

USA Wrestling

Safe Sport Policy

(Revised: December 10th, 2013)

USA Wrestling (USAW) is committed to providing safe and positive training and competition environments for its members, participants, coaches, officials and volunteers, free of misconduct, abuse and harassment in any form. USAW promotes good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all members, participants, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and staff. USAW advocates building strong self-images among the youth participants. Athletes with a strong self-image may be less likely targets for misconduct, abuse or harassment; similarly, they may be less likely to engage in misconduct or abuse, harass, bully, or haze others around them.

All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with Olympic ideals.

USAW has established this Safe Sport Policy (the “Policy”) for our members, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, participants, and staff. All such persons, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees attending or participating in the programs, activities and events of USAW, are expected to observe and adhere to the provisions of this Policy.

For purposes of this Policy, misconduct is identified as the following six primary types of misconduct:

- Sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse)
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Hazing

Definitions and examples of misconduct are set forth at the end of this Policy.

Other USAW policies, procedures and codes, including, but not limited to, Codes of Conduct and the USAW Background Screening Policy, may deal with these and other forms of conduct that are prohibited and that are subject to action by USAW for violation of such policies, procedures and codes.

1. Misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. USAW does not accept sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing or similar forms of misconduct from any person towards athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, staff, parents, spectators or any other persons.
2. To further protect USAW youth participants, as well as our coaches, officials and volunteers, USAW strongly advises that no adult person allow him/herself to be alone with a child or with any group of children in a private setting during or while they are participating in sponsored activities of USAW, its state associations, or its member clubs. In particular, in such circumstances, USAW recommends that coaches or other adult members of the organization should:
 - a. Not drive alone with a child participant in the car
 - b. Not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms, or any other private room
 - c. Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching with assistance from another adult or athlete
 - d. Have private conversations with youth participants within view of others instead of a private office
 - e. Not socialize individually with the participants outside of sponsored activities.

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

USAW encourages parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, practices and other events. The more the parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.

3. Dating or sexual relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances have inherent dangers when they occur between supervisors, team leaders, coaches, officials or other members of USAW in positions of authority and any person for whom there is a professional responsibility. These dangers can include:
 - a. Athletes, employees or others may feel coerced into an unwanted relationship because they fear that refusal to enter or stay in the relationship will adversely affect their employment, sport opportunity or ability to participate in USAW events or programs.
 - b. Conflicts of interest may arise when supervisors or officials are required to evaluate performance or make personnel decisions with respect to an individual with whom they are having a romantic relationship.
 - c. The perception that employees, coaches, officials or athletes who are involved in a romantic relationship with a person having professional, supervisory or promotional responsibility for them might receive an unfair advantage.

For these reasons, such relationships are inappropriate.

4. It is a violation of this Policy:
 - a. For any members, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, participants, and staff to engage in any form of misconduct as identified by this Policy, including harassment of any kind based on age, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, race, disability, or national or ethnic origin.
 - b. For any such person to engage in any such conduct towards any person participating in any event, training camp or competition conducted or sanctioned by USAW or the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).
 - c. For a person who knows of misconduct to not take any action to report it. Wilfully tolerating misconduct is unacceptable and a violation of this Policy.
 - d. For any person to make a false, frivolous or malicious complaint of misconduct (as contrasted with complaints which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith).
 - e. To retaliate, or threaten retaliation or reprisal, against an individual for reporting a matter under this Policy.
5. USAW recognizes that it can be difficult to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made verbally or in writing.
6. USAW will timely respond to any and all allegations of misconduct in matters that are within the purview and jurisdiction of USAW. USAW expects that allegations of misconduct that are properly within the purview and jurisdiction of officials or persons at other levels or of other organizations will be timely responded to and dealt with as appropriate. When necessary and appropriate, this information should be communicated to the appropriate authorities for investigation and should be reviewed by appropriate officials, with timely notification to the alleged offender of such allegations. All suspected criminal activity should be reported to the appropriate authorities immediately.

7. To report suspected violations of this Policy to USAW, information should be submitted to Les Gutches, USAW Associate Executive Director for Programs and Performance, at (719) 598-8181 (ext. 662), or on a confidential basis at 6155 Lehman Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80918 or by e-mail at lgutches@usawrestling.org. Upon receiving notice of a suspected violation of this Policy, the following will occur:
 - a. USA Wrestling staff, or an assigned agent of USA Wrestling, will review matters and investigate as determined to be reasonable, necessary and appropriate.
 - b. In cases where staff finds sufficient evidence to demonstrate probable cause that a violation exists, both the reporting party and the accused will be given notice of the results of the investigation and an opportunity to provide written response to the claim and information developed from the investigation.
 - c. All such information and written statements will be forwarded to USA Wrestling's Executive Committee, or its designee, for resolution consistent with applicable provisions and procedures of USAW's By-Laws pertaining to matters of eligibility or internal grievances, as appropriate under the circumstances of the matter. The Executive Committee, or its designee, may adjudicate and resolve the matter, or delegate adjudication and resolution to a Sport Committee or other body within USAW.
 - d. Any discipline imposed as a result of the adjudication of the matter may be enforced by USAW, its state associations, and/or member clubs, as appropriate under the circumstances.
8. Any person who violates this Policy will be subject to discipline or other action as may be within the purview and jurisdiction of USAW, including but not limited to suspension or termination of membership in USAW or of any other position in which the person serves in USAW.
9. Any person who is accused of, charged with, pleads guilty to, or is found guilty of, sexual or physical abuse or harassment may be asked to resign voluntarily or may, after written notice that is reasonable under the circumstances, be suspended until the matter is investigated and resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the USAW, its state associations, its member clubs, and its members, and could be harmful to the participants in training activities and/or competitions. A person who is accused but later cleared of the charges, may apply to have a suspension lifted or, if applicable, to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no assurance is made that the person will be reinstated to his/her former position.
10. Education and familiarity with respect to safe sport principles and policies is critical. Every coach and official who wishes to become a member of USA Wrestling, as well USAW staff members, (i) will be required to review and become familiar with this Policy and (ii) must acknowledge and affirm compliance with this requirement on an annual basis. As USAW education programs for coaches, officials and staff are updated, USA Wrestling will incorporate Safe Sport Policy modules in each.

****Definitions of Misconduct are set forth on the following pages of this Policy****

Definitions of Misconduct

Abuse and harassment is defined in various sources such as state and federal law, case law, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human rights commission materials. While USAW reserves the right to refer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending on the circumstances, USAW adopts the following definitions and examples of misconduct for purposes of this Policy:

1. Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct involves:

- Any touching or non-touching sexual intercourse that is:
 - Nonconsensual or forced;
 - Coerced or manipulated; or
 - Perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitive or threatening manner.
- Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitive.
- Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape).

Types of sexual misconduct prohibited by this Policy include:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual abuse
- Any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. **Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult**, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Examples of sexual misconduct include but are not limited to the following:

- Touching offenses. Behaviors that include:
 - Fondling an athlete's breast or buttocks.
 - Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
 - Genital contact.
 - Sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sports participants.
- Non-touching offenses. Behaviors that include:
 - A coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete.
 - A coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life.
 - A coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to an athlete.
 - Exposing athletes to pornographic material.
 - Sending athletes sexually explicit or suggesting electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., "sexting").
 - Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts.
 - Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker room and changing areas are shared).
 - Sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and:
 - Is unwelcome, offensive or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this.
 - Is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.

2. Sexual Abuse of a Minor

Sexual abuse of a minor involves any touching or non-touching or sexual harassment of, or sexual interaction with, a minor and any act of conduct described as child sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state laws. Sexual abuse of a minor includes any sexual activity with a minor where the consent is not or cannot be given, regardless whether there is or is not deception, use of force or threats. Neither consent of the minor to the sexual contact, mistake as to the minor's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a USAW event or program or USAW offices or facilities are defenses to a complaint of sexual abuse.

Sexually abusive acts may include:

- Sexual penetration
- Sexual touching
- Non-contact sexual acts such as:
 - Verbal acts
 - Sexually suggestive electronic or written communications
 - Exposure
 - Voyeurism

3. Emotional Misconduct

Emotional misconduct is conduct which involves:

- A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete or participant, regardless of age. Non-contact behaviors include:
 - Verbal acts
 - Physical acts
 - Acts that deny attention or support
- Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect)

Exceptions - Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance (for example, controlled and disciplined verbal communication that is generally accepted in sports as a reasonable method of coaching or teaching the sport).

Examples of emotional misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Verbal acts. A pattern of verbal behaviors that:
 - Repeatedly attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting); or
 - Exhibits repeated and excessive yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose
 - Chronically attacks a participant's self-esteem, such as psychologically destructive behavior consisting of ridiculing, screaming, swearing, racist comments, threatening, stalking or hazing.
- Physical acts. A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as:
 - Throwing sports equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or
 - Punching walls, windows or other objects.
- Acts that deny attention and support. A pattern of:
 - Ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time; or
 - Routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

4. **Physical Misconduct**

Physical misconduct is conduct which involves:

- Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to an athlete or participants, regardless of age; or
- Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault).

Exceptions - Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete's performance (for example, physical contact that is reasonable designed to coach, teach or demonstrate a wrestling skill).

Examples of physical misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Contact offenses. Behaviors that include:
 - Punching, beating, biting, striking, shoving, choking, slapping, or shaking an athlete.
 - Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment.
- Non-contact offenses. Behaviors that include:
 - Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space).
 - Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface).
 - Forcing an athlete to train, practice or compete when injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment.
 - Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.
 - Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law).
 - Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete.
 - Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to practice or competition prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional.
 - Prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of the athlete.

5. **Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other oral and written communications or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual's employment, USAW appointment, selection to a USAW team or program, or participation at any USAW event.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for any decision affecting the employment at or appointment by USAW, selection to a USAW team or program, or participation at any USAW event by such individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work, sport performance or participation in USAW activities or any USAW event or creates an intimidating, hostile or abusive work, training or sports environment.

Other forms of harassment are defined as:

- Oral or written communications or physical conduct that denigrates, criticizes, belittles or embarrasses, or is intended to denigrate, criticize, belittle or embarrass, any person on the basis of such person's age, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, race, disability or national or ethnic origins.

- The sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, race, disability or national or ethnic origin of a person being used as a basis for any decision affecting the employment at or appointment by USAW, selection to a USAW team or program, or participation at any USAW event by such individual.
- Any conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work, sport performance or participation in USAW activities or any USAW event or creates an intimidating, hostile or abusive work, training or sports environment.
- Any contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to a person or is described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, assault)

Examples of harassment include but are not limited to the following:

- Requesting or demanding sexual favors in exchange for employment or sport opportunity such as hiring, firing, USAW appointments, selections for any USAW team or program, or participation in any USAW Event.
- Submitting an unfair or inaccurate job or sport evaluation or denying training, promotion or access to employment or sport opportunities because sexual advances have been rejected or because of such person's sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, race, disability or national or ethnic origins.
- Sexual comments, teasing or jokes, graphic or sexually suggestive gestures, sexual slurs, demeaning statements about an individual's attire or body.
- Sexual assault or non-consensual sexual relations.
- Non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure or voyeurism.
- A person being denied employment or selection for any USAW team or program, or participation in any USAW event on the basis of such person's sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, race, disability or national or ethnic origins.
- Teasing or jokes, slurs, demeaning statements about such person's sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, race, disability or national or ethnic origins.
- Punching, beating, striking a person or intentionally hitting a person with objects or sporting equipment.
- Withholding hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

6. **Bullying and Hazing**

Bullying is defined as an intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing, or willfully tolerating the commitment by another person of, physical or non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted person, as a condition of membership.

Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

Exceptions - Neither bullying nor hazing includes group or team behaviors meant to establish team cohesion or verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder. However, activities that fit within the definitions of bullying or hazing are considered bullying or hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to the following:

- Hitting, pushing, punching, kicking, slapping a person or throwing objects, such as sporting equipment, at a person.
- Teasing, ridiculing, intimidating, spreading rumors or making false statements or using electronic communications or social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate.

Examples of hazing include but are not limited to the following:

- Forcing the consumption of alcohol or drugs.
- Physically restraining a person.
- Schedule disruption or the withholding of water, food or sleep.
- Requiring social actions or public displays, such as nudity or the wearing of inappropriate clothing that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule.
- Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.