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USA LACROSSE
MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE
PREVENTION POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2020, the U.S. Center for SafeSport published the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) with Mandatory Components that National Governing Bodies (NGB), Paralympic Sport Organizations (PSO) and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) were required to adopt. This policy provides the minimum mandatory components that sports organizations should develop and implement. As the governing body for lacrosse in the United States, USAL has utilized the U.S. Center for SafeSport Model MAAPP as a best practice model to create this document.

USAL requires Local Lacrosse Organizations to use this model and ensure all stakeholders within their respective organizations are knowledgeable and understand their responsibility for implementation. USAL encourages that all organizations in the broader lacrosse community adopt these policies as well to ensure the safety of athletes and enrich the experience for all participants.

DEFINITIONS

Adult Participant

Any adult (18 years of age or older) who engages in the sport of lacrosse through a particular club, team, school or youth serving organization. An adult participant can include an athlete, coach, official, and administrator as well as a volunteer who regularly engages with a club, team, school, or youth serving organization. An adult participant need not be a member of USAL to have regular contact with youth, and as such is subject to this policy.

Amateur Athlete

An athlete who meets the eligibility standards established by the National Governing Body or paralympic sports organization for the sport in which the athlete competes.

Authority

When one person's role 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.

Close-in-Age Exception

An exception to certain policies is applicable when an Adult Participant does not have authority over a Minor Athlete and is not more than four years older than the Minor Athlete (i.e., a 19-year-old and a 16-year-old). Note: this exception only applies to prevention policies and is not regarding conduct defined in other governing policies.



Dual Relationship

An exception to certain policies is applicable when an Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent at least annually authorizing the specific exception.

In-Program Contact

Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport (i.e. practices, competition, camps/clinics, pre/post game meals and outings, team travel, etc.)

Local Lacrosse Organization (LLO)

An LLO is defined as a regional, state, or local lacrosse program, club, or organization that requires USA Lacrosse membership for its coaches, athletes, and/or officials.

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 an NGB, USPOC, or LLO.

Partial or Full Jurisdiction

Any sanctioned event (inclusive of all travel and lodging in connection with the event) by the governing body, LLO, or any facility that the governing body or LLO owns, leases or rents for practice, training or competition.

Personal Care Assistant

Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant who assists an athlete requiring help with activities of daily living 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 each athlete and should be individualized to fit their needs.

Regular Contact

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

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

USA Lacrosse, along with the U.S. Center for SafeSport, recognize that youth-adult relationships can be healthy and valuable for development. Policies on one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. As child sexual abuse is often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations, it is critical that organizations limit such interactions between youth and adults and implement programs that reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

POLICY: ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

There may be circumstances where a minor athlete may need to or may find themselves in a situation where they are one-on-one with an adult participant. Under these circumstances, USAL requires LLOs to observe the following guidelines when dealing with minor athletes/participants.

1. All one-on-one interactions between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete **MUST** be observable and interruptible except when:
 - a. A Dual Relationship exists;
 - b. The Close-In-Age Exception applies;
 - c. A minor athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant and:
 - a. The minor athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent for the Personal Care Assistant to work with the minor athlete.
 - b. The Personal Care Assistant has complied with USA Lacrosse's background screening and training requirements as outlined in the Athlete Protection and Safety Policy.
 - d. Any other instances not expressly stated in this policy that allow for certain one-on-one interactions if the LLO receives parent/guardian consent.

MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

In concurrence with the One-On-One Interactions Policy, all meetings and training sessions must be observable and interruptible. The following guidelines should be observed during meetings and training sessions:

- a) Meetings between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances.
- b) Meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- c) Any one-on-one interactions taking place in an office must have the door unlocked and open. If the office where this meeting is taking place has windows, the windows should be easily seen through, which may require curtains or blinds be opened.

- d) The only time a door may be closed during a one-on-one meeting is in the event of a meeting between a minor athlete and a mental health care professional where the following are also present:
 - a. The door remains unlocked;
 - b. Another adult is present at the facility;
 - c. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and
 - d. Written legal guardian consent is obtained by the mental health care professional (this consent may be withdrawn at any time by the guardian).

A customizable consent form template can be found [here](#).

ATHLETE TRAINING MODALITIES AND MESSAGES

All In-Program athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of a Minor Athlete must:

- a) Be observable and interruptible;
- b) Have another Adult Participant (as defined in the USAL Athlete Protection and Safety Policy as a mandated reporter) physically present for the athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown; and
- c) Have documented consent as defined in the subsection below
- d) Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered; and
- e) Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing
- f) Only licensed providers can administer a massage or rubdown
- g) Coaches, regardless of whether they are licensed massage therapists, cannot massage Minor Athletes
- h) Where possible, without compromising an athlete's privacy, such activities should be performed in open/public areas (e.g. training room but not behind a screen) and, in any event, should be observable and interruptible
- i) Icing and taping near the intimate areas of the body (i.e. bathing suit areas) is not permitted by a non-licensed medical professional
- j) The provider of any massage or other athletic training therapy should, if possible, narrate the steps in the activity before taking them, ensuring transparency and allowing questions the minor athlete may have throughout the entire process

Consent

- a) Providers of athletic training modalities, massages, and rubdowns or USAL or the LLO, when applicable, must obtain consent at least annually from Minor Athletes' parents/guardians before providing any of the aforementioned services.
- b) Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians have the ability to withdraw consent at any time.

A customizable consent form template can be found [here](#).



LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

All Adult Participants must ensure that all one-on-one In-Program contact with Minor Athlete(s) in a locker room, changing area, or similar space where Minor Athlete(s) are present is observable and interruptible except if:

- e. A Dual Relationship exists;
- f. The Close-In-Age Exception applies; or
- g. A minor athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant and:
 - a. The minor athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent for the Personal Care Assistant to work with the minor athlete; and
 - b. The Personal Care Assistant has complied with the USA Lacrosse Athlete Protection and Safety Policy's background screening and training requirements

Conduct in Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

Athletes are increasingly vulnerable in locker rooms and changing areas due to the stages of dressing and undressing and because these areas are often less supervised than at many other times. The risk of peer-on-peer problems, such as child sexual abuse and bullying, hazing, harassment, is present when coaches and staff members are not monitoring athletes. This is significantly more likely in locker rooms. Adherence to locker room and changing areas policy enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct.

To reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas, the following guidelines should be observed:

- a) No Adult Participant or Minor athlete can use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in locker rooms, changing areas, or any other area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing except for:
 - a. Championship celebrations where everyone is fully clothed and parent/legal guardian consent has been obtained.
- b) At no time should an Adult Participant be alone with a minor in a locker room, rest room, or changing area during In-Program Contact except when:
 - a. A Dual Relationship exists;
 - b. The Close-In-Age Exception applies; or
 - c. A minor athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant and:
 - i. The minor athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent for the Personal Care Assistant to work with the minor athlete; and
 - ii. The Personal Care Assistant has complied with the USA Lacrosse Athlete Protection and Safety Policy's background screening and training requirements.
- c) Adult Participants must not change clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groins, or genitals to a Minor Athlete.
- d) Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes.

- e) Parents/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change with Adult Participant(s) during In-Program Contact.
- f) Parents/guardians should not enter locker rooms or changing areas unless of an emergency in which the parent/guardian entering should be of the same sex as the athlete(s). If this is necessary, parents should let a coach or administrator know about this in advance.
- g) Local Lacrosse Organizations must provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes that need to change clothes or undress at sanctioned events or facilities.
- h) Local Lacrosse Organizations must monitor the use of locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces to ensure compliance with these policies at sanctioned events or facilities.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

As communication has evolved and remains ever-changing, it is crucial to recognize the possibility of misconduct to occur utilizing electronic communications and enact procedures to help prevent misconduct. The following principles apply across all manners of electronic communication and must be used to guide adult behavior when communicating with Minor Athletes:

- a) Content Must be professional in nature
 - a. All electronic communications between a coach/team personnel and a Minor Athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or team-oriented motivation or instruction.
 - b. Communication or conversation regarding illegal or age-inappropriate topics (drugs, alcohol use, sexually explicit language or imagery, or discussion of adult personal life, social activities, relationship, or family issues) is not permitted.
- b) Communications must be Open and Transparent
 - a. The content of any electronic communication should be group-based and should always be readily available to share with the Minor Athlete's family and LLO.
 - b. Administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers may not use SnapChat (or any similar app that automatically deletes content of a communication) to communicate with minor athletes. Only platforms that utilize open and transparent communication may be used.
 - c. Any conversation with a Minor Athlete via electronic communication should also have the minor's legal guardian copied. If a Minor Athlete contacts the Adult Participants first, the Adult Participant is then responsible for following this policy.
 - d. Parent/guardians have the right to request any communication with their Minor Athlete is stopped at any time.
- c) Keeping Imagery Public
 - a. In posting imagery, adults are expected to be sensitive to the status of minors. This means any imagery posted to a team website or social media should be professional in nature, not private, and age appropriate

- b. Under no circumstances should imagery depict any conduct that would violate USA Lacrosse's Athlete Protection and Safety Policy
- c. Requests of parents/guardians of Minor Athletes to remove imagery in which their child is recognizable and individually features will be honored to a practicable extent

Prohibited Electronic Communications

- a) Private communication between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete is prohibited, except for in emergency situations, or when an exception of this policy applies and there is consent from the athlete's parent/guardian.
- b) Adult Participants are not permitted to "private message," "direct message," or "instant message," or send photos to a minor athlete privately regardless of which platform is used.
- c) Adult Participants should not have connections with Minor Athletes on social media platforms, unless consent from the athlete's parent/guardian is obtained.

Social Media

- a) The personal pages of an Adult Participant should remain on the private setting and any requests to be "friends" on such pages should be denied.
- b) Administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers may not invite or allow minor athletes to join a personal social media page unless the Dual Relationship Exception applies
- c) If team communication is necessary, Adult Participants should look to utilize Apps with support group-based communication but continue to avoid individual messages.
- d) Electronic communications between administrators, coaches, or staff should be sent at a reasonable time during the day unless of a time sensitive communication regarding safety or sport related information.

TRANSPORTATION

USA Lacrosse generally does not arrange for local travel for individual players from home to training/practice/competition.

An Adult Participant should not transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if;

- a) A Dual Relationship exists; or
- b) The Close-In-Age Exception applies; or
- c) A Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant and:
 - a. The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent; and
 - b. The Personal Care Assistant has complied with the USA Lacrosse Athlete Protection and Safety Policy's background screening and training requirements.
- d) Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to pick up their own minor athlete(s) first and drop off their own minor athlete last in any carpool travel arrangement.
- e) An Adult Participant meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors.

- f) Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian is required for all transportation sanctioned by the LLO or USAL.

A customizable consent form template can be found [here](#).

LODGING

All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, in addition to the following recommendations:

- a) An Adult Participant cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s), except if:
 - a. A Dual Relationship Exists, and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided the LLO, administrator, or coach with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement.
 - b. The Close-In-Age Exception applies, and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided the LLO, administrator, or coach with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement; or
 - c. The Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - i. The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided advance, written consent to the LLO, administrator, or coach for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete for the lodging arrangement
 - i. The Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the USA Lacrosse Athlete Protection and Safety Policy's background screening and training requirements
- b) Written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually.
- c) If team performs room checks during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed and at least two adults must be present for the room checks.
- d) The LLO responsible for organizing lodging must create a policy for travel that requires an Adult Participant's signature annually.
- e) Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athlete(s) are assumed to have Authority over Minor Athlete(s) and thus must comply with the USAL Athlete Protection and Safety Policy's background screening and training policies.

Coach and Staff Responsibilities

During team travel, coaches and staff will:

- a) Prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Information will be given to parents/guardians who are under the age of 14, who are considered new or relatively new to the team, or are considered inexperienced travelers to familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel
- b) Conform to, and monitor for others' adherence, all policies during team travel.

- c) Encourage minor athletes to participate daily with scheduled communications with their parents/guardians.
- d) Ensure athletes are not alone in hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff, and chaperones.
- e) Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching/staff duties.
- f) Immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations to the USAL Athlete Protection and Safety Program to USAL and the appropriate authorities.