

*U.S. FIGURE SKATING*  
***SKATESAFE***  
***HANDBOOK***





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## I. INTRODUCTION

### PART 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Handbook is to clearly communicate the key principles of U.S. Figure Skating's SkateSafe® Program and U.S. Figure Skating's commitment to athlete safety. The SkateSafe® rules and policies set forth in this Handbook, and as set forth in the [Code of the U.S. Center for SafeSport](#), apply to all U.S. Figure Skating Participants, as defined below. A violation of the SkateSafe® policies as found in this Handbook may be considered a violation of the U.S. Figure Skating Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics and/or GR 1.03, as found in the [General Rules of U.S. Figure Skating](#).

### PART 2: DEFINITIONS

#### ADULT

Anyone 18 years of age or older.

#### ADULT PARTICIPANT

Any individual 18 years of age or older who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of the alleged Misconduct:

- a) A Member of U.S. Figure Skating;
- b) An employee or board member of U.S. Figure Skating or a Local Affiliated Organization ("Member Clubs");
- c) Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating or a Member Club;
- d) Authorized, approved, or appointed by U.S. Figure Skating or a Local Affiliated Organization ("Member Club") to have Regular Contact with Minor Athletes or Authority over Minor Athletes; and/or

#### AMATEUR ATHLETE

A U.S. Figure Skating Member who is participating in, is training to participate in, or participated within the previous 12 months in a U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned event, program, activity, or competition such as test sessions, exhibitions, club activities etc.

#### AUTHORITY

When one person's position over another person is such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, they have the power or right to direct, control, give orders to, or make decisions for that person. Also see the Power Imbalance definition in the SafeSport Code.

#### BILLETING

A residential environment in which an Athlete is temporarily housed in a private home with an adult or family who is not related to or known by the Athlete. This lodging arrangement is in conjunction with an activity related to sport. U.S. Figure Skating, Member Clubs and Programs shall not facilitate billeting arrangements for Minor Athletes – billeting decisions must be made primarily by a Minor Athlete's parent(s) or permanent legal guardian(s), or by the Adult Athlete when applicable. Further, Minor Athletes are not permitted to billet with an Adult Participant unless a policy exception outlined in this handbook is met.

## **CLAIMANT**

The person who is alleged to have experienced conduct that constitutes a violation of this Handbook or a Code violation.

## **COACH**

Any Member who also meets U.S. Figure Skating's compliance requirements for being a Coach and/or Learn to Skate USA® Instructor.

## **CODE**

The rules, policies, procedures and practices of the U.S. Center for SafeSport. For the most up-to-date version of the Code, [click here](#). In the event of a discrepancy between any of the rules and policies set forth in this Handbook and the Code, the provisions of the Code shall govern.

## **DUAL RELATIONSHIP**

A U.S. Figure Skating approved exception applicable to certain policies when an Adult Participant has a role or relationship with a Minor Athlete outside of the sport program. Examples of Dual Relationships are Immediate Family Members as defined within this handbook and other extraordinary circumstances (such as Licensed Medical Professionals/Licensed Mental Health Professionals). Convenience is not considered an extraordinary circumstance. The Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian must apply for the exception by submitting [this completed form](#) to [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org) for review. The exception shall not be applied prior to written approval being granted by U.S. Figure Skating to 1) the parent/permanent legal guardian, 2) the Adult Participant with the dual role or relationship, and 3) the Minor Athlete's club President and SkateSafe® Compliance Chair when applicable. The parent/permanent legal guardian must apply for this exception on an annual basis. The exception will be considered void if a new application is not received after 365 days of the last exception approval.

The Dual Relationship exception may be revoked at any time by U.S. Figure Skating, the parent/permanent legal guardian, or by the Adult Participant with the approved dual role/relationship. If a parent/permanent legal guardian or the Adult Participant with the approved dual role/relationship wish to end the Dual Relationship exception, an email must be sent to U.S. Figure Skating at [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org) clearly stating the date of revocation. If no date is included, it will be assumed that the Dual Relationship exception is terminated at the time of the email.

The following documents must be submitted to [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org) as part of the Dual Relationship application:

1. Dual Relationship Application: [This application](#) must be completed in its entirety and signed by the parent/permanent legal guardian and the Adult Participant with the dual role or relationship.
2. U.S. Center for SafeSport's Parent SafeSport™ Training Course Certificate of Completion: The parent/permanent legal guardian requesting the Dual Relationship exception must complete the parent SafeSport™ Training course created and provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Instructions for taking this course and downloading the certificate of completion may be found at [www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe](http://www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe) or by contacting [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org).

## **IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER**

Spouse, domestic partner, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, stepparent, grandparent, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, including adoptive relationships.

### **IN-PROGRAM CONTACT**

In-Program Contact includes sanctioned events, activities and facilities, but it also applies more broadly to sport-related interactions. "In-Program Contact" is defined as:

Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport.

Examples of In-Program Contact include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post game meals or outings, team travel, review of film, team- or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.

### **JURISDICTION: PARTIAL OR FULL**

Includes any U.S. Figure Skating or LAO sanctioned event (including all travel and lodging in connection with the event), or any facility that U.S. Figure Skating or a LAO owns, leases, or rents for practice, training or competition.

### **LICENSED MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL/LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**

A person with the knowledge, skill and experience in the field of medicine or other therapeutic modality who has the requisite education and current applicable national and state licensure required for practice in their respective field (such as MDs, DOs, PAs, ATCs, PTs LMTs). A Licensed Medical Professional/Licensed Mental Health Professional must register with U.S. Figure Skating and must complete the SafeSport™ Training and pass the U.S. Figure Skating-approved background check with a green-light finding prior to working with Athletes.

### **MEMBER**

A person who meets the membership requirement(s) as outlined in Article V of the current U.S. Figure Skating Rulebook.

### **MEMBER CLUB (LOCAL AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION or LAO)**

A figure skating club registered with U.S. Figure Skating. This includes interim, provisional, and full-member clubs.

### **MINOR or CHILD**

An individual under the age of 18 years old.

### **MINOR ATHLETE**

An Amateur Athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of, U.S. Figure Skating or a LAO.

### **MISCONDUCT**

Conduct that results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. The primary types of Misconduct in sport are emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, bullying, threats and harassment, and hazing. The willful failure to report Misconduct one observes may also be Misconduct.

### **NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY (NGB)**

A U.S. Olympic National Governing Body, Pan American Sport Organization, or Paralympic Sport Organization recognized by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501, et seq. This definition shall also apply to the USOPC, or other sports entity approved by the USOPC, when they have assumed responsibility for the management or governance of a sport included on the program of the Olympic, Paralympic, or Pan-American Games.

### **PARTICIPANT**

Any individual who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of the alleged Misconduct:

- a) A Member of U.S. Figure Skating;
- b) An employee or board member of U.S. Figure Skating or a Local Affiliated Organization (“Member Clubs”);
- c) Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating or a Member Club;
- d) Authorized, approved, or appointed by U.S. Figure Skating or a Local Affiliated Organization (“Member Club”) to have regular contact with Minor Athletes or authority over Minor Athletes; and/or

### **OUT-OF-PROGRAM CONTACT**

Adult Participants who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete should not have Out-of-Program Contact with Minor Athlete(s), even if the Out-of-Program contact is not one-on-one.

### **PROGRAM**

A U.S. Figure Skating initiative or skating activity organized for the purpose of education, participation, recreation, or competition. A Member Club is not a Program.

### **REGULAR CONTACT**

Ongoing interactions during a 12-month period wherein an Adult Participant is in a role of direct or active engagement with any Minor Athlete(s).

### **RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT**

A place in which participants live or stay temporarily. Residential Environments include, but are not limited to, onsite housing at training facilities, billeting, hotel stays, billeting, or rentals (i.e., Airbnb, VRBO, HomeToGo, etc.).

### **RESPONDENT**

A Participant who is alleged to have violated a provision of this Handbook or of the Code.

### **UNITED STATES OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE (USOPC)**

A federally chartered nonprofit corporation that serves as the National Olympic Committee and National Paralympic Committee for the United States

### **PART 3: THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT**

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 authorizes the U.S. Center for SafeSport to develop training and policies to prevent abuse—including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse—within the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(1). Federal law requires that, at a minimum, national governing bodies and Paralympic sports organizations must offer and give consistent training related to the prevention of child abuse: (1) to all adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors and (2) subject to parental consent, to members who are minors. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(3) Federal law requires that these policies contain reasonable procedures to limit unobservable and uninterrupted one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete, who is a minor, and an adult, who is not the minor’s legal guardian, at facilities under the jurisdiction of organizations within the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement. 36 U.S.C. § 220542(a)(2).

### **PART 4: ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

All NGBs, LAOs, and the USOPC (the “Organization”) must implement proactive policies designed to prevent abuse. These organizational requirements can be found [here](#).

## **II. ATHLETE AND MEMBER PROTECTION POLICIES**

U.S. Figure Skating established the following Athlete and Member Protection Policies to help prevent sexual, emotional, and physical abuse and misconduct of an Athlete or Participant at U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities. U.S. Figure Skating requires each Member Club and organizers of U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events and activities to implement, monitor and report violations of the policies contained within this Handbook.

The policies within this Handbook apply during all In-Program Contact unless a policy exception exists. These Athlete and Member Protection Policies apply to all Adult Participants, regardless of role.

Minor Athletes who reach the age of majority (i.e. 18 years of age) must adhere to the provisions found in these Athlete Protection Policies when interacting with Minor Athletes who are more than four years younger.

Minor Athletes who reach the age of majority and then obtain a position of authority that presents a power imbalance, such as becoming a coach, official, or board member must also comply with these prevention policies regardless of the age of the minor athletes with whom they will interact.

#### **POLICY EXCEPTIONS:**

1) CLOSE-IN-AGE EXCEPTION:

This exception applies to certain policies and allows for In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

- a) The Adult Participant has no Authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- b) The Adult Participant is not more than four years older (determined by birth date) than the Minor Athlete.

*Note: This exception only applies within the policies outlined below and not regarding conduct defined in the SafeSport Code.*

2) EXCEPTIONS FOR DUAL RELATIONSHIPS:

This exception applies to certain policies when the Adult Participant has a role or relationship with a Minor Athlete that is outside of sport. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete’s

parent/permanent legal guardian at least annually. The consent must identify for which Required Prevention Policies the parent/guardian is allowing during One-on-One In-Program Contact.

### 3) PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT

An Adult Participant who assists a parasport athlete who requires help with activities of daily living (ADL) and preparation for athletic participation. This support can be provided by a Guide for Blind or visually impaired athletes or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration, and toileting. Personal Care Assistants are different for every athlete and should be individualized to fit their specific needs.

Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants are permitted to be with and assist Minor Athlete(s) in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces where other Minor Athletes are present, if the following requirements have been met:

- a) The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has completed the SafeSport™ Training; and
- b) The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has successfully passed a U.S. Figure Skating approved background check; and
- c) The Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete.

The exceptions above apply to the following policies:

1. Two-Deep Leadership
2. One-on-One Interactions
3. Gifting
4. Electronic Communication
5. SkateSafe® Travel Policy

#### Emergency Exceptions

This exception applies to all Athlete and Member Protection Policies where an Adult Participant must violate a requirement(s) of these policies due to an emergency. Adult Participants must carefully consider whether specific circumstances meet the threshold of "emergency." Adult Participants should document emergency situations where policies are violated by self-reporting the events through U.S. Figure Skating's [online reporting tool](#).

### **PART 1: TWO-DEEP LEADERSHIP**

Two-Deep Leadership is one of the cornerstones of U.S. Figure Skating's Athlete and Member Protection Policies. Two-Deep Leadership is a mandatory policy that requires at least one other person to be present at all times when an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete are interacting in person and are not in a public viewing area where the interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another Adult (i.e., "rule of 3").

Note that this section refers only to in-person interactions. Additional requirements for electronic communications can be found on page 9.

Additional requirements for Two-Deep Leadership involving a Minor Athlete during medical evaluations or athletic training modalities can be found on page 14.

The policy exceptions listed on page 6 apply to U.S. Figure Skating's Two-Deep Leadership policy.

## **PART 2: REQUIRED POLICIES FOR LIMITING ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH MINOR ATHLETES**

Federal law, notably the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, requires reasonable procedures to limit every one-on-one interaction that is not observable and interruptible between a Minor Athlete and an Adult (who is not the minor's parent or permanent legal guardian) at U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events and activities by another Adult, except under emergency circumstances.

### **OUT-OF-PROGRAM CONTACT**

Adult Participants, who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have an approved Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete, should not have Out-of-Program contact with Minor Athlete(s) without parent/permanent legal guardian consent, even if the Out-of-Program Contact is not one-on-one.

### **APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

A one-on-one meeting between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant may be necessary to address an Athlete's concerns, training program or competition schedule. All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, except in emergency circumstances or with a documented exception. This policy applies to all Adult Participants. The following are appropriate one-on-one interactions:

#### ***Meetings***

Any In-Program meeting with a Minor Athlete must occur when others are present (Two-Deep Leadership), except under emergency circumstances or when there is a documented exception. Individual one-on-one meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed by and at a distance from which another Adult can interrupt. If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door must remain unlocked and open and there must be another Adult who is able to observe and interrupt. If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the Adult Participant must inform and request that another Adult, preferably the Minor's parent or permanent legal guardian, be present in the room and ensure the door remains unlocked. If an office has a window, blinds and/or curtains should remain open during the meeting.

An example of a meeting where it may be necessary and/or appropriate to conduct a private closed-door meeting is between a Minor Athlete and a mental health professional, licensed health care provider, or a student under the supervision of a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider to discuss confidential concerns. In these types of one-on-one interactions, the mental health professional must receive written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent or permanent legal guardian consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time, U.S. Figure Skating or the Member Club is notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete, and the mental health professional must inform another staff member and that staff member must be present at the facility while the meeting is occurring, although the identity of the Minor Athlete needs not be disclosed. In no case is it permissible to conduct a meeting with a Minor Athlete with the door locked.

It is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete completes the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to have a meeting with an Adult Participant subject to these policies.

#### ***Individual training sessions***

Individual training sessions between Minor Athletes and a Coach (or another Adult Participant) are a major component of figure skating. These training sessions are considered In-Program Contact. The Minor Athlete's training session must occur in a location where the Minor Athlete may be easily observed and at a distance from which another Adult may interrupt, unless a policy exception exists. On-ice training at a public ice rink is an example of a permissible individual training session because it is in a public viewing area and interactions can be easily observed and, if necessary, interrupted by another Adult. The Adult Participant providing the individual

training session must receive advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually, which can be withdrawn at any time. Parents/guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

It is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete completes the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to have an individual training session with an Adult Participant subject to these policies.

### **PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

While some one-on-one interactions may be necessary (such as individual training sessions), specific examples of prohibited one-on-one interactions provide Coaches, parents, Minor Athletes, and other Participants with clear rules and expectations for athlete safety. It is important for Member Clubs to communicate this Two-Deep Leadership policy to its Members and set clear boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior to protect Minor Athletes and all Participants. Except as set forth in the policy for appropriate one-on-one interactions, Minor Athletes cannot be left unattended or unsupervised during U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events, activities and In-Program Contact.

Adult Participants are prohibited from being alone with a Minor Athlete or having contact with a Minor Athlete that is not observable and interruptible in any room or facility unless:

- a) There is an emergency;
- b) The Adult Participant is the Minor Athlete's parent or permanent legal guardian; or,
- c) There is a specific exception to this policy contained elsewhere in this Handbook.

The policy exceptions listed on page 6 apply to U.S. Figure Skating's One-on-One Interactions Policy.

### **GIFTING**

Adult Participants, who do not meet the Close-in-Age Exception nor have a Dual Relationship with a Minor Athlete, shall not give personal gifts to Minor Athlete(s) without the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian consent.

Gifts that are distributed to all athletes or gifts that serve a motivational, educational, or celebratory purpose are permitted. These gifts may be personalized, but not personal. All gifts given to a Minor Athlete must be approved by the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian prior to being given to the Minor Athlete.

## **PART 3: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

All electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about skating activities unless a policy exception applies. Additionally, all electronic communication between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Open and Transparent. This policy applies to all Adult Participants who do not qualify for a policy exception listed on page 6. Electronic communications shall include, but are not limited to: email, text messages, phone calls, videoconferencing, video coaching, WhatsApp, social media messaging, or communication through any other electronic medium.

"Open and Transparent" means that the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant (i.e., an Adult Athlete, Team Leader, or Coach) on every communication.

U.S. Figure Skating recommends that the content of all electronic communication with a Minor Athlete should be saved by the Adult Participant for a period of three years and be readily available to share upon request with the Minor Athlete's family or a representative of the Member Club or U.S. Figure Skating.

If a Minor Athlete communicates with an Adult Participant electronically without copying one of the required adults as outlined above, the Adult Participant must follow this policy if the Adult Participant responds. When an Adult

Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes, the Adult Participant must copy or include the Minor Athlete's parents/permanent legal guardians, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant as outlined above.

Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication may be used for Adult Participants to communicate with Minor Athletes when a policy exception does not exist.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Adult Participants, except those with a Dual Relationship or a Close-in-Age Exception, are prohibited from having a private social media connection with Minor Athlete(s) and must discontinue existing private social media connections with Minor Athlete(s). Private social media connections include those that are not visible to the public, i.e., Snap Chat. An example of a permissible social media connection includes public Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Adult Participants and Minor Athletes are not permitted to "private message" or "instant message" each other privately. Adult Participants are encouraged to set their personal social media pages to private settings to avoid Minor Athletes' attempts to friend, follow, or access their sites.

Nothing in this policy is meant to prohibit a Member Club from utilizing social media to communicate to its Members and promote its program or from Adult Participants from "following" and "privately messaging" each other.

Member Clubs are required to have a signed Name and Likeness Consent and Release Agreement by the Minor Athlete's parent or permanent legal guardian before any distribution, posting of photos, videos, images, etc. Sharing of a Minor Athlete's contact information on any social media site is strictly prohibited.

Adult Participants should not publicly share or post photos or videos of Minor Athlete(s) if the Adult Participant has not obtained the parent/permanent legal guardian and the Minor Athlete's consent.

#### **PARENTAL/PERMANENT LEGAL GUARDIAN REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Member Clubs, Programs and Adult Participants must comply immediately with a request from a Minor Athlete's parent or permanent legal guardian that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication unless necessitated by an emergency. Failure to immediately comply with such a request is a violation of this Electronic Communication Policy.

#### **PART 4: LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS**

Parents/permanent legal guardians are prohibited from being in a locker room except for when it is necessary to assist their child under 11 years of age, and their presence is necessary to assist their child.

Adult Participants are not permitted to enter a locker room where Minor Athletes may be actively changing or undressing unless:

- a. A policy exception on page 6 applies, or
- b. An emergency circumstance arises where an Adult is needed in the locker room.

If an Adult Participant who does not meet a policy exception is entering a locker room that is not designated for changing and where no Minor Athletes will be in any state of undress, all In-Program contact with Minor Athlete(s) must be observable and interruptible and two-deep leadership must be met by having at least one other person (preferably another Adult Participant) present.

### **LOCKER ROOM CONDUCT:**

The following applies for all In-Program Contact in locker rooms, changing areas, and other similar spaces:

- Adult Participants must not remove their clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a Minor Athlete.
- Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes unless the Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age Exception.
- No Adult Participant or Minor Athlete can use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in any area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing.
- Media and championship celebrations in locker rooms are prohibited (celebrations where photographic or recording devices would be used to document the celebration). Such documented celebrations must occur outside of a changing area.
- Parent/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with Adult Participant(s) during In-Program Contact. U.S. Figure Skating or the Member Club or Program and the Adult Participant(s) must abide by this request.
- Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants are permitted to be with and assist Minor Athlete(s) in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces where other Minor Athletes are present. They must meet all requirements on page 7.

Availability and Monitoring of Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

- A private or semi-private place must be provided to all Minor Athletes that need to change clothes at all U.S. Figure skating-sanctioned events or facilities that are under the partial or full jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating or the Member Club.
- U.S. Figure Skating and/or the Member Clubs and Programs must monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas available to Minor Athletes to ensure compliance with these policies at all sanctioned events or facilities that are under the partial or full jurisdiction of U.S. Figure Skating or the Member Club.

### **CLUB AND PROGRAM LOCKER ROOM SIGNAGE**

All Member Clubs and Programs are required to publish locker room/changing area policies and post at the facility locker room door during U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events or where the Member Club or Program is responsible for regularly and randomly monitoring the use of locker rooms and changing areas at a facility under our jurisdiction to ensure compliance with these policies.

Clubs and Programs shall include the following information in their posting:

- Procedures for supervising and monitoring locker rooms and changing areas with at least one Participant.
- A policy statement prohibiting parents/permanent legal guardians from being in the locker rooms except for when it is necessary to assist their child under 11 years of age, are of the same sex and their presence is necessary to assist their child.
- A list of prohibited conduct, including all forms of abuse and misconduct prohibited by U.S. Figure Skating.
- Specific policies regarding the use of mobile digital devices (e.g., mobile phones, tablets, etc.) and prohibiting the use of photographic or recording capabilities of any device in designated changing areas.
- Coaches are prohibited from being in the locker room with a Minor Athlete unless the Coach is the parent or permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete under 11 years of age, are of the same sex and their presence is necessary to assist their child.

Locker rooms used for warm-up and that are intended to be co-ed will be labeled as such and require that the door be open at all times and shall not be used for undressing. These spaces will be referred to as “Ready Rooms.” In the event of a medical situation or emergency, U.S. Figure Skating officials working on behalf of the event (such as doctor, physical therapist, chief referee) or emergency medical personnel will be permitted into the locker room/changing area.

The use of any recording and photographic devices inside a locker room/changing area is strictly prohibited.

Locker rooms and changing areas at U.S. Figure Skating competitive events are for Athletes only, will be labeled with regard to specific use and where identified will be gender specific. An exception can be made for Athletes under 11 years of age who will be allowed one parent or permanent legal guardian of the same sex to assist their child immediately prior to and after their skating event, where parental assistance is necessary. Coaches who are not the parent or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete will not be allowed in the locker room, regardless of the age of the Athlete.

- [Click here](#) for sample signage for clubs, programs, and competitions.

### **CO-ED LOCKER ROOMS**

If the club activity or event consists of more than one gender, all genders’ privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate locker room and changing arrangements must be made. Where possible, Member Clubs and Programs should have separate locker rooms. If separate locker rooms are not available, the Athletes will take turns using the locker room to change or use the appropriate restroom within the facility. Member Clubs and Programs must refer to applicable federal and state law.

## **PART 5: SKATESAFE® TRAVEL POLICY – LODGING AND TRANSPORTATION**

The purpose of U.S. Figure Skating’s SkateSafe® Travel Policy is to provide guidance, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of Misconduct. All travel must strictly adhere to Two-Deep Leadership requirements. During In-Program travel, all meetings shall be conducted consistent with U.S. Figure Skating’s one-on-one interaction policy.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program Contact during Transportation is observable and interruptible.

An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one and Two-Deep Leadership requirements must be adhered to at all times during In-Program travel (except if an exception as outlined on page 6 of this document applies) by transporting at least two minors who are at least 8 years of age or a second Adult Participant.

It is the responsibility of the parent/permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete to ensure the person transporting the Minor 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 laws and the U.S. Center for SafeSport required and U.S. Figure Skating’s policies.

U.S. Figure Skating recommends that parents/permanent legal guardians complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport education and training on child abuse prevention before allowing their child to travel without a parent/permanent legal guardian being present. Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/permanent legal guardian may withdraw consent at any time for such transportation arrangements.

Written consent from a Minor Athlete’s parent/guardian is required for all transportation sanctioned by U.S. Figure Skating or the LAO at least annually. The parent/permanent legal guardian may withdraw consent at any time.

It is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete completes the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to be transported by an unrelated Adult Participant.

## **LODGING AND RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS**

All In-Program Contact during lodging between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible unless a policy exception exists. Lodging arrangements covered under this policy include, but are not limited to, hotel stays, rentals (i.e., Airbnb, VRBO, HomeToGo, etc.), Billeting and long-term Residential Environments, including lodging at training sites.

### **Hotel Rooms and Other Sleeping Arrangements**

An Adult Participant cannot share a lodging arrangement, as outlined above, with a Minor Athlete(s), except if a policy exception on page 7 is met and the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian has provided U.S. Figure Skating or the Member Club or Program or Adult Participant with advance, written consent for each specific lodging arrangement. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. If rooms are connected, such as a hotel with adjoining rooms, a lock must be in place to limit access between the two rooms.

Under circumstances where U.S. Figure Skating a Member Club, or a LOC is responsible for making all travel arrangements for a Minor Athlete's overnight travel, U.S. Figure Skating will follow the organization's Travel and Expense Policy as well as this SkateSafe® Travel Policy and follow Two-Deep Leadership Requirements.

- o [Click here](#) to read the U.S. Figure Skating's Travel and Expense Policy in its entirety.

Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually. This consent can be withdrawn at any time by the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian.

### **Monitoring**

If the Organization or team performs room checks during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interactions policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present for the room checks.

### **Additional Requirements**

Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athlete(s) are assumed to have Authority over Minor Athlete(s) and thus must comply with the Education and Training policy, unless the Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age exception for all Minor Athlete(s) participating in the overnight travel.

It is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete completes the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for lodging arrangements under this policy.

## **TEAM OVERNIGHT TRAVEL**

U.S. Figure Skating requires a Member Club or Program to make efforts to provide adequate supervision through participation of Adult Participants. For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance and Two-Deep Leadership requirements will be met at all times. Minor Athletes 13 years and older may share rooms, with two to four Minor Athletes assigned per room, depending on accommodations. Minor Athletes will share a hotel room with other Minor Athletes of the same gender and a similar age. It is recommended that meetings between Minor Athletes and Adult Participants do not occur in hotel rooms (but may occur in hotel lobbies or other meeting rooms). If an Adult Participant will be transporting Athletes, that Adult Participant shall abide by Two-Deep Leadership requirements by transporting at least two minors who are at least 8 years of age or a second Adult Participant, have a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicle and shall comply with all state laws and the policies set forth in this Handbook. This policy does not apply when a Minor Athlete is traveling with an Adult Participant who is also a person with a Policy Exception as outlined on page 6.

Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian is required for all transportation sanctioned by US Figure Skating or LAO at least annually. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

It is recommended that a Minor Athlete always travel with their parent/permanent legal guardian.

All Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athlete(s) must agree to and sign the organization's lodging policy at least annually and are assumed to have authority over Minor Athletes and must complete the Center's SafeSport™ Training and pass a U.S. Figure Skating background check.

## **PART 6: MANUAL THERAPY, THERAPEUTIC AND RECOVERY MODALITIES, AND MEDICAL EVALUATIONS AND TREATMENTS**

In addition to being required to adhere to all U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Policies, the following requirements apply to all In-Program treatments. There are generally two types of medical professionals at a rink during U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned events:

- Emergency Medical Staff, such as EMTs or other professionals contracted by the host club, may be rink-side during the event in case of an immediate medical emergency. These individuals will be stationed in public area that is observable where any activity between the EMT and the Athlete(s) may be interrupted by another Adult in a timely manner, and will only provide emergency medical care. As such, these individuals do not have regular or repeated access to Athletes and are not required to complete any compliance requirements.
- Licensed Medical Professionals/Licensed Mental Health Professionals (MDs, DOs, PAs, ATCs, PTs and LMTs) available for injury and illness evaluation/treatment will be stationed in a "medical room" at the rink during an event, competition, training camp, etc. These individuals are available for Athletes to seek out regarding injuries and illness that are not an immediate health emergency and shall observe the guidelines provided below.

An individual evaluation or treatment may be necessary to address an Athlete's physical injury or illness at an event or competition. Under these circumstances, Licensed Medical Professionals/Licensed Mental Health Professionals shall observe the following guidelines:

- All Licensed Medical Professionals/Licensed Mental Health Professionals must be compliant pursuant to this Handbook (which includes passing a U.S. Figure Skating approved Background Check and completing SafeSport™ Training) prior to having any contact with Athletes.
- Any individual evaluation or treatment performed by a Licensed Medical Professional/Licensed Mental Health Professional shall meet Two-Deep Leadership requirements, as outlined below.
- Two-Deep Leadership requirements are met when there is either a third-party present or the evaluation/treatment takes place in a publicly visible open area that is observable and interruptible by another nearby Adult Participant. When a Minor Athlete is being evaluated or treated, Two-Deep leadership must be met by having another Adult Participant present.
- Medical emergencies are exempt from the Two-Deep Leadership requirement.

There are times when it is appropriate for a Minor Athlete to receive a massage, manual therapy, icing, or other therapy from a Licensed Medical Professional.

- Massage, manual therapy, icing or other therapy performed on a Minor Athlete must always be observable and interruptible and must always have a second Adult Participant physically present.
- Any massage or manual therapy must be provided by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional.
- Any massage, manual therapy, icing or other therapy should never involve touching of a Minor Athlete's intimate areas.
- Even if a Coach is a licensed massage therapist, the Coach shall not perform a massage or manual therapy on a Minor Athlete.
-

- If traveling with their Minor Athlete, the parent or permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete is encouraged to attend evaluations and treatments.
- Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breast, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered.
- Allow parents/permanent legal guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing.
- The provider must narrate the steps in the modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.
- Providers of manual therapy and therapeutic and recovery modalities or U.S. Figure Skating or Member Clubs, when applicable must obtain consent at least annually from Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian before providing any manual therapy, therapeutic modalities, or recovery modalities. This consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- It is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete completes the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to receive a manual therapy, therapeutic modality, or recovery modality.

### III. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

#### PART 1: U.S. FIGURE SKATING SKATESAFE® PROGRAM COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

U.S. Figure Skating requires Adult Participants as outlined in the matrix located in Appendix A to have successfully completed the SafeSport™ Training and a U.S. Figure Skating-approved Background Check with a green-light finding prior to participating in and/or preparing for U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events and activities. The Members Only landing page accessed through [www.usfigureskating.org](http://www.usfigureskating.org) is the portal members and volunteers will use to complete the background check and SafeSport™ Training requirements – along with all other compliance requirements for various member roles.

As of January 1, 2025, Appendix A of this Handbook outlines SafeSport™ Training and Background Check requirements for specific roles.

[Click here to view the FAQs regarding Compliance](#)

#### PART 2: ADULT PARTICIPANT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

All Adult Participants who require compliance must successfully complete a background check and the SafeSport™ Core Training Course, along with all other compliance requirements required by role, before having any contact with Minor Athletes and within 45 days of initial membership or a new role, whichever comes first.

If all compliance components for an Adult Participant's identified role are not complete, the Adult Participant is not authorized to participate in the identified role.

#### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background Checks include screens are performed on behalf of U.S. Figure Skating by the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI). NCSI is a third-party that specializes in providing background screens for Adults participating in youth sports. NCSI is responsible for interpreting results and reporting to U.S. Figure Skating. All personal identifying information for an applicant is provided directly to NCSI, therefore NCSI is responsible for complying with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and maintaining the confidentiality of information obtained in the background search process. Per U.S. Figure Skating's Background Check Disqualifiers Policy, additional information outside of an NCSI screen may be considered in the Background Check.

- [Click here](#) for more information on NCSI and the background check process.
- [Click here](#) or visit [www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe](http://www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe) to learn more about U.S. Figure Skating's Background Check Disqualifiers Policy.

Background screens for designated Adult Participants are required to be completed every other year through NCSI on or before the beginning of the U.S. Figure Skating membership year (July 1). Background checks typically take between 5-10 business days to receive a determination from NCSI. In some instances, applicants receive a request for additional information. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants allow at least two weeks for completion of the background check prior to having contact with any Minor Athletes.

A person must be at least 18 years of age to submit a background screen through NCSI. Designated Participants who are 17 must complete the U.S. Figure Skating NCSI background screen within 45 days of turning 18. It is recommended that a background screen is submitted within the first week of an Adult Participant turning 18 to ensure NCSI has time to issue a finding within 45 days of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## SAFESPORT™ TRAINING

Adult Participants, as identified below, must complete SafeSport® Training before Regular Contact with any Amateur Athlete(s) who is a Minor OR within the first 45 days of either initial membership or upon beginning a new role subjecting the Adult Participant to this policy, whichever comes first.

### Adult Participants Required to Complete Training:

1. The following Adult Participants must complete the *SafeSport® Trained Core Course* online through the Center's training portal:
  - a. Adult Participants who have Regular Contact with any Amateur Athlete(s) who is a Minor;
  - b. Adult Participants who have Authority over any Amateur Athlete who is a Minor;
  - c. Adult Participants who are an employee or board member of U.S. Figure Skating or a Member Club.
2. Adult Participants, who are medical providers, required to take training can take the Health Professionals Course in lieu of the *SafeSport® Trained Core Course* and are required to take the refresher courses on an annual basis if they will continue to serve as a medical provider for a U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned event or activity.

The above-listed Adult Participants must complete a refresher course every 12 months, beginning the calendar year after completing the SafeSport™ Trained Core Course. Every four years, Adult Participants will complete the SafeSport™ Trained Core Course training.

A Participant in a role that requires completion of the SafeSport™ Training must do so on or before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. 17-year-olds may take the training early with parent/permanent legal guardian consent. Consent can be provided within the person's online profile.

### Training Exemptions:

The Center's online training courses contain information about various forms of abuse. The courses do not include graphic descriptions of abuse or show violent images or video. The content may be uncomfortable or trigger trauma for some individuals.

1. Exemptions for Survivors: Exemptions to the online training requirement may be requested by survivors of abuse and misconduct. Survivors of abuse can request an exemption by contacting U.S. Figure Skating at [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org) or by contacting the Center directly at [exemptions@safesport.org](mailto:exemptions@safesport.org). All exemptions granted by the Center and U.S. Figure Skating in this category are considered indefinite and do not need to be re-requested each year.
2. Other exemptions: Exemptions to the online training requirement for reasons other than being a survivor of abuse or misconduct are limited to cognitive or physical disability or language barrier. Requests for these exemptions must be made to U.S. Figure Skating at [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org). If U.S. Figure Skating grants a training exemption, the rationale and duration of the exemption will be tracked in the member's U.S. Figure Skating record.
3. The Center has several options available to assist individuals in completing the online training courses, including screen reader-compatible versions and course availability in several languages. If none of these options will fit the individual's needs, the individual must contact U.S. Figure Skating at [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org) for further information regarding a potential exemption.

### Optional Training:

The U.S. Center for SafeSport has a catalog of training courses available for free to individuals with a U.S. Figure Skating or Learn to Skate USA profile. All adult members are encouraged to explore these training opportunities.

Adult Participants serving in a volunteer capacity, who will not have Regular Contact with or Authority over any Amateur Athlete(s) who is a Minor, are encouraged to complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's brief Volunteer Course (or SafeSport™ Trained Core Course) before engaging or interacting with Athlete(s) of any age.

At least every 12 months, U.S. Figure Skating must offer and, subject to parental consent, give training to Minor Athletes or amateur athletes who are minors on the prevention and reporting of child abuse. These free youth courses are created and provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport and can be located at [www.safesporttrained.org](http://www.safesporttrained.org).

At least every 12 months, U.S. Figure Skating must offer training to parents on the prevention and reporting of child abuse. The U.S. Center for SafeSport offers a parent training course located at [safesporttrained.org](http://safesporttrained.org) that is free for any person with a U.S. Figure Skating or Learn to Skate USA account. All parents and guardians are encouraged to explore and complete in the Center's online training courses.

U.S. Figure Skating and Member Clubs and Programs may provide training in addition to the U.S. Center for SafeSport's required courses. These training sessions cannot be referred to as "SafeSport" training. Training other than the U.S. Center for SafeSport's "SafeSport™ Trained" Core or Refresher courses do not satisfy U.S. Figure Skating compliance requirements.

#### **VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE**

U.S. Figure Skating tracks the compliance of designated Adult Participants through an automated database that is updated daily. It is the responsibility of Member Clubs and Programs to verify that all designated Adult Participants have fulfilled all compliance requirements prior to participating in a sanctioned event (e.g., test sessions, competitions, ice shows, etc.). For non-qualifying events, the Chief Referee and LOC Chair are responsible for compliance verification.

- [Click here](#) for information on compliance verification.

## **IV. TYPES OF MISCONDUCT**

### **U.S. FIGURE SKATING CODE OF CONDUCT**

U.S. Figure Skating will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment (including sexual harassment), misconduct, (including sexual, physical and emotional misconduct), bullying or hazing of any of its members including Coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, Athletes and volunteers — or any other persons — while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating (GR 1.03, Rulebook).

- [Click here](#) to read U.S. Figure Skating's Code of Conduct in its entirety.

In addition, it is a SkateSafe® violation for a Participant to violate any provision of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Code or Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) or other proactive policies adopted by the USOC.

- [Click here](#) for the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code.
- [Click here](#) for the most recent version of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's MAAPP.

In the event of a discrepancy between any definition of the misconduct addressed below and the Center's Code or MAAPP, the Center's Code or MAAPP definition shall take precedent.

There are six types of misconduct addressed in the U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Program:

- Sexual misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Emotional misconduct
- Bullying, threats and harassment
- Hazing
- Willful Toleration

## **PART 1: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is non-consensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an Athlete of any age and a Participant with evaluative, direct or indirect authority (called an “imbalance of power”). Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

### **EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

#### Touching offenses

- Unwanted touching by a Participant of the breasts, buttocks or genitalia of another Participant.
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team selection, scores, feedback, free lessons/ice time, etc.) for sexual acts.
- Sexual relations or intimacies between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete (and in some cases between an Adult Participant and an Adult Athlete, except in the event of a pre-existing relationship between spouses or life partners).

#### Non-touching offenses

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an Athlete or Participant, or other sexually harassing behavior.
- An Adult Participant discussing his or her sex life with a Minor Athlete or another Participant.
- An Adult Participant asking a Minor Athlete or another Participant about his or her sex life.
- An Adult Participant requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress image to a Minor Athlete or another Participant.
- Exposing Minor Athletes or other Participants to pornographic material.
- Sending Minor Athletes or other Participants sexually-explicit or suggestive digital or written messages or images (i.e., “sexting”).
- Deliberately exposing a Minor Athlete or other Participants to sexual acts.
- Deliberately exposing a Minor Athlete or other Participant to nudity.
- Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature.

Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an Adult. All sexual interaction between an Adult and a Minor is strictly prohibited. Sexual contact between two Minors can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, size or development.

## GROOMING

Abusers may try to control their victims through a systematic process called grooming. An abuser grooms a victim by pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable and the abuser forms connections with their victims (and often the victim's family). Since interactions between an abuser and a Child can occur in sport settings around other people, Participants are well positioned to observe and report grooming behavior.

### *Six Steps of Grooming*

1. Targeting the victim: An abuser will identify a Child and determine his or her vulnerabilities.
2. Gaining trust: Through watching and gathering information about the Child, an abuser will become acquainted with his or her needs.
3. Filling a need: Abusers will often provide lavish gifts, extra attention and affection to forge a bond with their victims.
4. Isolating the Child: By developing a special relationship with the Child, an abuser creates situations in which he or she is alone with the Child.
5. Sexualizing the relationship: An abuser will desensitize a Child by talking to, taking photos of and even creating situations in which both the abuser and victim are touching or naked. The abuser then uses a Child's curiosity and feelings of stimulation to engage in sexual activity.
6. Maintaining control: To ensure the Child's continued participation and silence, abusers use secrecy and blame as well as other tactics. Victims sometimes continue the relationship out of fear or shame at the thought of having to tell someone about the abuse.

All questions or concerns related to suspicious or suspected grooming behavior shall be immediately reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport at [www.uscenterforsafesport.org](http://www.uscenterforsafesport.org) or call 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233).

## PART 2: PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

Physical misconduct is physical contact with a Minor Athlete or Participant that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the Minor Athlete or Participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical misconduct may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit a Minor Athlete or Participant with objects or sports equipment. Physical misconduct includes providing alcohol to a Minor Athlete or Participant under the age of 21 and providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to an Athlete or Participant.

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

### EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

#### *Contact offenses:*

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping a Minor Athlete or Participant.
- Intentionally hitting a Minor Athlete or Participant with objects or sporting equipment.
- Providing alcohol to a Minor Athlete or Participant under age 21.
- Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any Minor Athlete or Participant.

#### *Non-contact offenses:*

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

- Encouraging or permitting a Minor Athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional after a serious injury (e.g., a concussion).
- Prescribed dieting or other weight-control shaming (e.g., public weigh-ins, caliper tests for humiliation purposes, encouraging disordered eating behaviors, or failure to act or intervene upon discovery of an eating disorder).

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

- The physical contact takes place in a public area where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another Adult. There is no potential for physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact.
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the Minor Athlete or Participant, not to meet an emotional or other need of an Adult Participant.

### **PART 3: EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT**

Emotional misconduct involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a Minor Athlete or Participant. These behaviors may include verbal acts, physical acts or acts that deny attention or support. Emotional Misconduct is typically perpetuated by a person in a position of authority over a Minor Athlete.

#### **EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT**

- Verbal acts: A pattern of verbal behaviors that attack a Minor Athlete or Participant personally (e.g., calling them “worthless,” “fat” or “disgusting”); repeatedly and excessively yelling at a Minor Athlete or Participant in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- Physical acts: A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of a Minor Athlete or Participant; punching walls, windows or other objects with the purpose of intimidating the Minor Athlete or Participant.
- Acts that deny attention and support: A pattern of ignoring a Minor Athlete or Participant for extended periods of time or routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Minor Athlete or Participant from practice.

Note: A single incident, such as a verbal outburst, may be inappropriate, but does not constitute emotional misconduct, which requires a pattern of harmful behaviors over time.

### **PART 4: BULLYING, THREATS AND HARASSMENT**

Bullying and threats can be written, verbal, physical or digitally transmitted expressions. Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person emotionally, physically or sexually. A threat is any intent to physically injure or harm someone.

#### **EXAMPLES OF BULLYING**

- Verbal acts: Teasing, ridiculing, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.
- Physical acts: Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting or slapping; throwing objects such as sporting equipment at another Participant.
- Cyberbullying: Using digital communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, humiliate or socially exclude someone.

Bullying behavior is different from mean or rude behavior in the following ways:

- Mean is defined as purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone very infrequently.

- Rude is defined as intentionally saying or doing something that hurts someone else, infrequently.
- Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive and persistent behavior repeated over time.

*The main distinction between “rude” and “mean” behavior has to do with intention. While rudeness is often unintentional, mean behavior very much aims to hurt or degrade someone. Mean and rude behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying shall be addressed at the club and/or local level, as they are not violations of the SkateSafe® policy.*

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment in sport includes any pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual Athlete or Participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability. It also can be the creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive.

Examples of harassment:

- Name-calling
- Taunts
- Threats
- Belittling

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual Harassment is a form of harassment prohibited by this policy. It shall be a violation for any Athlete or Participant to harass another Athlete or another Participant through conduct or communications of a sexual nature or to retaliate against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

If the U.S. Center for SafeSport does not exercise jurisdiction, U.S. Figure Skating will act in accordance with its rules and appropriate corrective action shall be taken. Corrective action includes taking all reasonable steps to end the harassment, to prevent harassment from recurring and to prevent retaliation against anyone who reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment, even if the harasser and the Athlete or Participant being harassed are the same sex or gender and whether or not the Athlete or Participant resists or submits to the harasser, when:

- a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an Athlete or Participant’s participation in any activity; or
- b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an Athlete or Participant is used as the basis for decisions affecting the Athlete or Participant; or
- c) Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive such that it limits an Athlete’s or Participant’s ability to participate in or benefit from a program or activity or it creates a hostile or abusive environment.

Any conduct of a sexual nature directed by one Athlete or Participant toward another Athlete or Participant is presumed to be unwelcome and shall constitute sexual harassment. Acts of verbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex or gender, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature, may also constitute sexual harassment. Legitimate non-sexual touching or other non-sexual conduct is not sexual harassment.

An Athlete, parent or permanent legal guardian of an Athlete or Participant who engages in any act of harassing or sexually harassing behavior is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, removal from

the venue, suspension, permanent ban or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the harassing or sexually harassing behavior and/or result caused by such behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

## **PART 5: HAZING**

Hazing includes any conduct that is intimidating, humiliating, offensive or physically harmful that is typically an activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

Examples of hazing:

- Requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Tying, taping, or physically restraining an Athlete or Participant.
- Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature.
- Sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food.
- Social actions or public displays (e.g., public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule.
- Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.

## **PART 6: WILLFUL TOLERATION**

It is a violation of these SkateSafe® policies to willfully tolerate any misconduct where an Athlete or Participant observes or otherwise knows of misconduct but takes no action to report it on behalf of the affected Athlete or Participant.

# **V. REPORTING CONCERNS**

## **PART 1: MANDATORY REPORTING**

All Adult Participants, regardless of membership with U.S. Figure Skating, are required to report suspected SkateSafe® violations to U.S. Figure Skating. Participants are required to report suspected child abuse and/or sexual misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and local law enforcement. All other suspected SkateSafe® violations, including violations of the Athlete Protection Policies, should be reported to U.S. Figure Skating (or the U.S. Center for SafeSport). There are no fees for filing a SafeSport report with the U.S. Center for SafeSport or a SkateSafe® report with U.S. Figure Skating.

## **PART 2: REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

The U.S. Center for SafeSport handles all reports of sexual misconduct. Make a report to the Center if you have suspicions or have heard allegations of sexual misconduct, such as child sex abuse, non-consensual sexual conduct, sexual harassment or intimate relationships involving an imbalance of power (i.e., an inappropriate relationship between a Coach and an Athlete, regardless of age).

- [Click here](#) (or go to [www.uscenterforsafesport.org](http://www.uscenterforsafesport.org)) to make an online report involving sexual abuse and misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- You may also call the U.S. Center for SafeSport at: 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233).

Reports to the U.S. Center for SafeSport may be made anonymously.

### **PART 3: REPORTING OTHER SKATESAFE® VIOLATIONS**

All questions or concerns regarding possible SkateSafe® violations other than sexual misconduct, such as failure to comply with the policies set forth in this Handbook and other misconduct such as emotional or physical misconduct, bullying, hazing or harassment should be made directly to U.S. Figure Skating.

- [Click here](#) or (go to [www.USFigureSkating.org/SkateSafe](http://www.USFigureSkating.org/SkateSafe)) to make an online report that does not involve sexual misconduct or abuse.
- You may also call U.S. Figure Skating at 719.635.5200, option 6.
- You may also email [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org)

Reports to U.S. Figure Skating's SkateSafe® Committee may also be made anonymously, but please keep in mind that at times a reporter may need to be contacted for additional information. If a report is filed anonymously, this may not be possible. U.S. Figure Skating will use reasonable efforts to maintain anonymity but cannot guarantee that a report will remain anonymous. Anonymous reporting may make it more challenging for U.S. Figure Skating to investigate or properly address misconduct or abuse, but U.S. Figure Skating recognizes that it may be difficult for a Claimant to report an allegation otherwise. U.S. Figure Skating strives to remove barriers to reporting.

Reports not under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport will be addressed pursuant to U.S. Figure Skating Rules. U.S. Figure Skating's Rulebook can be found [here](#).

### **PART 4: BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS**

A report of abuse, misconduct or a policy violation that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad-faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Policy and 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 and/or criminal proceedings.

### **PART 5: WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

Regardless of whether the allegation(s) is proven, U.S. Figure Skating will support the Claimant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. U.S. Figure Skating will not allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish or in any way harm any individual(s) who report a concern in good faith. And such retaliatory actions against a Claimant may be grounds for disciplinary action.

## **VI. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION**

### **PART 1: MEMBER CLUBS AND PROGRAMS**

- Shall adopt, monitor and enforce compliance of all U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® policies.
- Shall adopt, monitor and enforce compliance of the SkateSafe® policies requiring all designated Adult Participants to have successfully completed the required background checks and SafeSport Training prior to such persons having access to Athletes or Participants.
- Shall promptly address any reports of abuse or possible misconduct and make certain that all such reports are completed as required under U.S. Figure Skating policies, the SkateSafe® Program, applicable U.S. Figure Skating rules and/or applicable law.
- Shall conduct reviews and evaluation of their Program to monitor and promote compliance with the U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® policies.
- Shall designate an 18+ club member, to hold the title of SkateSafe® Compliance Chair. In the absence of such designation, the SkateSafe® Compliance Chair shall be the club President. The SkateSafe® Compliance Chair must be a member of U.S. Figure Skating and must be fully compliant with SkateSafe® compliance requirements.

### **PART 2: CLUB SKATESAFE® COMPLIANCE CHAIR**

The Club SkateSafe® Compliance Chair is responsible for the implementation and coordination of the U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Program within their local club. The SkateSafe® Compliance Chair will serve as the liaison for the U.S. Figure Skating SkateSafe® Program and work within their local club to facilitate implementation of all aspects of the SkateSafe® Program.

#### **POSITION REQUIREMENTS**

The Club SkateSafe® Compliance Chair must be 18+ and a current member of U.S. Figure Skating in good standing and a home club member. A description for the SkateSafe® Compliance Chair position can be found [here](#).

### **PART 3: PARENT/PERMANENT LEGAL GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of a Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian to be knowledgeable of the contents within this SkateSafe® Handbook including the various forms of abuse and misconduct, compliance requirements of Adult Participants, and how to report alleged policy violations and allegations of abuse and misconduct.

This handbook outlines the six steps of the grooming process on page 20. It is the responsibility of a Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian to be familiar with this process and know how to respond to concerns of grooming during both In-Program Contact and Out-of-Program Contact.

U.S. Figure Skating does not have jurisdiction over interactions that occur during Out-of-Program Contact. It is the responsibility of the parent/permanent legal guardian of any Minor Athlete to have heightened awareness for all Out-of-Program Contact they allow their Minor Athlete to have with an Adult Participant.



It is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of all Minor Athletes complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before allowing their child to participate in any U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned event, program, or activity and continuously throughout the Minor Athlete's journey as a member of U.S. Figure Skating or Learn to Skate USA®. The U.S. Center for SafeSport's online education can be found at [safesporttrained.org](https://safesporttrained.org) and can be accessed for free by any person with a U.S. Figure Skating or Learn to Skate USA® online profile. Parents/permanent legal guardians without a U.S. Figure Skating or Learn to Skate USA® profile may reach out to [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org) for assistance with setting up a free non-member profile to access these training opportunities for free.

## APPENDIX A

<b>ADULT PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE SAFESPORT™ TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECK</b> <b>(Must be 18 years or older as of January 1, 2025)</b>			
U.S. FIGURE SKATING HOSTED EVENTS/ACTIVITIES*	CLUB/PROGRAM HOSTED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**	CLUB/PROGRAM DAILY OPERATIONS***	COACHES AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONALS**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Figure Skating staff, interns, Board Members, and Committee Chairs and Committee Members</li> <li>U.S. Figure Skating-hired independent contractors and/or vendors who have Regular Contact with or Authority over an Athlete(s)</li> <li>U.S. Figure Skating Officials and Prospective Officials/Test Judges</li> <li>Adult Participants and Adult Athletes appointed to travel with Team USA and/or the International Selection Pool (ISP): i.e., faculty, team leaders/managers, volunteer medical providing more than emergency medical services, and any other service providers attending a U.S. Figure Skating hosted event/activity</li> <li>Faculty, staff and volunteers who have Regular Contact with or Authority over Athletes for U.S. Figure Skating training camp</li> <li>Volunteer medical staff supporting U.S. Figure Skating national or international events</li> <li>S.T.A.R.S. anchors</li> <li>All coaches who are U.S. Figure Skating Members</li> <li>Foreign coaches working with U.S. Figure Skating Athletes</li> </ul> <p><i>*U.S. Figure Skating responsible for cost of background checks.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All volunteers in any sanctioned events or club/program activities who have Regular Contact or Authority over with Athletes</li> <li>Medical volunteers/staff providing more than emergency medical services</li> <li>Team Managers/Team Service Personnel for synchronized skating, collegiate skating, and theatre on ice teams</li> <li>Locker Room Monitors for all competitions, ice shows, club events, programs, and other club/program events and activities</li> <li>SAFESPORT™ TRAINING ONLY: Mandatory Athletes - Adult Athletes competing on a team (i.e., synchro, dance, pairs, theatre, etc.) with at least one Minor Athlete</li> </ul> <p><i>**Those listed in this column are responsible for the cost of background checks.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club SkateSafe® Compliance Chairs</li> <li>Club Board of Directors</li> <li>Club Chairs/Co-Chairs</li> <li>Club staff</li> <li>Any professional service provider (i.e., sport psychologist, nutritionist, choreographer, etc.) brought in by a club/program to work with Athlete(s)</li> <li>Adult Athletes who have Regular Contact with or Authority over a Minor Athlete(s)</li> <li>Any Adult assigned by the Club/Program to 1) be in a position of Authority or 2) have Regular Contact with Minor Athlete(s)</li> </ul> <p><i>***U.S. Figure Skating is responsible for the cost of background checks for one SkateSafe Compliance Chair per club. The club/individual is responsible for the cost of all others in this category.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult partners assisting in pair or dance tests with a Minor Athlete(s)</li> <li>All registered Learn to Skate USA Instructors, coaches, and Directors</li> <li>Any professional service provider (i.e., sport psychologist, nutritionist, choreographer, etc.) wishing to obtain a credential for a U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned event</li> </ul> <p><i>**Those listed in this column are responsible for cost of background checks.</i></p>