



Lake Purdy Rowing Association

SafeSport Policy

Preventing, Recognizing, and Responding to Misconduct

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Policy Statement

LPRA's Commitment to Safety

LPRA commits to communicating and enforcing this athlete protection policy in order to maintain a safe and positive environment for athletes' physical, emotional and social development. This policy applies to every activity and program conducted under the LPRA umbrella including, but not limited to, Masters, Collegiate, Juniors, and Public education programs.

In the event any LPRA coach, member, program participant, or volunteer observes inappropriate or harmful behaviors, suspected physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, potential risk situations, or potential boundary violations, it is their **personal obligation to immediately:**

1. Interrupt, or disrupt the conduct.
2. Share your concerns.
3. Report to your designated administrator.
4. If you suspect child abuse, report to the proper law enforcement authorities.

While the protection of minor athletes is the primary focus of this document, the strategies set forth also protect members, coaches, and volunteers. Towards this end, all parties should be mindful of both impropriety and any potential appearance thereof. Without even realizing it, sport organizations may send an inadvertent message that they don't take abuse seriously if they don't establish a culture of establishing and enforcing athlete protection policies.

Prohibited Conduct

LPRA members, participants, coaches, volunteers, and athletes must refrain from all forms of misconduct including, but not limited to:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct, and
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse

Harassment - a repeated pattern of behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance; offend or degrade; create a hostile environment; or reflect discriminatory bias.

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.

Emotional Misconduct - A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior with the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete, including: verbal acts, physical acts, and acts that deny attention or support. Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance.

Physical Misconduct - Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threaten to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).

Sexual Misconduct - any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner; and any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority.

Child Sexual Abuse - any sexual interactions between an adult and a child, and any peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure or voyeurism.

Grooming - Because sexual abusers “groom” children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that a staff member and/or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Participant Safety Committee.

Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse - Approximately 1/3 of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. **If you have any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, report it to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and a member of LPRA’s Participant Safety Committee immediately.**

Education and Screening

All LPRA coaches and board members are required to complete SafeSport misconduct awareness training every two years. Coaches, chaperones, and volunteers working with minor athletes must sign a document acknowledging review of this policy, and consent to, and pass, a formal screening process that includes a reference check and criminal background check.

In Summary, every 2 years:

- All LPRA coaches and board members must complete SafeSport training.
- Coaches, chaperones, and volunteers working with minor athletes must sign a document acknowledging review of this policy.
- Coaches, chaperones, and volunteers working with minor athletes must consent to and pass criminal background check.

The LPRA Secretary shall be responsible for documenting compliance with these education and screening requirements.

Managing Training and Competition with Juniors

This section applies specifically to minor athletes and their interactions with coaches, members, program participants, and volunteers.

A. One-on-One Interactions

During training and competition, LPRA strives to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-on-one interactions with minors to create a safe training environment and to protect athletes and participants. **Minor athletes and participants will not be left unattended or unsupervised during LPRA activities and LPRA coaches, staff members and/or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual athlete or participant in any room or building.**

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Any such meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.

- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area.
- If an individual meeting is to take place in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open.
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the coach, staff member and/or volunteer must inform another coach, staff member and/or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked.

B. Physical Contact

Physical contact with minors for purposes related to safety, consolation, or celebration are appropriate provided:

- the physical contact takes place in public;

- there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact;
- the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

Prohibited forms of physical contact with minors, which shall be reported immediately under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:

- asking or having an athlete sit in the lap of a coach, administrator, staff member or volunteer;
- lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact;
- slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete;
- “cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay;
- playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., tickling or “horseplay” wrestling);
- continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not;
- any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

C. Electronic Communications

All electronic communications between a coach and minor athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes. Coaches, staff, and administrators should copy parents on all electronic and mobile communications to minors.

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of any athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be submitted to local, state or national publications, used in LPRA videos, posted on LPRA or LPRA associated websites, or offered to the LPRA families in electronic form. It is the default policy of LPRA to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and LPRA.

D. Travel

Because travel is a standard aspect of competition, LPRA has established these policies to increase the safety of minor athletes while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience. A key aspect is maintaining appropriate boundaries by minimizing one-on-one interactions.

Athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. It is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) to ensure the person transporting the 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 state laws.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, LPRA staff members, coaches and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor athlete and should only drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the athlete's parent or guardian in advance of travel. In any case where a staff member and/or volunteer is involved in the athlete's local travel, a parental release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that staff and/or volunteers are not alone with an athlete or participant, by, e.g., picking the athletes up in groups.

Coaches, staff members and volunteers who are also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). We encourage guardians to pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/guardians of any minor athlete who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of that particular athlete). Where an adult is registered both as a coach and an athlete member of LPRA, and is functioning primarily as a coach, he or she may share sleeping arrangements with another registered coach.

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches and staff will monitor the activities of athletes, fellow coaches and staff during team travel. Coaches and staff will prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/guardians of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14.

During travel, coaches are responsible for:

- familiarizing themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of travel;
- conforming to, and monitoring others' adherence to, the Athlete Protection Policy and all policies;
- helping athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible);
- not using, or being under the influence of, drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors;
- immediately reporting any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations.

Responding to Abuse, Misconduct and Policy Violations

How we respond to misconduct or policy violations is the most critical aspect of this policy. Whether intervening on a coach's decision to make an injured athlete practice, pulling aside a verbally abusive volunteer, or reminding a coach about physical contact, intervention not only protects the athlete, but the staff as well. Regardless of the policy violation, or the type of misconduct, there are four basic steps for responding:

1. Interrupt, or disrupt the conduct.
2. Share your concerns.
3. Report to your designated administrator.
4. If you suspect child abuse, report to the proper law enforcement authorities.

A. Responsibility to Report

You need to report when you: (1) suspect, or have reason to believe, that a child has been abused or neglected, or (2) have knowledge of, or observe a child being subjected to, conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child.”

It is your responsibility to report these observations to the Participant Safety Committee. It’s not easy to report something you suspect about a friend, a respected coach, or a fellow volunteer. The bottom line is that it is the right thing to do to protect the athletes. Moreover, if you don’t, you could subject yourself to criminal prosecution as well as civil liability that extends to your organization. If a child is being abused or suspected of being abused, you need to report so someone someone who is an authority and trained to investigate can look into it. Do not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of the abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

If you attempt to investigate allegations of abuse, you make yourself a witness and you potentially harm the investigation and the ability of the authorities to determine what really happened.

B. How to Report

Members, participants, parents, and volunteers may report to any member of the Participant Safety Committee, which includes:

- Marietta Williams, 205/948-8716, mariettawilliams@charter.net
- Craig Richardson, 205/907-7596, cmrichardson5@yahoo.com
- Jackie Major, 205/249-5605, jackierows@aol.com

LPRA will take a report in whatever way is most comfortable for you to report it, including an anonymous, in-person, verbal or written communication. Providing the following information will enable the Committee to provide effective follow-up:

- name(s) of the complainant(s);
- type of misconduct alleged;
- name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct;
- approximate dates the misconduct was committed;
- names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct;
- a summary statement of reasons to suspect misconduct has occurred.

Confidentiality: To the extent practical and permitted by law, the Participant Safety Committee will keep confidential your name, the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator. All suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

“Whistleblower” Protection: Regardless of outcome, LPRA will support you and your right to express concerns in good faith. LPRA will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of this Policy and grounds for disciplinary action.

Malicious Allegations: A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is proven to be malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited 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 or criminal proceedings.

C. How Reports are Handled

Alleged policy violations and misconduct that are not reportable under relevant state or federal law are handled by the LPRA Participant Safety Committee. In all cases, LPRA’s disciplinary procedures and actions will be proportionate, reasonable and applied fairly and equally. Upon receipt of an allegation, LPRA will determine in its discretion the appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including the nature and seriousness of the incident, the age of the complainant or victim, and the age of the accused. In extreme cases, misconduct will result in immediate summary dismissal, provided that the accused individual shall be advised of their right to a hearing. If the accused individual is a minor, LPRA will contact his or her parents or guardians.

LPRA, its staff members and/or volunteers **do not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.** As necessary, however, LPRA may ask a few clarifying questions of the person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities and Child Protective Services. For mandatory reporting laws, visit www.childwelfare.gov.

When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made, LPRA may immediately remove the individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated by an official agency. In those cases where the Ted Stevens Act may apply, the accused individual will be offered a hearing. A hearing under the Ted Stevens Act will not necessarily affect LPRA's ability to immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual from employment or performing services for organization.

Following notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of an employee, coach or other volunteer, LPRA may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. In LPRA's discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with counsel, LPRA may notify its staff members, contractors, volunteers, parents, and/or athletes of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other criminal behavior that (1) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (2) that LPRA is investigating internally. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.

Implementation

The LPRA Board of Directors adopts this policy as an essential component of every activity and program conducted under the LPRA umbrella including, but not limited to, Masters, Collegiate, Juniors, and Public education programs. Revisions and updates to this policy may be made at any time by either:

1. unanimous vote of the Participant Safety Committee, or
2. majority vote of the LPRA Board of Directors.

All Board members and coaches will be notified of revisions or updates and the current version of this Policy will be posted on LPRA websites,

**I have read, and accept my personal obligation commit to enforce,
LPRA's SafeSport athlete protection Policy:**

Date: _____

Legible Name: _____

Signature: _____