



# **SAFESPORT PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

Effective April 2019

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# INTRODUCTION

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports (USA-WSWS) strives to provide a safe environment for its members and is committed to create an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. ***USA-WSWS and its affiliated Sport Disciplines will not tolerate any form of harassment, abuse or misconduct and will uphold a zero tolerance policy.***

There are many positive reasons to participate in one of USA-WSWS's nine Sport Disciplines, but like all sports, it can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct: emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing. *All forms of harassment, abuse and misconduct are unacceptable and in direct conflict with USA-WSWS values and ideals.*

Misconduct may damage an athlete's psychological well-being. Athletes who have been mistreated experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, and loss of self-esteem. Misconduct may also have a negative impact on family, friends and the sport. Misconduct often hurts an athlete's competitive performance and may cause him or her to drop out of the sport entirely.

This SafeSport Handbook includes various policies that apply to all USA-WSWS members, clubs, programs, events and activities, and specifically includes abuse prevention policies relating to youth athletes and participants. It also acts as an educational tool for USA-WSWS members. This handbook focuses on the following:

- Recognizing and reducing circumstances for potential abuse to occur
- Information on USA-WSWS's required screening and background check program
- The availability and procedures for any person to report suspected abuse or misconduct (including protections from any retaliation or repercussions for such reporting)
- The procedures and means by which USA-WSWS and its sport disciplines, member clubs and programs should respond to allegations of abuse and misconduct

Through the USA-WSWS SafeSport Program, USA-WSWS is committed to providing the safest possible environment for all participants.

# SAFESPORT: ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ABUSE POLICY

## What is SafeSport?

SafeSport is an initiative of the United States Olympic Community and its National Governing Bodies to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport. USA-WSWS has adopted this policy as a part of that effort, and as a part of its effort to prevent harassment or abuse from occurring. This policy defines what conduct is prohibited, outlines the training that is available to help prevent misconduct (and who is required to complete that training), and outlines what action should be taken when suspicions or allegations of misconduct occur. **Individuals should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of any harassment or abuse allegations before taking action under this policy; rather, this policy should be followed whenever those circumstances arise.** This is particularly important in cases involving the harassment or abuse of minors.

## Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applies to all “Covered Individual,” who are defined to include the following persons:

- Persons who are members of USA-WSWS, including coaches, volunteers, officials, athletes and others;
- All USA-WSWS office staff and board members;
- Members of any national or international team staff.

Further information regarding the requirements for Covered Individuals, such as background screening and SafeSport training, are found in the “USA Water Ski SafeSport Certification Requirements” attachment to this policy.

Covered Individuals shall be subject to the jurisdiction of USA-WSWS and/or the U.S. Center for SafeSport with respect to the investigation and resolution of any allegations that such Covered Individual may have violated this policy, and are subject to any actions taken by the U.S. Center for SafeSport or USA-WSWS relating to the enforcement of this policy.

More information about the SafeSport initiative and programs can be found at [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org).

# PROHIBITED CONDUCT

**Sexual Abuse and Misconduct: It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no sexual abuse or misconduct. This includes any sexual activity where consent is not or cannot be given is prohibited.**

USA-WSWS members and Covered Individuals shall not engage in sexual harassment or abuse, which includes, and is not limited to, nonconsensual sexual solicitation, physical advances or contact, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature. This prohibition includes sexual contact 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 minor (regardless of whether there is a deception or the minor understands the sexual nature of the activity. Inappropriate touching or contact is prohibited, which includes, but not limited to, nonconsensual touching, hugging, kissing, sexually oriented behavior, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, sexually stimulating or otherwise inappropriate games.

Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law is also prohibited.

Sexual misconduct also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority.

Note:

- ❖ An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete, regardless of age.
- ❖ Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

## Examples of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

<i>Touching Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fondling an athlete’s breasts or buttocks</li> <li>• Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback, free lessons/water time, etc.) for sexual acts</li> <li>• Genital contact – whether or not either party is clothed</li> <li>• Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants</li> </ul>
<i>Non-touching Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior</li> <li>• An authority figure discussing his or her sex life with an athlete</li> <li>• An authority figure asking an athlete about his or her sex life</li> <li>• An authority figure requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete</li> <li>• Exposing athletes to pornographic material</li> <li>• Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., “sexting”)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts</li> <li>• Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)</li> <li>• Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature</li> </ul>
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**Physical Abuse and Misconduct:** It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no physical abuse or misconduct.

Physical abuse includes:

- Physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes, or has the potential to cause, the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury.
- Physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit an athlete with objects or sports equipment.
- Providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of 21 and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant.
- Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault).

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

#### Examples of Physical Abuse and Misconduct

<i>Contact Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete</li> <li>• Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment</li> <li>• Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law)</li> <li>• Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete</li> <li>• Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, after a serious injury (e.g., a concussion)</li> <li>• Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., public weigh-ins, caliper tests for humiliation purposes)</li> </ul>
<i>Non-contact Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space)</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.</li> </ul>

**Emotional Abuse and Misconduct: It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no emotional abuse or misconduct.**

Emotional abuse involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a participant. These behaviors may include verbal acts, physical acts or acts that deny attention or support.

Emotional abuse does not include generally accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, motivation, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

Examples of Emotional Abuse and Misconduct

<i>Verbal Acts</i>	A pattern of verbal behaviors that attack a participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting) or repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
<i>Physical Acts</i>	A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or punching walls, windows or other objects.
<i>Acts that Deny Attention &amp; Support</i>	A pattern of ignoring a participant for extended periods of time or routinely or arbitrarily excluding a participant from practice.

**Bullying, Threats and Harassment: It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no bullying, threats and harassment.**

Bullying is the use of coercion to obtain control over another person or to be habitually cruel to another person. Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture.

A threat to harm others is defined as any written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted expression of intent to physically injure or harm someone. A threat may be communicated directly to the intended victim or communicated to a third party.

Harassment in sport includes any pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual participant or group

based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability. Harassment also includes the creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive. Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not. It includes, for example, name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed. Harassment includes child abuse.

#### Examples of Bullying

Physical Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punching, kicking or choking an athlete</li> </ul>
Verbal and Emotional Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber bullying – Using electronic communication to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate</li> <li>• Using words to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate</li> </ul>

#### Examples of Threats

Direct Threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating an intent to cause physical harm to another</li> </ul>
Indirect Threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating an intent to cause harm through a third party</li> </ul>

#### Examples of Harassment

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassing environment created by: name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed.</li> </ul>
Sexual Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwanted deliberate touching</li> <li>• Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions</li> <li>• Unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature</li> </ul>

**Hazing: It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no hazing.**

Hazing includes any conduct which is intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful. The hazing conduct is typically an activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

#### Examples of Hazing

Hazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs</li> <li>• Tying, taping, or physically restraining a participant;</li> <li>• Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature</li> <li>• Sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food</li> <li>• Social actions or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal</li> </ul>
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	or meant to draw ridicule • Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.
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**Willfully Tolerating Misconduct: It is a violation of this USA-WSWS policy if an instructor, coach, official, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), staff member and/or volunteer.**

# ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

## One-on-one Interactions

**The one-on-one interaction policies in this section apply to all of the following persons:**

- 1) Adult members at a facility that is either partially or fully under the jurisdiction of a Covered Organization;
  - 2) Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors;
  - 3) Any adult authorized by a Covered Organization to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor; and
  - 4) Adult staff and board members of a Covered Organization.
- (Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of one-on-one interaction policies.)

### **One-on-one interactions - General:**

One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an adult (who is not the minor’s parent or legal guardian) at a facility under USA-WSWS’ jurisdiction (such as at sanctioned events) are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult, except in emergency circumstances. However, individual training sessions between minor athletes and an adult (who is not the minor’s parent or legal guardian) may also be conducted if the adult has obtained written permission from the minor’s parent or legal guardian in advance of the individual training session (to be renewed at least every six months).

#### a. Observable and interruptible

- One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
- One-on-one interactions between minor athletes and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction are prohibited, except in the circumstances described in subpart d of this section and under emergency circumstances.

#### b. Meetings

- Meetings between Applicable Adults and minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If

available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

c. Meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers

- If a mental health care professional and/or health care provider meets with minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that: (1) the door remains unlocked; (2) another adult is present at the facility; (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the mental health care professional and/or health care provider, with a copy provided to our organization.

d. Individual training sessions

- Individual training sessions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. It is the responsibility of the Applicable Adult to obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session if the individual training session is not observable and interruptible by another adult. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.

**Changing Area Policy:**

Minor athletes may be particularly vulnerable in changing areas, locker rooms and restrooms because of various states of dress/undress, and because they may be less supervised than at other times. Adherence to a changing area policy, including proper supervision of the changing areas, enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct. To protect against abuse or misconduct which may occur in changing areas:

- Where a changing area for USA-WSWS athletes is available to minor athletes, at least one responsible adult shall be present to monitor the changing area to ensure that only athletes, coaches, approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the changing area and to supervise the conduct in the changing area. Where possible, two responsible adults who have been properly screened pursuant to USA-WSWS' Screening and Background Check policy shall be present.
- No audio or video recording will be allowed in changing areas, including recording by cell phones and other mobile devices with video or audio recording capabilities, or still and video cameras.

If our organization uses a facility not fully under our jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Applicable Adults in categories 1 through 4 are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth herein.

Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Applicable Adult at a facility under our organization's jurisdiction intentionally expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a minor athlete.

Except for athletes on the same team, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area when at a facility under our partial or full jurisdiction, except under emergency circumstances.

If our organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, we will designate separate times for use by Applicable Adults, if any.

### **Travel Policy:**

USA-WSWS has sport disciplines where teams are formed to travel to compete in national and international competitions. In addition, USA-WSWS has member clubs that may also form teams to travel and compete in various events. USA-WSWS prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA-WSWS SafeSport Handbook. USA-WSWS has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of abuse or misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the athletes experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

Applicable Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must have at least two minor athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.

- When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete must have his/her legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.
- Applicable Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the Applicable Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the minor athlete). However, a parent/legal guardian may consent to such an arrangement in advance and in writing. Furthermore, a parent/legal guardian may consent in advance and in writing to the minor athlete sharing a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an adult athlete.

Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the organization's policy for one-on-one interactions (i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible). Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the organization's policy for one-on-one interactions (i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible).

We distinguish between travel to training, practice and local tournaments ("local travel") and team travel involving an overnight stay ("team travel").

## Local Travel

Local travel occurs when USA-WSWS does not sponsor, coordinate or arrange for travel.

- Athletes and/or their parents/guardian are responsible for making all arrangements for local travel. The team and its coaches, managers or administrators should avoid responsibility for arranging or coordinating local travel. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure the person transporting the minor athlete maintains the proper safety and legal requirements, including but not limited to: a valid driver's license, automobile liability insurance, a vehicle in safe working order, and compliance with applicable state laws.
- Absent emergency circumstances, the employees, coaches and/or volunteers of USA-WSWS or one of its teams, who are not also acting as a parent, shall not drive alone with an unrelated minor player.

## Social Media, Blogging and Internet Guidelines:

USA-WSWS encourages athletes, staff and members to post comments on social media platforms, websites and applications. These postings must respect USA-WSWS and its officials and members, including other athletes, and must conform to this SafeSport policy as well as USA-WSWS' Code of Conduct and all applicable sport discipline rules. All postings should be dignified and in good taste, should respect the privacy of others, and should not contain vulgar or obscene words or images.

All electronic communications between coaches, team staff and minor athletes must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), another Applicable Adult or the minor's legal guardian will be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor's legal guardian. When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult will copy another adult.

Coaches, team staff and minor athletes must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communications. It is recommended that electronic communications will generally only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or while traveling internationally or during competition travel.

At the written request of a minor athlete, or her/his parent or guardian, any electronic communication shall include a copy to the parent or guardian. Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the organization or by the Applicable Adults subject to this policy. The

organization will abide by any such request that their minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

Minor athletes may “friend” the organization’s official page.

### **Massage, rubdown, athletic training interactions:**

Any massage, rubdown or athletic training interaction at a training or competition venue under USA-WSWS’ jurisdiction (such as at sanctioned events) must be conducted in an open and interruptible location. Any massage or rubdown of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the massage or rubdown in the room.

## **SCREENING AND BACKGROUND CHECK PROGRAM**

USA-WSWS has implemented a background screen program, which is applicable to the persons listed in the attached “USA Water Ski SafeSport Certification Requirements” chart. These background checks have been implemented to promote a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for USA-WSWS athletes and members, including an environment that is safe and appropriate for minors. This background screen program also discourages the presence of those who may seek to harm athletes, and help protect USA-WSWS member clubs, programs, events and all members from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants. Although no background screen program can guarantee that incidents of abuse or other violations will not occur, it is intended as a preventative risk management tool for the benefit of all participants.

### USA-WSWS requires screening of the following members:

- USA-WSWS board of directors and sport discipline boards of directors
- All USA-WSWS certified instructors/coaches
- Any participant (athlete) or staff of national or international teams (Team USA representing USA-WSWS
  - Includes coaches, team leaders, managers, medical support staff or persons in position of influence or authority
- Show ski team show directors and assistant directors
- Junior development coaches and leadership
- Employees of USA-WSWS

USA-WSWS has adopted the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s training materials as the official education and certification program and as an available resource to its members. The above listed adults are required to complete training concerning child abuse prevention. This must be completed immediately for the above listed adults, and:

- Before regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor begins; or
- Within the first 45 days of initial membership, or upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy.

## Screening Policy

It is USA-WSWS's policy that prior to the hiring of staff, awarding certification of instructors or designating any member into a position of influence or authority that each individual give consent to and passes a formal applicant screening process before performing or participating in USA-WSWS events and activities.

The background screen components will include a review of all criteria required under United States Olympic Committee criteria, including social security number validation, name and address history records, multi-jurisdictional criminal history searches, sex offender and national watch list checks, county criminal records for each location where the individual lives or has lived in the last seven years, federal district court records, and SafeSport disciplinary records. This background check is in addition to any motor vehicle records checks that may be required for USA-WSWS drivers.

Disqualifiers include the following:

A person should be disqualified and prohibited from serving as a volunteer if the person has been found guilty of the following crimes. Guilty means that a person was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by a court finding of guilty, regardless of whether there was an adjudication of guilt (conviction) or a withholding of guilt. This recommendation does not apply if criminal charges resulted in acquittal, Nolle Prose, or dismissal.

### **SEX OFFENSES**

- **All Sex Offenses** – Regardless of the amount of time since offense.  
**Examples include:** child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, child pornography, possession and distribution of obscene material, public indecency and any sex offender registrant.

### **FELONIES**

- **All Felony Violence** – Regardless of the amount of time since offense.  
**Examples include:** murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated Burglary, etc.
- **All Felony offenses** other than **violence** or **sex** within the past 10 years.  
**Examples include:** drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.

### **MISDEMEANORS**

- **All misdemeanor violence** offenses within the past 7 years  
**Examples include:** simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, stalking, harassment, blackmail or threats. (Including crimes involving firearms)

- **Animal Abuse, cruelty or neglect.**
- **Destruction of Property** including arson, vandalism, and criminal mischief.
- Multiple misdemeanor drug & alcohol offenses within the past 7 years.  
**Examples include:** driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.
- **Any other misdemeanor** within the past 5 years that would be considered a potential danger to children or is directly related to the functions of that volunteer.  
**Examples include:** contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft – if person is handling monies, etc.



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education is a key component of any abuse and misconduct prevention strategy. Awareness training provides relevant participants with information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for abuse and misconduct, and respond to concerns. It is also a strong public statement that the organization places a priority on the safety of its participants.

In an effort to maintain a safe environment for USA-WSWS members, it is a requirement that all persons listed in the attached “USA Water Ski SafeSport Certification Requirements” chart complete the Center for SafeSport’s education and certification program. It is also strongly encouraged that all USA-WSWS members familiarize themselves with the USA-WSWS SafeSport Program. The more awareness USA-WSWS members have about abuse and misconduct, the safer the sport will be.

USA-WSWS has adopted the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s training materials as the official education and certification program and as an available resource to its members. The above listed adults are required to complete training concerning child abuse prevention. This must be completed immediately for the above listed adults, and:

- Before regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor begins; or
- Within the first 45 days of initial membership, or upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy.

Training shall also be provided to minors regarding the prevention and reporting of child abuse, subject to parental consent.

*Training other than the Core Center for SafeSport Training does not satisfy this policy.*

Exemptions from this Education & Training Policy may be made on a case-by-case basis for victims/survivors. Requests may be made directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, [ngbservices@safesport.org](mailto:ngbservices@safesport.org), or to the relevant NGB.

The Center will work with Covered Organizations regarding appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities to satisfy the training requirements herein.

All Covered Individuals listed in the attached “USA Water Ski SafeSport Certification Requirements” chart must also renew their SafeSport certification every year via the SafeSport “Refresher Course,” which is approximately 15 minutes in length.

Certain jurisdictions in the United States may have mandatory training and testing that may apply to those who work or volunteer with youth athletes. All Covered Individuals must also comply with any state-mandated training and testing requirements.

## REPORTING ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT

USA-WSWS requires that violations of this policy, as well as suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, be immediately reported. **USA-WSWS members should not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

### Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse

All such allegations must be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, as well as notification to USA-WSWS that the report was made. **Contact your local law enforcement authorities if you have a reasonable suspicion that child sexual abuse or neglect has occurred, or have received a report of child sexual abuse or neglect. Reports or abuse not involving a minor may also be reported to local law enforcement authorities.**

### Reporting Other Policy Violations

Any other allegations or reports of sexual-related misconduct should be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, as well as notification to USA-WSWS that the report was made. **Contact your local law enforcement authorities if you have a reasonable suspicion that child sexual abuse or neglect has occurred, or have received a report of child sexual abuse or neglect.**

Other non-sexual related misconduct or inappropriate behavior should be reported to USA-WSWS.

### Failure to Report

It is the obligation of USA-WSWS members and member clubs to report suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct. If a person in authority knows, or should reasonably have known, that harassment or abuse may have occurred and fails to report it or take appropriate action as set out in this policy statement, that person may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Retaliations or Threats of Reprisal

Retaliation or threats of reprisal against an individual for filing a complaint under this policy or for participating or assisting in any procedure under this policy will be considered harassment for the purpose of this policy. Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Reporting Procedure

If you are aware of or suspect any violation of USA-WSWS's policies on abuse and misconduct, you should do all of the following:

### 1. Report the abuse to authorities.

*If the abuse and misconduct is criminal in nature, contact the authorities immediately.* In most states, you are obligated to bring this matter to the attention of local law enforcement or public child welfare organization and make a report

### 2. How to Report:

To report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, you may use the online reporting form at [www.safesport.org/report-a-concern](http://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern), or call (720) 531-0340.

To report a concern to USA-WSWS, you may contact Executive Director Nate Boudreaux, at [nboudreaux@usawaterski.org](mailto:nboudreaux@usawaterski.org) or (863) 508-2095, with copies to USA-WSWS' President and the chair of USA-WSWS' Judicial Committee.

## Protection for Reporting Parties

Although USA-WSWS will review all reports under this policy, anonymous reporting may make it difficult to properly investigate allegations. To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, USA-WSWS will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the name(s) of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of child physical or sexual abuse to local law enforcement authorities. Regardless of the outcome of a complaint, USA-WSWS will support the complainant and her/his right to express concerns in good faith. However, false complaints or complaints made in bad faith are prohibited, and may subject the complainant(s) to disciplinary action depending on the nature of the allegation or complaint.

## Complaints, Investigations and Adjudications

All complaints or requests for investigations under USA-WSWS's SafeSport policy will be referred to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which shall have the sole and exclusive authority and jurisdiction to investigate, conduct hearings, make preliminary rulings and issue final orders on complaints and requests for investigations under USA-WSWS's SafeSport Policy. In certain cases, the U.S. Center for SafeSport may decline to exercise its jurisdiction over the matter, in which case the matter will be referred to the USA-WSWS Judicial Committee for handling under Article IX of the USA-WSWS Bylaws (including all due process requirements and policies thereunder). In cases where the U.S. Center for SafeSport has accepted jurisdiction, the final decision of the U.S. Center for SafeSport shall be reported to the President of USA-WSWS, and shall be binding upon and implemented by USA-WSWS.

For matters handled by USA-WSWS (in circumstances where the U.S. Center for SafeSport has declined to exercise jurisdiction over the matter), USA-WSWS may impose appropriate sanctions and penalties, including interim suspensions and permanent expulsions from membership, following the procedures set forth in the USA-WSWS Bylaws and other applicable policies. Any sanctions imposed by USA-WSWS shall be proportionate and reasonable, relative to the findings and conclusions of USA-WSWS as to what has occurred, and given consideration of the interest of USA-WSWS and its members to provide a safe environment for all participants in USA-WSWS activities, the nature and seriousness of the offense and its impact on the victim, and other information provided and considered by USA-WSWS relating to the complaint. Appropriate disciplines may range from a warning, to a reprimand, to a membership suspension or limitation for a period of time, or to a permanent expulsion from membership, and any continued participation or reinstatement to USA-WSWS activities may be conditioned upon the completion of specified requirements.

### **Notification**

Following USA-WSWS's notice of a credible allegation that results in the imposition of sanctions against a member, USA-WSWS may provide such notifications as are deemed appropriate including notification of the other parties involved in the matter, publication of the sanctions, and/or notification of local law enforcement authorities.