

SSA Safety, Reporting & Prohibited Conduct Policy

The Sartell Soccer Association (SSA) hereby adopts the Safety, Reporting & Prohibited Conduct Policies of the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA), United State Youth Soccer (USYS) and the U.S. Center for SafeSport, as they are amended from time to time. In the event that those provisions conflict with the provisions outlined herein, the stricter/more onerous/safer provision shall prevail.

PART I: BACKGROUND CHECKS

All adults must pass a background check EVERY year. Background checks are valid on a calendar year basis (January 1 through December 31).

Minnesota State Law, Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA), and Sartell Soccer Association (SSA) Policy requires that all participants including member club officials, coaches, team managers, and administrators who are at least 18 years old must have an approved annual background check before they participate in an MYSA and SSA activity.

Merely completing a background check is not sufficient to meet the requirement to participate, the background check must be approved before any activity starts.

All adults must complete a background check on or after November 1 (the year prior to the calendar year participating) in order to be eligible for participation in the Spring or Fall season. Adults must pass the background check before participating in any activities.

MYSA Background Standards

An applicant will be eligible if the background check reveals:

- “No Records Found” (i.e. no convictions of a criminal nature)
- Traffic offenses only (i.e. speeding ticket | except as provided below)
- Petty Misdemeanors only (i.e. littering)

An applicant may be eligible if the background check reveals:

- A Misdemeanor conviction or pending case related to financial crimes
- A Misdemeanor conviction or pending case of Driving Under the Influence, Driving While Intoxicated or a similar offense.
- A Misdemeanor conviction or pending case of a non-serious nature, which for purposes herein shall specifically exclude crimes involving violence, crimes involving the use of weapons, crimes committed against a minor and crimes of a sexual nature
- In these cases, MYSA will investigate the offenses outlined above and render a determination as to the applicant’s eligibility. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, the applicant may appeal to MYSA.

An applicant will be ineligible (unable to participate in an MYSA activities) if the background check reveals:

- Any conviction or similar disposition (i.e. no contest or plea agreement, including a plea to a lesser offense) or a Gross Misdemeanor or Felony
- Any pending case involving charges for a Gross Misdemeanor or Felony

Part 2: SAFESPORT TRAINING

ALL ADULTS MUST COMPLETE THE SAFESPORT TRAINING every year.

SafeSport training is mandatory for every adult participant within MYSA and SSA, including coaches, managers and administrators. The training covers three topics: mandatory reporting, sexual misconduct awareness education, and emotional and physical misconduct.

All registered MYSA members receive the training free of charge through a link that is provided after completion of a background check. Adults should complete this training before beginning any sanctioned activity with their club.

SafeSport Training Cycle

- Year 1: SafeSport Trained Core Training
- Year 2: Refresher 1
- Year 3: Refresher 2
- Year 4: Refresher 3
- Year 5: Restart process with the SafeSport Trained Core Training

SafeSport Training for Parents and Caretakers

The U.S. Center for SafeSport also offers training and resources for parents and caretakers of athletes. Parents and caretakers are encouraged to use the resources to familiarize themselves with SafeSport's philosophy and policies.

Parent/Caretaker SafeSport training is available [HERE](#)

Parents/Caretakers can also check out US Soccer's Safe Soccer Framework [HERE](#)

History: In 2018, Congress passed The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (the SafeSport Act). The legislation is aimed at preventing and reporting child abuse in youth sports by expanding the categories of "mandatory reporters" and requiring organizations to provide enhanced training. MYSA and SSA require all of its adult members to complete the training and follow the reporting guidelines of SafeSport.

SafeSport Reporting

In addition to requiring training, the SafeSport Act also expands the definition of mandatory reporter to include any "adult who is authorized, by a national governing body, a member of the national governing body...to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or such an amateur sports organization." MYSA and SSA urges all adults to understand their reporting obligations outlined below.

Under the SafeSport Act, the reporting obligation is triggered when a mandatory reporter becomes aware of "facts that give reason to suspect" a child has suffered an incident of child abuse. Mandatory reporters should refrain from judging or evaluating the credibility of such allegations, and instead immediately report these incidents to law enforcement and to SafeSport. Failure to promptly (within 24 hours of becoming aware) report suspected child abuse to law enforcement may constitute a violation of federal law, state law and U.S. Soccer's SafeSport Policy. Click on the "report a concern" if you have suspicions that must be reported.

Visit SafeSport

[Report a concern](#)

Mandatory reporters are required to report a concern when given "facts that give reason to suspect" a child has suffered an incident of child abuse.

PART 3: CONCUSSION TRAINING

We require registered adults to complete concussion training every three years. While there are various online concussion trainings available, we endorse [CDC's HEADS UP training](#).

Parents and caretakers are also encouraged to complete the free trainings on the website as concussion consequences don't stay on the field.

Heading Rules

Per Rule XX, we have heading restrictions based on age groups.

- U11 and younger: prohibit ALL headers including in trainings and games
- 12U-14U: limit to 30 minutes per week in training. No more than 15-20 headers per player, per week in training. All headers in games are permitted.
- 15U and older: no restrictions

Report a Concern

CDC's Heads up

Information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to help you recognize, respond, and minimize the risk of concussions.

PART 4: PROHIBITED CONDUCT POLICY

Application

This Policy applies to:

- Members or license holders of the SSA,
- Employees, coaches, independent contractors, service providers, and board members of the SSA and the employees and board members of the SSA members,
- Anyone within the SSA governance or disciplinary jurisdiction, and
- All definitions in this policy are taken from the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement the ("SafeSport Code"), as may be amended from time to time. In the event of any conflict between this Policy and the SafeSport Code, the SafeSport Code will govern. The most recent SafeSport Code is always available at www.safesport.org.

Prohibited Conduct

Harassment

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status. the SSA will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or safety, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Among the types of conduct prohibited by this policy are epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or intimidating acts based on an individual's protected status and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward an individual because of his or her protected status.

Prohibited conduct can also include jokes, kidding, or teasing about another person's protected status. While harassing conduct is unlawful only if it affects tangible job benefits and/or interferes unreasonably with work performance and creates an abusive or hostile work environment, this Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of law.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment,
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual serves as the basis for an employment decision affecting that individual, or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- Sexual harassment may involve individuals of the same or different gender. It may also occur between individuals of any employment status.
- Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment and are prohibited by this Policy include, but are not limited to:
 - unnecessary touching, patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against a person's body,
 - staring, ogling, leering, or whistling at a person,
 - continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature,
 - sexually explicit statements, sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, subtle pressure for sexual activity, comments, questions, jokes, or anecdotes,
 - graphic or degrading comments about a person's clothing, body or sexual activity,
 - sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, posters, calendars, or pictures in the workplace,
 - suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations,
 - harassing use of electronic mail, electronic or instant messaging, or telephone communication systems, or
 - other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Racial, Religious, or National Origin Harassment

Racial, religious, or national origin harassment deserves special mention as well, and is expressly prohibited by the SSA. Racial, religious, or national origin harassment includes any verbal, written, or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner which would make a reasonable person uncomfortable in the work environment or which would interfere with the person's ability to perform the job. Examples of race, religious or national origin harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- jokes, which include reference to race, religion, or national origin,
- the display or use of objects or pictures which adversely reflect on a person's race, religion, or national origin, or
- use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person's race, religion, or national origin.

Child Abuse, Including Child Sexual Abuse

Child abuse is prohibited. Child abuse is defined as the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or negligent treatment of a child. Specifically, child sexual abuse includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or whether the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

Sexual Misconduct and Power Imbalance

Sexual misconduct is prohibited. Sexual misconduct includes:

- Sexual Harassment as defined above in this policy,
- non-consensual touching of a sexual nature, however slight,
- watching, recording, or disseminating images of private sexual activity without the consent of all parties, and
- engaging in solicitation of prostitution or prostituting or trafficking another person.

Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual where there is a power imbalance is prohibited. A power imbalance exists when one person has evaluative, direct, or indirect authority over another. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Emotional Misconduct

Emotional misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Emotional misconduct is a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

Physical Misconduct

Physical misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Physical misconduct is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports but have no place in soccer.

Bullying

Intentional, persistent, and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership are prohibited. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

Hazing

Coercing, requiring, forcing, or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members are prohibited. Purported consent by the person subject to hazing is not a

defense, regardless of the person's willingness to cooperate or participate. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person for reporting prohibited conduct or for participating in an investigation of a report of misconduct under this policy, is prohibited. Retaliation means any adverse action, or threat to take an adverse action including, but not limited to threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other action or conduct with the potential effect of dissuading a reasonable person from reporting under this policy or participating in the investigation of a report.

Aiding and Abetting

- Aiding and abetting is prohibited. Aiding and abetting is defined as:
- knowingly assisting, in any way, the commission of prohibited conduct under this policy or

- allowing any person who has been suspended or ruled ineligible by the U.S. Center for SafeSport to participate, in any capacity, in the SSA's programs.

Abuse of Process

Abuse of process is prohibited. Abuse of process is defined as interfering with the SSA and/or U.S. Center for SafeSport's ("the Center's") process by:

- falsifying, misrepresenting, concealing, or destroying information,
- attempting to discourage a person's participation in the SSA
- publicly disclosing a claimant (or victim's) information,
- failing to comply with a temporary measure or other sanction,
- distributing or publicizing materials created or produced by the Center except as expressly permitted by the Center, or
- having another person complete any Center required training for them.

Misconduct Related to Reporting

Misconduct related to reporting is prohibited. Misconduct related to reporting is defined as:

- Failing to report allegations to the Center or to law enforcement and the SSA under the Safety and Reporting Policy or Prohibited Conduct Policy, or
- Filing a knowingly false allegation that someone engaged in prohibited conduct.

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Everyone covered by this policy as set forth under the Application section of this policy is required to report prohibited conduct. This section shall not be interpreted to require a victim of abuse to make a report.

1. Reporting to first Law Enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport and afterwards, to SSA

- Any allegation of child abuse, as defined by Section 4 herein, including child sexual abuse, must be reported within 24 hours to:
 - Local law enforcement, any other agency as required by state law, and
 - The U.S. Center for SafeSport, at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/> or 833-587-7233.

2. Reporting to the U.S. Center for SafeSport

- The following allegations must be reported within 24 hours to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/> or 833-587-7233:
 - Sexual misconduct as defined herein,
 - Retaliation as defined herein,
 - Aiding and abetting as defined herein, when it relates to the Center's process, and
 - Abuse of process as defined herein, when it relates to the Center's process.

3. Reporting to the SSA

- Following the reporting requirements above, a follow-up report must be made to the SSA above.
- All other allegations of conduct prohibited by this policy or the Code, as well as violations of SSA's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy ("MAAPP") must be reported to the SSA as soon as possible by contacting the SSA President and/or Director of Coaching.

ENFORCEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Any allegation of prohibited conduct reported herein shall be addressed by the governing bodies outlined hereinabove and the SSA, subject to the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, Mandated Reporting Laws, and Grievance and Complaint Policy that is materially free of bias and conflicts of interest, and which includes the opportunity for review by a disinterested individual or group and a right to appeal a final decision subject to the terms set forth in U.S. Soccer Bylaw 704.