



Zero-Tolerance Policy Against Abuse

Purpose: Geist Area Soccer League and Sporting Indiana FC is committed to providing a safe environment for its members and participants and to preventing abusive conduct in any form. Every member of this organization is responsible for protecting our participants and ensuring their safety and well-being while involved in sponsored activities.

GASL/SIFC promotes good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy, and tolerance in all participants, coaches, officials, and volunteers. We advocate building strong self-images among the youth participants. Children with strong self-images may be less likely targets for abuse. Similarly, they may be less likely to abuse or bully others around them.

To this end, GASL/SIFC establishes 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. 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, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within GASL/SIFC.
3. Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is prohibited. These include, but are not limited to, such forms of abuse such as yelling, insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior, or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sex, or age.
4. GASL/SIFC is committed to providing a safe environment for our players, participants, and staff. We do so by appointing all coaches, officials, and volunteers – and anyone affiliated with our organization – as protection advocates. See something, say something. Every member of this organization is responsible for reporting any cases of questionable conduct or alleged mistreatment toward our members by any coach, official, volunteer, player, parent, sibling, or spectator.
5. We recommend that every activity sponsored by GASL/SIFC 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. This buddy could be a senior player or team parents only to return back to game or practice.

6. To further protect our youth participants, as well as coaches, officials, and volunteers, we strongly advise that no adult person allow him or herself to be alone with an unrelated child or with any group of children during sponsored activities. In particular, we recommend that coaches and other adult members of this organization:
 - Do not drive alone with an unrelated child participant in the car;
 - Do not take an unrelated child alone to the locker room, bathrooms, or any other private room;
 - Only provide training or individual coaching with the assistance of another adult or the child's buddy;
 - If you must have a private conversation with a youth participant, do it within view of others, in the gym or on the field, instead of in a private office;
 - Coaches and other adult members of this organization should not socialize individually with nonrelated children outside of sponsored events.
7. We encourage parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, games, practices, and other events. The more parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.
8. When traveling overnight with youth players, children should be paired up with other children of the same gender and similar age. No coach, parent, or other adult should be alone in a hotel room with an unrelated child. Children should be supervised by adults while in hotels at all times.
9. GASL/SIFC will respond quickly to any and all allegations of abuse within this organization. This information will be communicated to the authorities for investigation and will be reviewed by the organization's Club Director and then the Board of Directors. The alleged offender will be notified of such allegations promptly.
10. Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended by the Club Director and/or the Board of Directors until the matter is 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 organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges, may apply to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made by GASL/SIFC that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.