

- Parents and guardians have the right to request that their child not be contacted in any form of electronic communications. All such requests will be honored.

### Other

Any violation of the Electronic Communications Policy could result in progressive discipline up to and including immediate termination.

A copy of this policy shall be posted on CLUB’s website and social media pages/accounts.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

________________________________________
Date

________________________________________
Employee Signature
CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all, and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been adopted regarding the locker room and restroom areas of CLUB.

**Safety in Locker Rooms/Restrooms**
- Only participants, approved CLUB personnel and family members are permitted in the locker rooms and changing areas.
- Interactions with gymnasts in the locker room or restroom should be minimized. If necessary, any interactions with a child shall be observable and interruptible by a responsible adult of the same gender.
- Any meetings between a staff member and athlete in a locker room or changing area shall require that a second responsible adult of the same gender be present.
- Athletes are encouraged to come dressed for practice or competition and shower and change at home.
- Parents are responsible for tending to the toileting needs of their children.
- The use of recording devices of any kind (including smart phones) in the locker rooms and restrooms is strictly prohibited.
- Sweeps of the locker rooms and changing areas will be regularly conducted in pairs by CLUB personnel.

**Other**
Any violation of the Locker Room/Restroom Policy could result in progressive discipline up to and including immediate termination.

A copy of this policy shall be posted in the locker rooms/changing areas and restrooms.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Employee Signature
CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all, and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been adopted regarding the screening of all potential employees and volunteers:

**Guidelines for Screening Potential Employees and Volunteers**

- If an interview is offered, it will be conducted by at least two CLUB personnel. Candidates will be asked in the interview to review and ask any questions they may have about all of CLUB’s safe environment/athlete protection-related policies.
- A minimum of three references (at least one of which should be a family member) will be checked for all applicants.
- Each applicant will be asked to sign a release form permitting CLUB to ask detailed questions of former employers and other references. This release will prevent the applicant from taking legal action against CLUB, former employers or references based on the information learned during the reference checks.
- A minimum of three years of recent work or school history is required.
- All information such as employment dates, job titles, salary and types of jobs performed will be verified. Any discrepancies may disqualify the applicant.
- CLUB reserves the right to investigate an applicant’s Social Security number, current address, previous addresses, credit score, work history, and education history.

- All applicants will be screened for a criminal background, listing on a sex offender registry, and inclusion on the USA Gymnastics list of Permanently Ineligible members.
- Generally, an applicant will be presumptively disqualified and prohibited from serving CLUB if the person
  
  [CLUB to insert its disqualifying criteria here]

- Hiring or placement decisions regarding anyone with a pending charge for the above offenses will be based on an independent review of the facts and circumstances surrounding the arrest and may be delayed until the resolution of such charges.
- All applicants will be re-screened for a criminal background, listing on a sex offender registry, and inclusion on the USA Gymnastics list of Permanently Ineligible members on an annual basis.
- Applicants may be rejected based on content found on the applicant’s social-media pages reflecting comments or behaviors inconsistent with CLUB’s policies or interests.
- The information received during background screenings will be shared within the organization on a “need to know” basis and to third parties outside the organization as required or permitted by law.

**Other**

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
Thank you for your interest in working or volunteering at CLUB. CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all, and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. CLUB has zero tolerance for any type of abuse and seeks only to employ or engage as volunteers those persons who share its commitment to the welfare of all gymnastics participants.

Please answer each question fully and accurately. No action can be taken on this application unless it is complete. Use blank papers if you do not have enough room on this application. PLEASE PRINT, except for signature on back of this application. PLEASE USE INK.

Job Applied For: ______________________________________________________

Are you seeking (circle):  Full-time  Part-time  Temporary  Summer

When are you available to work (circle):  Days Evenings  Nights  Weekends  On call

When are you available to start employment? ______/______/______

Salary requested: $____________ per_____________

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Name (Last, First, Middle) ______________________________________________________________________________

Current Street Address __________________________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip _______________________________________________________________________________________

Telephone (______)__________________________ Message Telephone (______)__________________________

Are you at least 18 years of age (circle)?  Yes  No

E-mail address: ______________________________________________________________________________________

If hired, can you furnish proof you are eligible to work in the United States (circle)? Yes  No

How did you learn of the position (circle)? Newspaper ad  Walk-in  Job Line  Referral Other__________

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:** (Complete even if you have a resume to attach.)
Account for all periods of time including military service and any periods of unemployment. List your most current employment first. If self-employed provide company name and supply business references.

**NOTE**: Offered employment may be contingent upon acceptable references from current and former employers.

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<tr>
<th>Time in Position</th>
<th>Name and complete address of employer (street, city, state, zip)</th>
<th>Name and Title Of Last Supervisor</th>
<th>Salary or Wage</th>
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Your title: __________________________________________ Employer telephone ( _______) __________________________________

Key Duties: __________________________________________________________________________________________

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Your title: __________________________________________ Employer telephone ( _______) __________________________________

Key Duties: __________________________________________________________________________________________

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Your title: __________________________________________ Employer telephone ( _______) __________________________________

Key Duties: __________________________________________________________________________________________
EDUCATION:

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<th>School</th>
<th>Name and complete Address of School (Street, City, State, Zip)</th>
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SKILLS:
If you are an experienced operator of any computers, business office machines or equipment, please list.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Word Processing (specify software): _____________________________________________________________

Data Entry (specify programs): ____________________________________________________________

What computer software do you know how to use? ____________________________________________

What skills or additional training do you have that are related to the job for which you are applying?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

GENERAL: YOU MUST ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION.

Note: a conviction or pending charge will not automatically disqualify you from consideration. However, your failure to list a conviction, pending charge or guilty plea (except those protected by law from disclosure) will disqualify you from further consideration.

[Clubs to tailor to your jurisdiction:]  

1. Have you ever been convicted under any criminal law; including any plea of “guilty”, “no contest” or “deferred adjudication” (excluding minor traffic violations)? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, when, where, and what was the disposition? ____________________________________________

2. Do you have charges or prosecutions that are pending? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Have you ever been fired from a job, or asked to resign? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Do you have any relatives currently employed by this organization? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. May we contact your present employer? Yes ☐ No ☐ If no, please explain: ______________________

6. For driving jobs only: Do you have a valid driver’s license? Yes ☐ No ☐

   License No ____________________________ Class ______________ State ________ Expires: __________

7. USA Gymnastics Membership: Member number ________________________________________________

   Red Cross CPR/First Aid __________________________________________________ Expires __________
REFERENCES:

Give at least three references (including at least one family member) who are familiar with your qualifications.

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>COMPLETE ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip)</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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AFFIDAVIT, CONSENT and RELEASE

Please read each statement carefully before signing

I certify that all information provided in this employment application is true and complete. I understand that any false information or omission (except omissions protected by law) may disqualify me from further consideration for employment and may result in my dismissal if discovered at a later date.

I authorize the investigation of any or all statements contained in this application. I also authorize, whether listed or not, any person, school, current employer, past employers and organizations to provide relevant information and opinions that may be useful in making a hiring decision. I release such persons and organizations from any legal liability in making such statements. A copy of this Affidavit signed by me can be used as my authorization for release of information from my former employers, schools or persons named in this application.

I understand I may be required to successfully pass a drug screening examination. I hereby consent to a pre- and/or post-employment drug screen as a condition of employment, if required.

I understand that this application, verbal statements by management, or subsequent employment does not create an expressed or implied contract of employment nor guarantee employment for any definite period of time. If employed, I understand that I have been hired at the will of the employer and my employment may be terminated at any time, with or without reason and with or without notice.

I have read, understand and, by my signature, consent to these statements.

Date______________________ Signature ____________________________________________

For HR use only:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Sample Hiring/Screening Checklist

Candidate: ___________________________ Interview Date: ___________________________

Reviewer: ___________________________

During the Interview:
• Notified candidate he/she will be screened for criminal background, listing on a sex offender registry, and inclusion on the USA Gymnastics list of Permanently Ineligible members.
• If not done by background check provider, provided candidate with required Fair Credit Reporting Act consent and notice forms, as applicable.
• Notified candidate that if employed or offered a volunteer position, he/she will be re-screened on an annual basis for criminal background, listing on a sex offender registry, and inclusion on the USA Gymnastics list of Permanently Ineligible members.
• Informed candidate that he/she may be rejected based on content found on the candidate’s social-media pages reflecting comments or behaviors inconsistent with CLUB’s policies or interests.
• Explained that information received during background screenings will be shared within the organization on a “need to know” basis and disclosed to third parties outside the organization as required or permitted by law.
• Informed candidate that he/she will be presumptively disqualified and prohibited from serving CLUB if he/she has [insert CLUB’s disqualifying events].
• Informed candidate that he/she shall not be employed or permitted to volunteer until any pending charges or cases involving disqualifying events are either resolved or independently reviewed by CLUB and, depending on the resolution, may not be offered employment or a volunteer position.
• Provided copies of all safe environment/athlete protection-related policies to candidate, asked him/her to review them in detail, and offered candidate the opportunity to ask any questions he/she has about the policies.

After the Interview:
• A minimum of three references, including one family member, were checked. [Indicate which reference is a family member.]
  Reference #1: ___________________________ Date: ______________
  Reference #2: ___________________________ Date: ______________
  Reference #3: ___________________________ Date: ______________
• A minimum of three years of recent work or school history confirmed.
• Signed release form permitting the CLUB to ask detailed questions of former employers and other references.
• Applicant’s Social Security number, current address, previous addresses, credit score, work history, and education history confirmed.
• Employment dates, job titles, salary and types of jobs performed verified.

Date______________________ Signature ___________________________
CLUB is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all, and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been adopted with respect to reporting violations of CLUB policies and suspicions or allegations of abuse.

Witnessing Misconduct
If CLUB personnel or volunteers witness any type of misconduct occurring, he/she should interrupt or disrupt the conduct using reasonably necessary action given the circumstances.

Reporting Misconduct

What to Report and When
All CLUB personnel and volunteers must report:
1. Potential violations of any CLUB policy related to safe environments/athlete protection.
2. Suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse.

Reports should be made as soon as reasonably possible.

To Whom Reports Should be Made
Reports should be made to [CLUB designated persons].

CLUB will follow applicable law in reporting abusive situations to law enforcement authorities. CLUB 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 for reporting to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Failure to make a report when the law requires one can be a crime itself, so the gymnastics professional should consult counsel promptly and consider such matters with the utmost seriousness. CLUB personnel or volunteer’s failure to make a report will also be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

If, in CLUB’s reasonable and good faith judgment, reporting to the proper authorities is necessary to protect a person from the possibility of further abuse, it may make such report even if not compelled by law to do so.

CLUB will consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to make a report to USA Gymnastics pursuant to Article 10 of USA Gymnastics’ Bylaws with respect to such conduct.

How to Report
[CLUB designated persons] will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report, including oral or written, over the phone, via email or in person. It is helpful for reporting individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant; (2) the name of the individual alleged to have committed the misconduct; (3) the type of misconduct alleged; (4) when and where the alleged misconduct occurred; (5) the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct; and (6) a summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred.

[If CLUB allows anonymous reporting] Anonymous reporting is permitted. Anonymous reporters should bear in mind that anonymous reporting may make it difficult for CLUB to investigate and properly address allegations.

How Reports are Handled
When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against CLUB personnel or volunteer, CLUB may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program or suspend or change the assignment of that individual, as may be necessary, until the allegation has been investigated (by the proper authorities and/or the CLUB).

With respect to any alleged violation of its safe environment/athlete protection-related policies that do not require reporting to the proper authorities, CLUB will conduct an internal investigation. Each investigation will be driven by the facts of the conduct being investigated, and therefore the steps taken in each investigation may not be alike. Any investigation and action taken with respect thereto will be documented.

If a report alleges conduct that requires reporting to the proper authorities, CLUB may consult legal counsel regarding whether CLUB’s conducting a simultaneous internal investigation is appropriate or necessary. In situations where the proper authorities do not press criminal charges or pursue charges to trial, or where the alleged offender is acquitted at trial, CLUB still may investigate the alleged conduct to determine whether there was any violation of CLUB’s safe environment/athlete protection-related policies and take action accordingly.

CLUB will consult legal counsel about whether it will notify other parents of athletes when a report has been made against CLUB personnel or volunteers.
**Other**

**Consulting Legal Counsel**
CLUB may consult legal counsel with respect to any report made to CLUB pursuant to this policy. CLUB may also consult legal counsel with respect to (1) its or its personnel/volunteers’ legal reporting requirements; (2) investigating any report made to CLUB pursuant to this policy; or (3) any employment action that may be taken with respect to any violation of its safe environment/athlete protection-related policies.

**Confidentiality**
To the extent permitted by law, as appropriate, and to the extent possible, CLUB will keep confidential the complainant’s name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

**“Whistleblower” Protection**
Regardless of outcome, CLUB will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. CLUB will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

**Bad-Faith Allegations**
A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited and will be considered grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

A copy of this policy shall be placed in the front desk reception area and employee notification area, and posted on CLUB’s website and social media pages/accounts, along with the incident report form.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

**Date**

**Employee Signature**
Sample Incident Report Form

Date of report:________________________ Date of incident:________________________ Time: ___________________

Individual involved in incident (circle one):

Gymnast  Instructor/Coach  Spectator  Other

Name:______________________________________________________ Age: ____________ Gender: ________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________

City:_____________________________________________ State:____________ Zip: _________________________________

Home phone:_____________________________________ Other phone:_____________________________________

Level:___________________________________________ Club: _______________________________________________

Emergency contact:_____________________________________ Phone #: __________________________

Incident:

Site of incident (if not club): ____________________________________________________________

Location or event where incident occurred: _______________________________________________

Activity, apparatus and equipment involved: _______________________________________________

Full description of incident, including injured body part: __________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

Has this problem occurred before? YES NO UNSURE

Action taken, including first aid or other treatment: ___________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________
Witness:
First Name: ___________________________________ Last Name: ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________________________________
City: __________________________________ State: _______ Zip: __________________________________________
Home phone: ______________________ Other phone: _____________________________

OFFICE USE ONLY
Person Making Report: ____________________________ Person in Charge: ____________________________
Director’s Acknowledgment / Date: __________________________________________________________________
Owner’s Acknowledgment / Date: __________________________________________________________________
Follow-up Call Date: ______________________________________________________________________________
Follow-up Information: ___________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
ATTACH A COPY OF PHYSICIAN’S RELEASE

SAMPLE • SAMPLE • SAMPLE
Visit usagym.org/ClubsCare for more information.