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Introduction

USA Softball provides people of all ages the opportunity to play the game they love at a variety of levels. USA Softball offers recreational, league, tournament and National Championship play for fast pitch, slow pitch and modified pitch and annually conducts over 100 National Championships.

USA Softball is committed to providing a safe environment for our members and participants, and to deter and proactively address abusive conduct in any form. Every member of this organization is responsible for protecting our participants and ensuring their safety and well-being on and off the playing field while involved in sponsored activities.

Covered Individuals

USA Softball Covered Individuals are (1) those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes; or (2) USA Softball staff, as designated below:

1. National Office Staff
2. National Teams, including:
   a. Staff
   b. Coaches
   c. Players
   d. Athletic Trainers
   e. Medical Personnel
   f. Umpires appointed by the NGB to national championship events or international events
3. Local Association Softball Officials, including:
   a. Board of Directors
   b. Commissioners appointed by the NGB
   c. JO Commissioners appointed by the NGB Commissioners
   d. Player Representatives appointed by the NGB Commissioners
   e. Umpires-In-Chief appointed by the NGB Commissioners
   f. National Championship Tournament Directors appointed by the NGB or NGB Commissioners
4. A.C.E. Program Coaches of NGB’s Local Association Members
USA SOFTBALL ATHLETE SAFETY POLICY

Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is strictly prohibited: Bullying, hazing, harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse and sexual harassment) as defined by the USOC SafeSport program at www.safesport.org.

1 Abuse of any kind is not permitted within our organization. This means we do not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or spectators.

2 Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd conduct, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within our organization.

3 Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. These include, but are not limited to such forms of abuse as a pattern or practice of: yelling, insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior, or making abusive statements in regard to a person’s race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age.

Criminal Background Check

Criminal background checks are required on an annual basis of any individual that falls in one or more of the Covered Individual categories. USA Softball will submit applicants’ information and will track all SafeSport Background Check screening and perform periodic checks to ensure compliance with this policy.

Education & Awareness Training

USA Softball is excited to partner with the U.S. Center for SafeSport and Beginning December 1, 2017 requires SafeSport education and training to members that fall under one or more category of the Covered Individuals.
Behavioral Guidelines

USA Softball has established the following guidelines of behavior and procedures for our staff, volunteers and participants. All members of this organization, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees are expected to observe and adhere to these guidelines.

1 Buddy System for Players: We recommend that every activity sponsored by our program put a Buddy System in place. Each youth participant should be assigned a buddy during sponsored activities. No child should go anywhere – to the bathrooms, locker rooms, or other location – without his or her buddy.

2 Buddy System for Adults: To further protect our youth participants, as well as our coaches, officials and volunteers, two adults should always be present at every activity. In particular, we recommend that:

- No adult person should allow him/herself to be alone with a child.
- Do not drive alone with a non-related child participant in the car.
- Do not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room.
- Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching only with the assistance of another adult.
- If you must have a private conversation with a youth participant, do it within view of others, in the gym or on the field, not in a private office.
- Coaches and other adult members of this organization should not socialize individually with youth participants outside of sponsored activities. This would include one-on-one social networking, emailing and texting. Coaches and other adult members of the organization should not nurture one-on-one relationships and/or participate in one-on-one texting, emailing or social networking relationships with individual youth participants. This would not include team-wide or group communications.

3 Supervision/Chaperone ratio: We recommend that for any sponsored activity, the ratio of adults to youth participants be 1:8 – one (or more) adults for every eight children, with a minimum of two adults for every activity.

4 When traveling overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of same gender and similar age group, with chaperones in separate but nearby rooms.

5 We encourage parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, games, practices and other events. The more the parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.
USA SOFTBALL ATHLETE SAFETY POLICY

Reporting to Law Enforcement

Every Covered Individual must comply with the reporting requirements of section 226 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20341) and report any suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities and/or child protective services in your jurisdiction.

Reporting to USA Softball or SafeSport for Discipline

For disciplinary complaints involving sexual misconduct against any ‘Covered Individual’, Complaints shall be made directly to SafeSport pursuant to the SafeSport rules and procedures at www.safesport.org To the extent a Disciplinary Complaint alleges any form of sexual misconduct, it will be administered by the Center for SafeSport of Denver, Colorado (www.safesport.org) and, in lieu of reporting to USA Softball, should be reported directly to the Center for SafeSport by calling (720) 524-5640 (M-F 8am-5pm MT) or online at www.safesport.org. The Center For SafeSport administers its investigations, complaints and discipline pursuant to its own procedures and SafeSport Code, which can be found at www.safesport.org.

If a disciplinary complaint is not sexual in nature or if it concerns the conduct of someone other than a “Covered Individual”, a disciplinary complaint should be made with the USA Softball local association commissioner for the area in which the wrongful conduct occurred.

Is Reporting Mandatory? Yes, Adult Covered Individuals are REQUIRED to report suspected sexual misconduct to the Center for SafeSport. A failure to timely report may subject the person to discipline by the Center for SafeSport.

Enforcement

USA Softball enforces its Athlete Safety Policy by following procedures established by the USA Softball Code and National Team Policies as well as policies and procedures set in place by the Center for SafeSport and the SafeSport Code.

Appeal Rights

All SafeSport disciplinary complaints (involving sexual misconduct) will be administered by the Center for SafeSport and the decision shall be final and binding.

All non-SafeSport disciplinary complaints will be administered by the USA Softball Local Association Commissioner for the area in which the offending conduct occurred, in accordance with the procedures and rules outlined in Article 305 of the USA Softball Code at https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/about/about-us and for National Team Athletes, in accordance with the procedures and rules
outlined in Article 105 of the Board of Directors Policy for International play at
https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/about/national-team. Appeal requests of non-SafeSport
disciplinary determinations will be handled pursuant to USA Softball disciplinary procedures.

USA Softball reserves the right to amend these policies from time to time as it deems appropriate.