

Sexual Harassment Policy

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 improper or inappropriate comment, action, or gesture directed toward a person or group that is related to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristics.
- 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, 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. It can include 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.

It can include touching for the purpose of causing sexual arousal or gratification that involves a child, or forcing a child to pose for or watch pornographic materials. This includes, for example, rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism, and sexual exploitation. It can include chronic attacks on a child's self-esteem. This includes, for example, such psychologically destructive behavior as ridiculing, screaming at or swearing at, racism, threatening, stalking, hazing, and isolating.

It can include chronic inattention to a child's basic needs by someone responsible for the child's welfare. This includes, for example, improper supervision, not providing adequate food or rest, inadequate medical or dental care, and unsafe equipment or facilities.

Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse

1. Contact a Local Child Protection Agency

- **Mandated Reporters:** A key legal protection for children and youth across the United States is the requirement that, following special training in the identification and reporting of child abuse, people involved in certain occupations must report suspected child abuse to a local law enforcement agency or local public child welfare agency or both, depending on state law. These mandatory reporter occupations include health practitioners, teachers, social workers, psychologists, clergy, firefighters, police officers, day camp administrators and youth organization and youth recreation program employees and coaches, among others, as prescribed by state law. Therefore, if mandated reporters observe abuse or suspect abuse of a young skater, they are required by law to report it immediately. Mandated reporters may be U.S. Figure Skating team physicians, sport psychologists, or certain rink employees. They are not required to disclose the fact that they made such a report to the parent or guardian, nor are they supposed to investigate the situation. They will obtain only enough information to report a "reasonable suspicion." The reporters' identity is confidential and will only be disclosed between cross-reporting child protection agencies.
- **Other Observers:** If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected by a non-mandated reporter, that person should immediately telephone either a local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report. (If more than one child protection agency exists, many states require that they cross-report.) Some communities provide a child abuse hotline for this purpose. Even if observers are unsure as to whether or not an action, incident, or situation meets their state's legal definition of child abuse, they should report it. Child safety must be the most important consideration. To encourage this, the reporter's identity is always kept confidential. The local child protection agency is then responsible for assessing the matter and conducting any investigation. That agency is also responsible for informing the reporter as to what determination it made and what actions it took as a result of its evaluation. Observers should not attempt to handle the situation themselves or investigate the circumstances. Instead, they must report the matter to their local child protection agency.

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 ECR 2.00 and GCR 2.00.

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 XXVII, 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.

Condonation 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 XXVII, 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 XXVII, Section 3, of the U.S. Figure Skating bylaws.