

Rev. September 2017



**USA**Volleyball.

# SAFESPORT

---

HANDBOOK

***“Safety and security don’t just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment.***

***We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear.”***



***Nelson Mandela***

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<i>USA Volleyball, its Regions &amp; SafeSport; Guiding Principles</i> .....	4
<i>Components of the SafeSport Program</i> .....	5
<i>U.S. Center for SafeSport</i> .....	6-7
<i>Definitions and Interpretations</i> .....	7
<b>SECTION 1: USA VOLLEYBALL SAFESPORT POLICIES</b> .....	8-13
<i>OVERVIEW</i> .....	8
<i>SEXUAL MISCONDUCT</i> .....	9-11
<i>PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT</i> .....	12
<i>EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT</i> .....	13
<i>BULLYING, THREATS AND HARASSMENT</i> .....	14-15
<i>HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT</i> .....	16-17
<i>HAZING</i> .....	18
<i>SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY; TRAVEL POLICY</i> .....	19-21
<b>SECTION II: USA VOLLEYBALL BACKGROUND SCREENING INFORMATION AND POLICY</b> .....	22-26
<b>SECTION III: USA VOLLEYBALL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS</b> .....	27
<b>SECTION IV: MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF SAFESPORT</b> .....	28-29
<b>APPENDIX: MODEL POLICIES</b> .....	30-37
<i>APPENDIX A:</i> .....	31-33
<i>APPENDIX B:</i> .....	34-37

## INTRODUCTION



*USA Volleyball and the forty Regional Volleyball Associations are committed to creating a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional, and social development. Together we will promote an environment free from abuse and misconduct. It must be recognized that the safety of its Participants lies with all those involved in the sport and is not the sole responsibility of any one person at the club, regional or national level.*

*First, and most importantly, whether one is a gifted athlete or a recreational player, volleyball is FUN! It is a lifetime sport enjoyed by players from 8 to 80. Participation in volleyball is not only good exercise, but also involves team cooperation and spirit.*

*Athletes enjoy a wide range of physical, emotional and social benefits. Sports develop general physical fitness, and physical exertion has a documented positive mental effect. Athletes have a greater sense of self-worth, demonstrate better collaboration skills, and maintain healthier peer relationships.*

*Unfortunately, sports, including volleyball, can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct, including physical and sexual abuse. All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the values of USA Volleyball.*

### **For more information:**

**Online – <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>**

**Email - [SafeSport@usav.org](mailto:SafeSport@usav.org)**

**Call – 719-228-6800 or your Regional Volleyball Association Office**

## **USA Volleyball and Regional Volleyball Associations Commitment of ZERO TOLERANCE**

*The safety of its participants is of paramount importance to USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations. Together we have adopted **ZERO TOLERANCE** for abuse and misconduct. This includes not only on-court safety, but also off-court safety in any part of our Volleyball programs. USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations are committed to creating safe and fun environments for all Participants. This includes, but is not limited to, providing training, educational materials and resources for regions, clubs, coaches and parents.*

### **Guiding Principles for USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations:**

- 1. Committed to providing a safe, healthy and positive environment for Participants' physical, emotional and social development.*
- 2. Believes in an environment free from abuse and misconduct.*
- 3. Believes that all non-athlete Participants share a collective responsibility to protect our membership.*
- 4. Makes training available for all Participants to increase awareness and understanding of athlete protection policies and best practices. USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations provides a process for Participants to recognize, respond to and report any SafeSport issues that arise.*
- 5. Provide resources, information and guidance on SafeSport- related issues to all Participants, including coaches, parents and athletes.*
- 6. Zero Tolerance for USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations means that we will treat all allegations of abuse or concerns regarding athlete safety seriously and will respond appropriately per policy.***



## **Components of SafeSport**

- **Policies and Guidelines** – Provide specific, mandatory policies that must be followed at all levels of the organization; provide additional best practices that protect all Participants; solicit feedback on policies / guidelines in practice and review / propose updates.
- **Education and Awareness Training** – Provide tools and resources for our community to increase understanding and awareness of abuse in sport and abuse prevention; deliver education and training opportunities, review and update efforts based on industry findings.
- **Background Screening of Staff** – Continue to be an industry leader in background screening, the organization's first line of defense against predators; provide tools to vet which individuals can become Participants, employees and have contact with minors.
- **Monitoring and Supervision** – Observe interactions and react appropriately at the local, regional and national levels; provide clear expectations of behavior for both youth to youth and youth to adult interactions.
- **Grassroots Engagement and Feedback** – Create a connection to the local clubs and Participants; establish clear communication channels; solicit feedback and communicate how the feedback was incorporated into to change efforts; work together; demonstrate why Participants of all levels need to be diligent and engaged in preventing abuse.

## ***U.S Center for SafeSport***

*The U.S. Center for SafeSport, located in Denver, opened in March 2017. The Center's Response and Resolution Office will investigate and resolve alleged policy violations of the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement's 47-member National Governing Bodies, which includes USA Volleyball.*

*The focus of the U.S. Center for SafeSport is to provide services in two areas - the administration of SafeSport Training and to act as an independent party to investigate and resolve allegations of sexual misconduct against any person within the jurisdiction of the national governing bodies, including USAV and its RVAs.*

- The SafeSport Code identifies prohibited conduct and serves as the benchmark by which the Center determines whether a policy violation has occurred.*
- Aggregate data from Center investigations will be used to identify trends and patterns across sport, strengthening national prevention efforts.*

### ***Jurisdiction and Authority***

*As a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations have agreed, effective with the beginning of the 2017-18 membership season on September 1, 2017, to adhere to the Center's policies and procedures, which includes the Center's SafeSport Code that identifies prohibited conduct and the procedures for investigating and resolving allegations. The Center will have exclusive authority and jurisdiction to investigate and resolve allegations involving sexual misconduct over covered individuals.*

*Covered individuals are defined as:*

- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Volleyball*
- USA Volleyball, a Regional Volleyball Association or the USOC authorizes, approves or appoints a person to a position of authority over athletes or who will have frequent contact with athletes*
- Identified by USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations as being within the Center's jurisdiction*

*The Center will have the exclusive authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport Code violations involving sexual misconduct.*

*USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations will retain the authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport violations that are non-sexual in nature. Although, at USA Volleyball's and its Regional Volleyball Associations request, the Center may exercise the discretionary authority to take on cases of this nature.*

*All individuals, including those who are not Participants of USA Volleyball and its regions,*

*are encouraged to report suspected violations of SafeSport.*

*Covered individuals who are over the age of 18 are required to report any suspected SafeSport violations related to or accompanying sexual misconduct. Covered individuals who fail to report SafeSport violations may be subject to disciplinary action.*

## **Definitions and Interpretations**

*The following terms and phrases shall have the meaning assigned to them below wherever used in this SafeSport Handbook:*

***“Participant”*** means and includes any person who is registered with USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations. The plural ***“Participants”*** shall have the same meaning as the singular ***“Participant.”***

***“Regional Volleyball Association”*** means one of the 40 Regional Volleyball Associations (RVAs) of USA Volleyball, found here: <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Membership/Regions>

***“Member Club”*** means a volleyball club consisting of any number of teams, registered and sanctioned through its local RVA.

***“Member Program”*** means a program conducting activities involving registered members sanctioned by USA Volleyball on the National, Region or club level.

***“Responsible adult”*** means and refers to a person within a Regional Volleyball Association or member club who has either been assigned or has assumed duties within the Region, club or individual team.

***“Parent”*** shall mean and refer to a parent and/or guardian, as appropriate to each minor’s situation. The plural ***“Parents”*** shall have the same meaning as the singular ***“Parent.”***



## **SECTION I:**

### **USA Volleyball and Regional Volleyball Associations SafeSport Policies**

*USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations are committed to providing a safe and positive environment for its Participants' physical, emotional and social development and ensuring it promotes an environment free from abuse and misconduct. As part of this program, USA Volleyball and Regional Volleyball Associations have implemented policies below addressing various types of abuse and misconduct, and certain policies intended to reduce, monitor and govern the areas where potential abuse and misconduct might occur.*

*A USA Volleyball or Regional Volleyball Association Participant or parent of a Participant who violates any of the below policies is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited, to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities as per policy.*

*The Center will have the exclusive authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport Code violations involving sexual misconduct.*

*USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations will retain the authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport violations that are non-sexual in nature.*

***These policies address the following types of abuse and misconduct (Defined in following sections):***

- 1. Sexual Misconduct*
- 2. Physical Misconduct*
- 3. Emotional Misconduct*
- 4. Bullying, Threats and Harassment*
- 5. Harassment, including Sexual Harassment*
- 6. Hazing*

***The following are considered proactive policies and are implemented to reduce the risks of potential abuse:***

- 1. Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy*
- 2. Travel Policy*

*All Participants will familiarize themselves with each form of misconduct and shall refrain from engaging in misconduct and/or violating any of these policies.*

*A Participant or Parent who violates any of the below policies is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension and/or*

*referral to law enforcement authorities.*

*In the event that any of USA Volleyball's employees or volunteers, the Regional Volleyball Association's employees or volunteers, or Member Clubs' employees or volunteers observe inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical and/or sexual abuse, and any other types of abuse or misconduct, it is the responsibility of that observing person to immediately report their observations to the appropriate authority as described in the following sections of this handbook when required under this Policy and/or under applicable law and the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Employees and volunteers should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.*

*USA Volleyball's and the Regional Volleyball Association's policies prohibiting misconduct shall be the same as the applicable policies set by U.S. Center for SafeSport. For more information, please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org). U.S. Center for SafeSport may change its definitions or policies at any time without notice. Where definitions are different, U.S. Center for SafeSport current applicable policies prevail.*

## ***Sexual Misconduct***

### ***How to Recognize and Respond to Sexual Misconduct***

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations that there shall be no sexual abuse or misconduct of any Participant by any coach, official, director, employee, Parent, volunteer, independent contractor, support staff or other Participant.*

*Sexual misconduct occurs when an athlete, coach, official, director, employee, Parent or volunteer touches or engages in any other inappropriate activity with a Participant for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.*

### ***Consent***

*Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited. All sexual interaction between a participant in a position of authority over a junior player is strictly prohibited by policy.*

### ***Authority and Trust***

*Once the unique coach-athlete relationship is established, the authority and trust on the part of the coach over the athlete shall be assumed, regardless of age. However, in some circumstances in regard to adult volleyball players, this assumption is rebuttable.*

### ***Imbalance of Power***

*An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete, regardless of age, and an adult in a*

*position of authority.*

*Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or child sexual abuse under applicable federal or state law constitutes sexual abuse under this policy. Any USA Volleyball or Regional Volleyball Association Participant who engages in any act of sexual misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent ban and referral to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and law enforcement authorities.*

## **EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT (without limitation)**

### **Touching offenses**

- *Fondling an athlete's breasts, buttocks or genitalia*
- *Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback, free lessons/court time, etc.) for sexual acts*
- *Genital contact – whether or not either party is clothed*
- *Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants*

### **Non-touching offenses**

- *Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior*
- *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 athlete*
- *Exposing athletes to pornographic material*
- *Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive digital 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 rooms and changing areas are shared)*
- *Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature*

## **'GROOMING'**

*Grooming describes the process whereby a person engages in a series or pattern of behaviors with a goal of engaging in sexual misconduct. Be advised that the initial stages of the grooming process can occur in public or group settings, offenders also take care to groom the community, which makes it easier to gain the trust*

of staff and administrators.

Grooming may involve any of the following but not limited to the following activities:

1. *Targeting the victim – An offender will identify a child and determine his or her vulnerabilities.*
2. *Gaining trust – Through watching and gathering information about the child, an offender will become acquainted with his or her needs.*
3. *Filling a need – Offenders will often lavish gifts, extra attention and affection to forge a bond with their victims.*
4. *Isolating the child – By developing a special relationship with the child, an offender creates situations in which he or she is alone with the child.*
5. *Sexualizing the relationship – An offender will desensitize a child by talking to, taking photos of and even creating situations in which both the offender and victim are touching or naked. The adult then uses a child's curiosity and feelings of stimulation to engage in sexual activity.*
6. *Maintaining control – To ensure the child's continued participation and silence, offenders can use secrecy and blame as well as other tactics. Victims sometimes continue the relationship out of fear or shame at the thought of having to tell someone about the abuse.*

***All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected grooming shall be immediately directed to law enforcement and the United States Center for SafeSport.***

## ***How to Report Sexual Misconduct Violations***

***If you become aware of sexual misconduct you must immediately report to law enforcement (and) the U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT.***

***To report to the U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT:***

Online Reporting Form: <https://www.safesport.org/response/report>

Phone: **720-524-5640**

SafeSport Helpline: [safesporthehelpline.org](https://safesporthehelpline.org)

SafeSport Helpline Number: **866-200-0796**

## **PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT**

**USA Volleyball's and the Regional Volleyball Association's policies prohibiting misconduct shall be the same as the applicable policies of the United States Center for SafeSport. For more information, please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org)**

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball and its Regional Volleyball Associations that there shall be no physical misconduct (abuse) of any Participant by any coach, official, director, employee, Parent, volunteer, independent contractor, support staff or other Participant.*

**Physical Misconduct means any contact or non-contact conduct that causes or reasonably threatens to cause physical harm to another person.**

**Examples of physical misconduct may include, without limitation:**

**Contact violations** – Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping another; intentionally hitting another with objects, such as sporting equipment; encouraging or knowingly permitting an Athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e. g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional.

**Non – contact violations-** Isolating a person in a confined space, such as 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); withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep; providing alcohol to a person under the U. S. legal drinking age; providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to another.

**Physical misconduct means physical contact with a participant - hitting, pushing, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting or slapping; throwing, objects such as sporting equipment at another person.**

*Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as physical misconduct under applicable federal or state law constitutes physical misconduct under this Policy. Physical misconduct does not include physical contact that is reasonably designed to coach, teach, demonstrate or improve a volleyball skill, including physical conditioning, and team building.*

*While other team Participants are often the perpetrators of physical misconduct towards their teammates, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other Responsible Adult participates, knows or should know of the physical misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).*

**To report instances of Physical Misconduct, refer to your regional SafeSport contact, regional commissioner or USAV at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>. USAV will immediately forward complaints to the appropriate Region.**

## **EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT**

**USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Association's policies prohibiting misconduct shall be the same as the applicable policies as the U.S. Center for SafeSport.** For more information, please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org).

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations that there shall be no emotional misconduct (abuse) of any Participant by an employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other Participant.*

**Emotional misconduct involves repeated and / or severe non-contact behavior involving Verbal Acts, Physical Acts and / or Acts that Deny Attention or Support. Emotional Misconduct is determined by the objective behaviors, not whether harm is intended or results from the behavior.**

**Examples** of emotional misconduct may include, without limitation:

**Verbal Acts** – Verbal assault that repeatedly attacks someone personally (e.g., calling a person worthless, fat or disgusting; taunting a person for being too effeminate); repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular athlete or other participant in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.

**Physical Acts** - Physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of others; punching walls, windows or other objects.

**Acts that Deny Attention or Support** – Ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time, including routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Participant from practice.

*While other team Participants are often the perpetrators of emotional misconduct towards their teammates, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other Responsible Adult participates, knows or should know of the emotional misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).*

**To report instances of Emotional Misconduct, refer to your regional SafeSport contact, regional commissioner or USAV at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>. USAV will immediately forward complaints to the appropriate Region.**

## **BULLYING, THREATS AND HARASSMENT**

***USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Association's policies prohibiting misconduct shall be the same as the applicable policies as the United States Center for SafeSport. For more information, please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org).***

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations that there shall be no form of bullying, threats or harassment directed at any Participant by any coach, official, director, employee, Parent, volunteer, independent contractor, support staff or other Participant.*

***Bullying Behavior is repeated and / or aggressive behavior among minors that is intended or likely to hurt, control or diminish another person emotionally, physically or sexually. (Bullying – like behaviors among adults are addressed under other forms of misconduct such as Hazing and Harassment.***

*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.*

### **BULLYING BEHAVIOR IS PROHIBITED IN ANY MANNER.**

***Forms*** of bullying may include, without limitation: Physical – Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting, or slapping; throwing objects such as sporting equipment at another person

***Verbal*** – Teasing, ridiculing, taunting, name-calling or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.

***Social, including cyberbullying*** – Using rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; using electronic communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate someone; socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same.

***Sexual*** – Teasing, ridiculing or taunting based on gender or sexual orientation (real or implied), gender traits or behavior e.g., taunting someone for being too effeminate), or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.

***Rude, mean and conflict*** – distinguished – Conduct may not rise to the level of Bullying Behavior if it is rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons, absent a Power Imbalance, who perceive they have incompatible goals.

*While other team Participants are often the perpetrators of bullying, threats and harassment, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene on the behalf of the targeted participant(s).*

***To report instances of Bullying, Treats or Harassment refer to your regional SafeSport contact, regional commissioner or USAV at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>. USAV will immediately forward complaints to the appropriate Region.***



## **HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Association's policies prohibiting misconduct shall be the same as the applicable policies as the U.S. Center for SafeSport.** For more information, please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org).

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations that there shall be no form of harassment directed at any Participant by any coach, official, director, employee, Parent, volunteer, independent contractor, support staff or other Participant*

**Harassment in sport is repeated and / or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation or annoyance, offends or degrades, creates a hostile environment, or reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual athlete or group based on age, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law. Whether conduct is harassing depends on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context and duration of the behavior.**

**Forms of Harassment may include, without limitation:**

**Discriminatory Harassment** – Conduct with the design or effect of establishing dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on age, sex, race, color, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, or mental or physical disability.

**Stalking** - Conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others, or to suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalking generally involves a course of conduct which includes two or more acts, involving persistent and frequent unwanted in person contact, surveillance or unwanted telephone and / or other electronic contact.

**Sexual Harassment** – Conduct by a covered Adult toward an Athlete or other non-employee, non-athlete, Participant that includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical behaviors of a sexual nature; or is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive and objectively offensive that it negatively affects an individual's performance.

*While other team Participants may be the perpetrators of harassment or sexual harassment, it is a violation of this policy if any coach or other Responsible Adult knows or should know of the harassment or sexual harassment but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).*

*It shall be a violation for any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other Participant to harass a Participant(s) through conduct or communications of a sexual nature, or to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation. USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations shall investigate all indications, informal reports and formal grievances of harassment or sexual harassment by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other Participant and appropriate corrective action shall be taken. Corrective action includes taking all reasonable steps to end the harassment, to prevent harassment from recurring and to prevent retaliation against anyone who reports harassment or sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.*

*While other team Participants are often the perpetrators of harassment, including sexual harassment towards their teammates, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other Responsible Adult participates, knows or should know of the harassment, including sexual harassment but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).*

*It shall be a violation for any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other Participant to harass a Participant(s) through conduct or communications of a sexual nature, or to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation. USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations shall investigate all indications, informal reports and formal grievances of harassment or sexual harassment by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other Participant and appropriate corrective action shall be taken. Corrective action includes taking all reasonable steps to end the harassment, to prevent harassment from recurring and to prevent retaliation against anyone who reports harassment or sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.*

*While other team Participants are often the perpetrators of harassment, including sexual harassment towards their teammates, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other Responsible Adult participates, knows or should know of the harassment, including sexual harassment but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).*

**To report instances of Harassment to include Sexual Harassment refer to your regional SafeSport contact, regional commissioner or at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>. USAV will immediately forward complaints to the appropriate Region.**

## HAZING

**USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Association's policies prohibiting misconduct shall be the same as the applicable policies as the U.S. Center for SafeSport.** For more information, please visit [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org)

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations that there shall be no hazing of any Participant by any coach, official, director, employee, Parent, volunteer, independent contractor, support staff or other Participant.*

**Hazing is any conduct that subjects another person, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, humiliate, degrade or intimidate the person as a condition of joining or being socially accepted by a group, team or organization. Purported Consent by the person subject to the Hazing is not a defense, regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.**

*Examples of Hazing include:*

**Contact Acts** - Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining another person; beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault.

**Non-Contact Acts** – Requiring or forcing the consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances in an effort to elicit a negative physiological response, including participation in binge drinking and drinking games, personal servitude; requiring social actions (e.g., wearing inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g., public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; excessive training requirements demanded of only particular individuals on a team that serve no reasonable or productive training purpose; sleep deprivation; otherwise unnecessary schedule disruptions; withholding of water and / or food; restrictions on personal hygiene.

**Sexualized acts** – Actual or simulated Sexual Conduct of any nature.

*Hazing does not include club or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion so long as such activities do not have reasonable potential to cause emotional or physical distress to any participant. Examples of activities that do not constitute hazing include directing or allowing younger player to pick up or fill water bottles or giving older players first preference to team assignments, responsibilities, accommodations, facilities or equipment.*

*While other team Participants are often the perpetrators of hazing towards their teammates, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other Responsible Adult participates, knows or should know of the hazing but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted Participant(s).*

**To report instances of Hazing, refer to your regional SafeSport contact, regional commissioner or USAV Volleyball at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>. USAV will immediately forward complaints to the appropriate Region.**

## ***SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY***

***Communication involving minor Participants will be appropriate, productive and transparent, as part of USA Volleyball's emphasis on participant safety. The same is recommended for junior players, who are no longer minors.***

*Communication concerning travel, practice, competition schedules, administrative issues among coaches, administrators, players and their families is critical. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media and other forms of electronic communication increases the possibility for improprieties, misunderstandings, and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of mobile devices and electronic communication can result in misconduct.*

*Below are USA Volleyball Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy requirements.*

### **Policy**

- *USA Volleyball and the RVA 's junior clubs are strongly recommended to implement a Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy. A model policy with additional suggested items is included in the Appendix to this handbook. If a club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy, the model policy will be the default policy for that club.*
- *All electronic communication between adult and player must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.*
- *Adults, players and all team personnel must follow appropriate guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication.*
- *All content between adult and player must be readily available to share with the public or families of the adult or player.*
- *If the player is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media or similar communication must also copy or include the player's parents. The same is recommended for junior players who are no longer minors.*

### **Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications**

*Immediate compliance without repercussion must be granted following receipt of a written request by the player's parents that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults, their club, team, coaches and administrators.*

## **TRAVEL POLICY**

***Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new locker rooms, workout facilities, gyms, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.***

*Below are USA Volleyball Travel Policy requirements.*

*USA Volleyball junior clubs are strongly recommended to implement a Travel Policy. A model Travel Policy with additional suggested items is included in the Appendix to this handbook. If a club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written Travel Policy, the model policy will be the default policy for that club.*

*Some travel involves only local travel to and from local practices and events while other travel involves overnight stays. Different policies shall apply to these types of travel.*

### *Local Travel*

- *It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure the person transporting the minor player 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.*
- *The employees, coaches and/or volunteers of a club or one of its teams, who are also not acting as a parent, shall not drive alone with an unrelated minor. The same is recommended for junior players who are no longer minors.*

### *Team Travel*

- *Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent or relative of the player).*
- *At no time, will only one adult be present in a room with minor players, regardless of gender.*
- *Individual meetings between a coach and a player may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms and must be held in public settings.*

- *The team will make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental requests when a child is away from home without a parent.*
- *No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.*
- *Prior to any travel, the club and/or coaches will endeavor to make players and parents aware of all expectations and rules.*
- *If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, then except where immediate action is necessary, parents will be notified before any action is taken, or immediately after.*

*Additional policies surrounding safety, behavior, financial guidelines are also recommended, as is the development of a Club Travel Code of Conduct or Honor Code. An example is included in the Appendix of this handbook.*

## **SECTION II:**

### **USA Volleyball Background Screening Policy**

***USA Volleyball has had a background screening policy in place since 2003.***

*USA Volleyball was one of the first national sports organizations to implement a screening policy and has been considered a leader in requiring a screening of its members. USA Volleyball's strict policy includes set criteria for which a person may be disqualified and prohibited from serving as an employee or subcontractor for USA Volleyball, its Regions or clubs. Under the policy, USA Volleyball will not authorize or accept any member who has routine access to minors unless that person consents to be screened **and** passes a comprehensive screen by USA Volleyball's approved background screen vendor. This policy encompasses all adults associated with junior programming, including coaches, officials and event staff.*

#### ***Purposes of a Screening Policy:***

- *It is the professional and moral responsibility of USAV and its Member Programs to provide a safe environment for members during sanctioned activities.*
- *Protects USA Volleyball participants from known offenders so that such individuals do not have access to USA Volleyball members.*
- *Deters offenders who have not been caught from joining USA Volleyball programs because the program has a known policy against abuse.*
- *Helps protect USA Volleyball, its Regions and clubs, and their respective employees and subcontractors, from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.*
- *It protects USAV, its Regions and clubs from state and federal precedence that associations can be held generally liable for sexual misconduct or abuse that can in some way be connected to their sanctioned events.*
- *Background screenings are a "risk management tool" to help reduce potential sexual abuse/molestation claims by identifying and eliminating individuals that might pose a threat from the group the insurance company is providing coverage.*

## **Policy:**

*It is the policy of USA Volleyball (USAV) and its Regional Volleyball Associations (RVAs) that any club/entity intending to hire or use registered individuals in any sanctioned junior volleyball events and/or activities (some examples of events or activities that can be sanctioned with regional approval are: tournaments, practices, clinics, tryouts, and fundraisers) will accept and abide by this background screening policy. The following individuals, 18 years of age or older, will be screened: Club directors, club administrators, team reps, coaches, chaperones, and trainers who intend to register, affiliate and/or participate with a USAV/RVA junior volleyball club or team. Any Junior Tournament Director/Site Director/On-site Tournament Administrator/Manager and official 18 or older who intends to work a junior sanctioned event will also be screened with the exception of a junior player. Each RVA may also choose to require other members of their organization to submit to and pass a background screen in order to affiliate with their organization. Additionally, the club/entity will enforce the penalties resulting from a negative background screening report. Failure to do so is grounds for automatic suspension of membership privileges to participate in USAV/RVA sanctioned junior events and/or activities. All disqualified individuals have the right to dispute the findings of the background screening directly with the RVA's approved Background Screen Vendor. All non-USA citizens will require an international criminal background screening when applying for any position stated above. This screening may require additional fees as determined by the RVA.*

*The RVAs and/or USAV will not register, or allow to be registered, any individual who refuses to consent to a background screen if he/she intends to affiliate and/or participate with a junior club/team, in the RVA or any other regional or national junior level programming. Junior members are any members under the age of 18. A background screen will not be required for those individuals who will be classified only as junior players or those individuals not registered, affiliated and/or participating with a junior volleyball club or team in a RVA (other than those categories listed above). For those regions that allow individuals under 18 to be an assistant coach, any individual who is not yet 18 years old and who is in a non-player role affiliated with a junior club must be background screened immediately upon reaching 18 years of age. A 30-day grace period shall apply from the date of the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to allow time for the background screening to be processed. During the 30-day grace period, the same restrictions apply to the individual and should be enforced as are in place for junior coaches regarding supervision by a qualified adult. It is the responsibility of the individual, club and region to identify the individuals in this situation and to meet the background screening requirement. Upon the conclusion of the*

*30-day grace period, the individual may not participate in a non-player role affiliated with a junior club unless the background screening requirement is met.*



*All screens will be good for two membership seasons (maximum of 26 months) **unless required more frequently by state law**. Anyone that fails a background screen cannot reapply for another screen until the following season. **USAV and the RVAs retain the right to require additional background screens at any time with the exception of reissuing an application that was previously disqualified due to falsification.***

### **Process:**

*Every individual required to submit Background Screening must complete, sign and date the Consent and Waiver Release Form. Electronic signatures are only accepted on the USAV Online Registration System. The Background Screen Consent and Waiver Release form will be submitted and the applicant cleared before the applicant may participate in RVA/USAV sanctioned junior events and/or activities.*

*Upon receipt of the above described documents, the USAV/RVA will request that the USAV/RVA approved Background Screen Vendor perform the background screen.*

*All information received as a result of a background check will be strictly confidential. Notice of clearance or disqualification for all applicants will be provided to:*

- 1. The designated contact of the RVA that submitted the application.*
- 2. USA Volleyball National Office*

*A notice of automatic disqualification will be sent by email by the USAV/RVA approved Background Screen Vendor to the RVA office. The RVA will provide the approved Background Screen Vendor a contact e-mail for the Club Director or highest staff member for the hiring entity. The approved Background Screen vendor will then contact the Club/entity to provide notice of the automatic disqualification and request additional contact information for the disqualified individual.*

*The complete profile will be sent by the USAV/RVA approved Background Screen Vendor directly to an automatically disqualified individual using the agreed upon method of delivery, along with a copy of the "Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act" (FCRA), and a notification that the individual is prohibited from participating in USAV/RVA sanctioned junior events and/or activities.*

*All disqualified individuals have the right to review and dispute the accuracy of the background screening findings directly with the USAV/RVA approved Background Screen Vendor. A disqualified individual MAY NOT appeal an automatic disqualification or the results of the findings of the background screen vendor to the RVA and/or USAV. USAV and each RVA is required by the policy to accept the findings of the approved background screen vendor.*

*Individuals automatically disqualified are excluded from participation in any USAV/RVA sanctioned junior events and/or activities.*

**EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2013, AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFIERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN  
SANCTIONED JUNIOR EVENTS AND/OR ACTIVITIES:**

*Anyone found guilty, entering a plea of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere (no contest) regardless of adjudication or received court directed programs and/or other sentencing directives in lieu of a finding of guilt, for the following criminal offenses; All Sex offenses, Murder, and Homicide regardless of time limit; Felony Violence and Felony Drug offenses in the past 10 years; any misdemeanor violence offenses in the past 7 years; any multiple misdemeanor drug and alcohol offenses within the past 7 year; or any other crimes (not listed) against children in the past 7 years (the time frames associated with the categories of crime listed above are calculated based on the date of the offense). Individuals found to have pending court cases for any of the disqualifying offenses will be disqualified. If the disposition of the pending case does not meet the criteria for disqualification as listed above, the individual would then be cleared and reinstated. Falsification of information on any membership application or the consent/release form is grounds for membership revocation or restriction of membership. Individuals that are automatically disqualified must wait one season before reapplying for affiliation and/or participation with a junior club or team.*

**ENFORCEMENT:**

*The hiring entity is responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy, and ensuring that those individuals who are disqualified do not participate in USAV/RVA sanctioned junior events and/or activities.*

**PENALTY:**

*Failure of a club/entity to request background screening or enforce disqualification is cause for the RVA or USAV to impose penalties. The minimum penalty shall be suspension of all members of the offending club/entity until background screening and enforcement requirements are met. Additional measures may include financial penalties and/or extended suspensions against disqualified individuals and/or the club/entity.*

## **SECTION III**

### **Education and Awareness Training**

*USA Volleyball has adopted the United States Olympic Committee's SafeSport training materials, which include a series of online training videos, totaling approximately 90 minutes and made available at no cost to the participant*

*Per the United States Olympic Committee, National Governing Bodies must provide an education program for (1) those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes; and (2) NGB staff. These individuals of your organization will have to complete all 3 courses. The training will be valid for 2 seasons once completing these 3 core courses.*

- 1. Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education*
- 2. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse*
- 3. Emotional and Physical Misconduct*

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

*Each Region shall identify an individual responsible for oversight of its SafeSport Program, who will also work with the US Volleyball National office for program updates and materials. Please note that US Volleyball may modify these guidelines from time to time as it deems appropriate.*

### **PARENT AND PLAYER EDUCATION**

*Parent education is one of the keys to keeping a program safe from abuse and misconduct. Parents can assist by helping avoid situations in which misconduct can occur, by being aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and by reporting suspected abuse.*

*Parents and players will be made aware of USA Volleyball's SafeSport Program through links on the USA Volleyball and individual Region websites, other social media and electronic channels and other suitable means.*

## **SECTION IV**

### **Monitoring and Supervision of SafeSport**

*The monitoring and supervision aspect of USA Volleyball's SafeSport Program describes how its Member Programs monitor, supervise and ensure that the aspects of the SafeSport Program (i.e., implementation and enforcement of policies, training requirements, screening requirements, responding, reporting and adjudication procedures, etc.) are being followed and how they may be improved, so that they result in a safe environment for the Participants.*

*Monitoring and supervision occurs at different levels within USA Volleyball:*

#### **➤ Team Coaches**

- The Head Coach for each team shall be responsible for monitoring his/her team so that the team is being properly supervised, that the team's travel is conducted in accordance with the Club Travel Policy, that all team electronic communications are in accordance with the Social Media and Mobile and Electronic Communication Policy.*
- It is recognized that the Head Coach may not be personally responsible for the direct supervision of each of the above areas at all times and may delegate responsibility to team personnel for certain activities or to other properly screened adults, but as the primary supervisor of the team, the Head Coach shall be responsible for delegating as necessary to result in compliance.*

#### **➤ Regions and Clubs**

- Regions, Clubs and their administrators shall monitor their programs and enforce compliance of its teams with respect to SafeSport policies set forth by USA Volleyball, The U.S. Center for SafeSport and the United States Olympic Committee.*
- The goal is to have Regions and Clubs monitor their personnel so that the program's coaches, officials, program administrators, support staff and other program volunteers and employees who will have routine access to minor participants have completed the training in accordance with USA Volleyball guidelines prior to such persons beginning in their position or otherwise having access to youth/junior participants*

- *Regions and Clubs shall promptly address any reports of abuse or misconduct and make all such reports as are required under the USA Volleyball SafeSport Program or applicable law.*
- *Regions and Clubs shall conduct reviews and evaluation of their program and team personnel to monitor and promote compliance with the USA Volleyball SafeSport Program.*

➤ **USA Volleyball National Office**

- *USA Volleyball, working with each Region SafeSport Contact, shall monitor compliance with the USA Volleyball SafeSport Program in all Regions.*
- *USA Volleyball shall monitor all regions to determine whether they are properly supervising and monitoring their local programs' compliance with set guidelines, and advising that all training and screening is completed prior to persons beginning in their position or otherwise having access to youth/junior participants.*
- *USA Volleyball and the Regions shall promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct and make all such reports as are required under the USA Volleyball SafeSport Program or applicable law.*

## **APPENDIX:**

### **Model Policies**

***USA Volleyball and the Regional Volleyball Associations require that clubs develop, adopt and implement policies relating to: (1) Social Media and Electronic Communication and (2) Travel.***

*The following model policies have been developed to assist clubs in developing their own policies. The policies are intended to serve as a starting place for Clubs. Clubs are encouraged to adapt the policies to fit the unique structure, personnel and needs of the Club. However, if a Club does not put in place a policy of their own, the model policy shall become the default policy for that Club.*

*Clubs should provide copies of their policies to all members. Clubs are additionally encouraged to review the policies annually with athletes and their parents and allow for open dialogue and question/answer regarding each policy so that clear expectations are set.*

*Sample of the REQUIRED POLICIES can be found in the Appendix.*

*Appendix A*

*Model Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy*

*Appendix B*

*Model Travel Policy*

## APPENDIX A:

### *Social Media and Electronic Communication*

### *Sample Policy for Clubs*

#### **Model Policy For Junior Club Volleyball Programs**

*USA Volleyball junior clubs are now required to implement an electronic communication policy. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with the Club. The following is a model policy for appropriate electronic communications between adults and athletes, and is provided to assist USA Volleyball member clubs with developing their own policies. If a Club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written electronic communication policy, the following model policy will become the default electronic communication policy for that club. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by the club, the default policy will no longer apply. Each member club has the responsibility for approval and implementation of its own electronic communication policy.*

#### **Electronic Communication Policy of [insert the name of the club]**

##### **PURPOSE**

*[Insert the name of the club] (the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our student-athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.*

##### **GENERAL CONTENT**

*All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Volleyball Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.*

*For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication shall not contain or relate to any of the following:*

- *Drugs or alcohol use;*
- *Sexually-oriented conversation; sexually explicit language, sexual activity*
- *The adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and*
- *Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.*
- *Note: Any communication concerning an athlete’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.*



*Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board or other athletes?"*

*With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with athletes is **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.*

**Transparent:** *All electronic communication between coaches and athletes are to be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.*

**Accessible:** *All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so there is no question regarding accessibility.*

**Professional:** *All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete shall be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choice, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.*

*If your communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely your method and manner of communication with athletes will be appropriate.*

#### **FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES**

*Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach shall not accept any "friend" request from any athlete. In addition, the coach will remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM methods.*

*The club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "like" or "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters.*

*Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.*

## **TWITTER**

**Best Practice:** *The club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.*

**Alternative Option:** *Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.*

## **TEXTING**

*Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 10pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.*

## **EMAIL**

*Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach or a board member must also be copied.*

## **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

*The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communications. Immediate compliance without repercussion must be granted.*

## **MISCONDUCT**

*Because social media and electronic communications can be used to commit misconduct (e.g. emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing), such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our SafeSport Handbook.*

## **VIOLATIONS**

*Violations of the Club’s Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy should be reported to your immediate supervisor, a Club administrator or the Regional SafeSport Contact for evaluation of complaints and allegations.*

*A USA Volleyball participant or parent of a participant who violates this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to: suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.*

## APPENDIX B:

### *Travel Sample Policy for Clubs*

#### **Model Policy For Junior Club Volleyball Programs**

USA Volleyball Junior Clubs are now required to implement a team travel policy. The following is a model team travel policy and is provided to assist USA Volleyball member clubs with developing their own policies. If a Club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written travel policy, the following model policy will become the default policy for that Club. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by the club, the default policy will no longer apply. Each member club has the responsibility for approval and implementation of its own set of travel policies, and to provide these policies to all players, parents, coaches and other adults who will be traveling with a team. It is strongly recommended that a signature by each adult acknowledging receipt of and agreeing to the travel policy be obtained by each Club.

Some travel involves only local travel to and from local practices and events while other travel involves overnight stays. Different policies should apply to these two types of travel. The form of policy below is a sample only but may be modified by the local program to meet its specific needs and travel.

#### **Travel Policy for [insert the name of the club]**

[Insert name of the club] has some teams that travel regularly to play in tournaments, has some teams where travel is limited to a few events per season, and some teams where there is no travel other than local travel to and from our own area. [Club] prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA Volleyball SafeSport Handbook. [Club] 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 player safety and improve the player's experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

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 [Club] does not sponsor, coordinate or arrange for travel.

- Players 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 player 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.

- *The employees, coaches and/or volunteers of [Club] or one of its teams, who are not also acting as a parent, shall not drive alone with an unrelated minor player.*

### **Team Travel**

*Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when [Club] or one of its teams or designees' sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that the team can compete locally, regionally or nationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the players.*

- *When possible, [Club] will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a contact person within [Club] or the team. This individual will be the point of contact to confirm your intention to travel and to help with travel details.*
- *Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the player).*
- *The coach or his/her designee will establish a curfew by when all players must be in their hotel rooms or in a supervised location. Regular monitoring and curfew checks will be made of each room by at least two properly background screened adults. At no time will only one adult be present in a room with minor players, regardless of gender.*
- *Team personnel shall ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels for player- only rooms.*
- *Individual meetings between a coach and a player may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms and must be held in public settings or with additional adults present, with at least one of those adults being the same gender as the player.*
- *Parents/Guardians who wish to stay in the team hotel are permitted and encouraged to do so.*
- *The team will make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental requests when a child is away from home without a parent. If any special arrangements are necessary for your child, please contact the team personnel who can either make or assist with making those arrangements.*
- *No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.*
- *In all cases involving travel, parents have the right to transport their minor player.*

- *Prior to any travel, coaches will endeavor to make players and parents aware of all expectations and rules. Coaches will also support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of the players for adherence to curfew restrictions and other travel rules.*
- *If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, then except where immediate action is necessary, parents will be notified before any action is taken, or immediately after.*

### ***Suggested Additional Policies***

*The following policies are additional guidelines for developing a travel policy based on the club's preferences and needs.*

- *Players are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Players are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, restaurant or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.*
- *When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc., players will stay in groups of no less than three persons. Athletes 12 and under will be accompanied by a chaperone.*
- *Safety Policies*
  - *Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches;*
  - *Supervised team room provided for relaxation and recreation;*
  - *Respect the privacy of each other;*
  - *Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances;*
- *Behavior Policies*
  - *Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in the hotel;*
  - *Be prompt and on time;*
  - *Develop cell phone usage guidelines;*
  - *Develop computer usage guidelines including social media;*
  - *Respect travel vehicles;*
  - *Establish travel dress code;*
  - *Use appropriate behavior in public facilities, including language;*
  - *Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out;*
  - *Must stay in assigned hotel room; and*
  - *Needs and well-being of the team come first.*

- *Financial*
  - *No room service without permission*
  - *Players are responsible for all incidental charges*
  - *Players are responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel;*
  - *Players must participate in contracted group meals; and*
  - *Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies.*
- *General*
  - *Establish fair trip eligibility requirements;*
  - *Establish age guidelines for travel trips;*
  - *Parent(s) responsible for getting player(s) to stated departure point; and*
  - *Requirements for families to attend “Team Travel Tournaments.”*

### ***Code of Conduct / Honor Code***

*USA Volleyball strongly suggests clubs to create a Code of Conduct or Honor Code as a companion document to team travel policies.*

#### ***Recommended:***

- a. *Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrator, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.*
- b. *Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.*
- c. *The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.*
- d. *The possession, use or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.*
- e. *Team members are reminded that when competing in tournaments, traveling on trips and attending other club-related functions, they are representing both themselves and [Club]. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club.*

#### ***For Consideration:***

- a. *Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:*
  - i. *Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete’s expense;*
  - ii. *Disqualification from future tournaments, either local or traveling;*
  - iii. *Financial penalties;*
  - iv. *Dismissal from team; and/or*
  - v. *Penalties set forth in the USA Volleyball Participant Code of Conduct, which may include a lifetime ban.*
- b. *Players are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities.*
- c. *Players are to refrain from the use of inappropriate language.*

