



## What is SafeSport?

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act passed into law on February 14, 2018 (S.534).

The law protects young victims from sexual, emotional, and physical abuse and established the US Center for SafeSport (which is an independent, national non-profit whose focus is on ending all forms of abuse in sport; they have authority over organizations regarding amateur athlete safety).

Law requires enhanced mandatory reporting policies, training, and prevention for certain individuals involved in youth/amateur sport organizations. In addition, the law establishes reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions and prohibits retaliation.

## Who is impacted?

Any adults interacting with amateur athletes in a sanctioned organization are considered covered individuals and subject to this law. An applicable amateur sports organization under this law is one that participates in an interstate or international amateur athletic competition and/or whose membership includes any adult who is in regular contact with an amateur athlete who is a minor.

Within South Texas Youth Soccer Association, this includes Executive Committee members, State staff. Staff coaches, Association Board members,

## What are the reporting requirements?

All covered individuals have a duty to report abuse or suspected abuse within a 24 hour period. In our organization, EVERY adult is considered a mandatory reporter. **When you have a reasonable suspicion or belief that abuse is occurring or has occurred, you are legally required to report to authorities within 24 hours.** If a minor discloses abuse to you, make a report! It doesn't matter if they disclose that it happened within your organization or not. Simply tell the reporting agency what you have been told. It is not your responsibility to investigate any claims or question any person accused or extensively question any child who makes a report to you. Leave the investigating and questioning to authorities. Even if abuse disclosed to you happened in the past, still report it (doesn't matter how long ago the suspicious behavior occurred).

Examples of things you should report include: inappropriate touching, minor being propositioned, asked to send sexual photos and/or received sexual photos, asked to engage in inappropriate email or social media communications, a minor who reports a friend is being abused (it is common for friends to share information with each other rather than an adult). In addition, report anytime you see or hear anything that makes you think abuse is happening such as sexual contact between an adult and a minor or sexual contact between minors significantly different in age (e.g., teen and elementary-age child)



## How can I limit 1-on-1 Interactions and manage High Risk Situations in my Association or Club?

- Establish an athlete protection policy (define child sexual abuse and all other forms of misconduct, identify who the policy applies to, and specify reporting mechanisms)
- Monitor changing areas and locker rooms (if applicable)
- Provide supervision to eliminate one-on-one interactions (meet in public areas, conduct meetings with others present or at least visible to others)
- Limit out-of-program contact (such as at a coach's home). Set rules around presence of alcohol at organization events.
- Minimize one-on-one travel/transportation with unrelated athletes and coaches. Encourage situations where more than one adult is responsible and present.
- Keep athletes safe on overnight travel (provide multiple chaperones, conduct bed checks with another adult, encourage contact between athletes and their parents during the trip).
- Limit interaction on social media sites to organization or team pages (athletes should not join or like coach or volunteer's personal page); keep electronic communication (texts, posts, emails, DMs, etc.) professional and related to team activities; use organizational, not personal, accounts to send messages.
- Ensure appropriate physical contact by qualified professionals (massages, etc.). Even if a coach is a certified massage professional, they should not massage athletes.
- Publish photography of individuals under the age of 18 only with notice and caretaker consent.

## How can I learn more and participate in the prevention training?

Currently training is not required by STYSA or US Soccer but is **HIGHLY** recommended for all administrators, coaches, and volunteers. In the future, there will also be training and resources for minor athletes.

SafeSport offers basic training in three 30-minute online modules covering sexual misconduct/abuse awareness, mandatory reporting, and emotional/physical misconduct/abuse (bullying, harassment, and hazing). In addition, SafeSport offers a toolkit and online training for parents that are very informative.

In addition, you can download the SafeSport Handbooks on recognizing, reducing and responding to misconduct in sport and on preventing bullying.

- ▶ **Online Training** – <https://safesport.org/authentication/signin>
  - ▶ Create an account
    - ▶ Add US Soccer as a Member
      - ▶ Access Code: **YC3E-6P5G-YYIL-CS2M**
- ▶ **Free Parent Training** - <https://athletesafety.org/training/index> (must create account first)



# Where and how do I report it?

- ⌄ First, report to STYSA (Jennifer Davis 512-272-4553) and local law enforcement.
- ⌄ SafeSport Reporting Phone # - 720-351-0340 or via incident reporting form [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SafeSport&layout\\_id=0](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SafeSport&layout_id=0)

## OTHER RESOURCES:

- ▶ STYSA Prohibited Conduct Policy - <https://usys-assets.ae-admin.com/assets/975/15/STYSA%20Prohibited%20Conduct%20Policy%201.16.19.pdf>
- ▶ SafeSport Helpline (Web + App) – 866-200-0796 -- <https://www.safesporthepline.org>
- ▶ SafeSport Disciplinary Records – <https://safesport.org/userviolations/search> (search past records by name, location, or sport)
- ▶ US Center for SafeSport – Mainline 720-351-0344 – [www.SafeSport.org](http://www.SafeSport.org)

## FACTS TO KNOW:

- ⌄ 45 million U.S. Youth participate in organized sport each year.
- ⌄ 1 in 5 report being bullied.
- ⌄ 1 in 10 will be victims of sexual abuse.
- ⌄ Most of the cases already handled by US Center for SafeSport involve coaches and a minor athlete (48%). Athlete-athlete incidents make up the next 23%.
- ⌄ To date, the US Center for SafeSport has received **ZERO** false reports.
- ⌄ **It can happen in your Association or club!**

