

Pond Athletic Association

Abuse Prevention & Mandatory Reporting Policy (Updated 2026)

1. Purpose & Commitment

Pond Athletic Association (Pond AA) is committed to providing a safe, positive, and abuse-free environment for all athletes. This policy outlines our legal obligations under federal and state law, SafeSport requirements, and Little League's Child Protection Program. All adults involved with Pond AA share responsibility for protecting minors from abuse, misconduct, and unsafe environments.

2. Federal Law Requirements (SafeSport Act of 2017)

Under the *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Act of 2017*, all adults who interact with minor athletes in youth sports organizations must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within **24 hours** to:

- Local law enforcement
- State child protective services

Failure to report is a federal crime. All Pond AA volunteers, coaches, board members, umpires, and staff are considered mandatory reporters.

3. State Law Requirements

Missouri law requires reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect when an adult:

- Has reasonable cause to suspect a child is being abused or neglected, or
- Observes conditions that would reasonably result in harm to a child.

Anonymous reports are permitted, but identifying yourself is encouraged to support investigations.

4. Required Reporting Pathway (Pond AA)

Any adult who suspects abuse must immediately report to:

1. Local Law Enforcement
2. Missouri Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline
3. Pond AA President
4. STLWEST District Administrator
5. U.S. Center for SafeSport (for sexual misconduct or abuse)

Reports must be made within **24 hours**.

5. Anti-Retaliation Policy

Pond AA strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a good-faith report of suspected abuse or misconduct. No volunteer, athlete, parent, or staff member may be penalized, threatened, or discouraged from reporting.

6. Annual Background Checks

All volunteers who have regular contact with minors must complete a Little League-approved annual background check, including:

- National criminal database search
- Sex offender registry search
- Disqualification for offenses involving violence, abuse, drugs, or sexual misconduct

No volunteer may begin service until cleared.

7. Mandatory Abuse Awareness Training

All coaches, volunteers, and board members must complete annual Abuse Awareness Training, such as:

- USA Baseball Abuse Awareness for Adults
- SafeSport Core Training

Certificates must be submitted before the season begins.

8. SafeSport MAAPP Compliance

Pond AA adopts the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP), which govern all adult–minor interactions.

8.1 One-on-One Interaction Policy

Adults may not be alone with a minor athlete unless the interaction is observable and interruptible. Private, unmonitored, or closed-door meetings are prohibited.

8.2 Electronic Communication Policy

- All communication with minors must include a parent or guardian.
- No private texting, messaging, or social media communication.
- Team communication must occur in group settings.

8.3 Locker Rooms & Changing Areas

- Adults may not enter locker rooms unless necessary for safety.
- No one-on-one interactions in changing areas.
- No recording devices permitted.

8.4 Transportation Policy

- Adults may not transport a minor athlete alone unless they are the child’s parent or guardian.
- Carpools must include two or more minors or two or more adults.

8.5 Individual Training Sessions

- Must be observable and interruptible.
- Parent or guardian must be informed in advance.

9. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited:

- Sexual abuse or misconduct
- Physical abuse
- Emotional or verbal abuse

- Bullying, hazing, or harassment
 - Grooming behaviors
 - Retaliation against reporters
 - Private electronic communication with minors
 - One-on-one unobservable interactions
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10. Volunteer Responsibilities

All Pond AA volunteers must:

- Complete annual background checks
 - Complete annual abuse awareness training
 - Follow MAAPP policies
 - Report suspected abuse within 24 hours
 - Maintain professional boundaries
 - Promote a safe, positive environment
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11. Parent & Athlete Education

Pond AA encourages all families to review:

- State child abuse reporting resources
 - SafeSport parent guides
 - Athlete safety education materials
 - Missouri child abuse hotline information
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12. Additional Resources

- U.S. Center for SafeSport
- Missouri Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline
- Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

- Little League Child Protection Program
 - DHHS Child Welfare Information Gateway
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13. Policy Enforcement

Violations of this policy may result in:

- Immediate removal from volunteer duties
 - Suspension or permanent ban
 - Reporting to law enforcement
 - Reporting to SafeSport
 - Reporting to Little League International
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14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect federal law, state law, SafeSport requirements, and Little League guidelines.