

USA GYMNASTICS STRENGTHENS SAFE SPORT INITIATIVES

NEW SAFE SPORT POLICY EMPOWERS ATHLETES, OTHER MEMBERS

Earlier this summer, USA Gymnastics strengthened its safe sport efforts with the adoption of the USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy and accepted the recommendations contained in a comprehensive, independent review of its handling of safe sport matters conducted by former federal prosecutor Deborah Daniels. While USA Gymnastics is developing the implementation plan for these recommendations, the Safe Sport Policy, formerly known as the Participant Welfare Policy, is already in place and provides requirements and important information on mandatory reporting and Proactive Policies that empower athletes and guide athlete-coach interaction.

The health and well-being of athletes are a top priority, and USA Gymnastics is committed to promoting a safe environment for all gymnastics disciplines.

All USA Gymnastics members are required to report suspected abuse to law enforcement. This obligation is separate from notification to USA Gymnastics, the U.S. Center for Safe Sport or to a Member Club, as outlined below.

For matters involving sexual misconduct, members must make a report to law enforcement and notify the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which has the exclusive authority to handle sexual misconduct matters for the entire U.S. Olympic movement (including gymnastics).

Other forms of misconduct— including, but not limited to, physical, verbal and emotional misconduct, harassment, bullying and hazing— require notification to USA Gymnastics, which has jurisdiction over abuse issues that are non-sexual in nature, and to local law enforcement if the member believes a crime has been committed.

While the Center only handles sexual misconduct cases, the Center may, in its discretion and upon the written request of USA Gymnastics, accept jurisdiction over alleged violations of other safe sport misconduct.

Suspected violations of the Proactive Policies included in the Safe Sport Policy require notification directly to the respective Member Club and USA Gymnastics. For more information, go to usagym.org/safesport for USA Gymnastics information and the Safe Sport Policy and/or to safesport.org for information on the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Many of the provisions in the Safe Sport Policy impact the day-to-day activities of USA Gymnastics members. All members, including athletes (and their parents) and coaches, need to review the Safe Sport Policy, especially the Proactive Policies that set standards for professional boundaries and minimize the appearance of improprieties.

The following are specific Proactive Policies included in the Safe Sport Policy that must be adopted by all Member Clubs and that all members – athletes, coaches, judges and clubs – must follow. These policies not only affect and protect members of USA Gymnastics, but also ALL participants in a Member Club. Definitions of the terms used in the policies are available below.

NOTE: Definitions of terms used in the Proactive Policies are: a *Covered Adult* is a covered individual who is within the governance or jurisdiction of USA Gymnastics and over 18 years of age; and an *unrelated Covered Adult* is not a member of the athlete's immediate family; and a *Minor* is a covered individual who is under age. For more detailed information on the terminology listed below and other requirements, please consult the Safe Sport Policy.

1. ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

- An unrelated Covered Adult shall not be alone with a Minor (a) in a private setting, and (b) in any place that is inappropriate to the professional relationship (i.e., a social setting outside the training or competitive environment). A gymnastics activity conducted within the view and/or earshot of another adult is not considered a one-on-one interaction if it presents a meaningful opportunity for interruption.
- Gymnasts may not reside with an unrelated Covered Adult, nor may a Covered Adult reside with a gymnast's family.

2. TRAVEL

- When traveling, an unrelated Covered Adult shall not be alone with a Minor.
- For overnight travel, assign gymnasts to hotel rooms with age-appropriate, same-sex teammates.
- Do not allow an unrelated adult to share or be alone in a sleeping room with gymnasts.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- All e-mails, texts and posts must be transparent, professional and related solely to gymnastics activities or events. Covered Adults may not have out-of-program contact with gymnasts on social media. (For example, general communication regarding a gymnastics activity or event via a club's social media account is acceptable, but private communication via a coach's and/or a gymnast's personal social media account is not acceptable.)
- Covered Adults must distribute electronic and mobile communi-

cations to minor gymnasts openly and publicly; for example, with a copy to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or to the entire team transmitted simultaneously.

- Parents and guardians have the right to request that (a) their child not be contacted in any form of electronic communications, or (b) certain information about their child that they designate not be distributed in any form of electronic communications. All such requests will be honored.

4. PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

- Photographs or videos may only be taken (a) in public view; (b) if they observe generally accepted standards of decency; and (c) are both appropriate for and in the best interest of the gymnast.
- Examples of photos that should be edited or deleted:
 - Open straddle positions
 - Any image where the genital area is prominent
 - Images with misplaced apparel or where undergarments are showing
 - Suggestive or provocative poses
- Without a parent's (or legal guardian's) consent in the case of a Minor gymnast, or a gymnast's consent in the case of an adult gymnast, (a) gymnasts may not be photographed or filmed; and (b) no images of gymnasts may be posted publicly or privately. If consent is given, it may be revoked at any time.

5. LOCKER ROOMS/ CHANGING AREAS

- Interactions between Covered Adults and gymnasts should not occur in any room where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as the locker room, restroom or changing area. A second adult should be present for any necessary interaction between an adult and a gymnast in any such room.

- The use of recording devices of any kind in any such room is strictly prohibited.

6. GIFTING

- Gift-giving or providing special favors or privileges to individual gymnasts is prohibited.

7. MASSAGE/ICING/TAPING

- Any rubdown or massage performed on a gymnast by any unrelated Covered Adult must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only a gymnast and unrelated Covered Adult in the room.
- Icing and taping must be conducted in open/public locations and must never be done with only a gymnast and unrelated Covered Adult in the room.
- Icing and taping near the intimate areas of the body is not permitted by any unrelated Covered Adult— unless it is done by a licensed medical professional— and must never be done with only a gymnast and unrelated Covered Adult in the room.

8. STRETCHING AND OTHER PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Covered Adults should take care to prevent any compromising positions while stretching or closely interacting with gymnasts and must avoid:
 - laying or sitting on top of the gymnast.
 - facing the gymnast while he/she is in a static straddle position.
 - lap sitting.
 - pats on the bottom.
- Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a gymnastics skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., spotting, catching) is permissible. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment



on the part of the gymnast, participant or coach, does not violate this policy.

Athletes and parents should speak with their clubs to learn about the safe sport policies they have in place. Or, go to usagym.org/safesport to learn more about the Safe Sport Policy.

The entire gymnastics community— athletes, parents, coaches, administrators, judges, gym club owners and staff— needs to become one force, united in preventing abusive behavior.

