



# ACA SafeSport Handbook

Executed by the ACA Board of Directors through the ACA SafeSport Policy (SAS-001)

Updated: 8-15-2018 *Wade Blackwood, Executive Director*

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## *Section I*

# **Components of the ACA's SafeSport Program**

ACA's SafeSport program involves several components



# Introduction

The American Canoe Association (ACA) mission is to provide leadership, integrity and advancement for paddlesports in the United States. The organization works to achieve this mission through a wide range of programs and events geared towards providing a level playing field for all paddlers, and at the same time, providing a safe environment in which to recreate and compete. At the ACA, we envision a future where everyone has an opportunity to paddle and enjoy a lifetime of rewarding experiences both on and off the water. The ACA has a ZERO tolerance policy for misconduct.

Unfortunately, sports can be a high-risk environment for misconduct, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse. All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the values of the ACA. Our SafeSport Policy identifies six primary types of misconduct:

- Sexual Misconduct and Grooming Behaviors
- Physical Misconduct
- Emotional Misconduct
- Bullying, Threats, and Harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

Misconduct may damage a participant's psychological well-being. Participants who have been mistreated may experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, loss of self-esteem and negative impacts on their relationships with family, friends and the sport. Misconduct often hurts a participant's competitive performance and may cause enough harm for them to drop out of our sport entirely.

The ACA is committed to fostering a fun, healthy and safe environment for all paddling athletes. We must recognize that the safety of athletes lies with all those involved in the sport and is not the sole responsibility of any one person at the local club, regional or national level. The ACA put together a number of topics in this Safesport Handbook to be adhered to as a member of the ACA. Breach of the conduct listed within this handbook are subject to sanctions and or dismissal from the ACA.

## *Section II*

### **How to use this Handbook & Definitions**

The ACA's SafeSport program raises the awareness about possible misconduct in the sport, promotes open dialogue, and provides training resources and guidance. The ACA encourages members to use the policies, guidelines, best practices, strategies and tools included in the handbook to implement SafeSport practices. The sport environment improves when we all take part in being actively engaged in our athletes safety. We all have a responsibility to provide a safe environment to learn, practice, compete, and live in the paddlesports world.

The following terms and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed to them within use of this Handbook:

#### **Child, children, minor and youth**

Anyone under the age of 18. Herein, "child," "children," "minor" and "youth" are used interchangeably.

#### **Child physical abuse**

- Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by contact behaviors, such as punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. Child physical abuse also may include non-contact physical misconduct.
- Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway ([www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)).

#### **Child sexual abuse and misconduct**

- Child sexual abuse and misconduct involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a minor that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power or disparity in age, development or size, such that one child is the aggressor. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or digital communications, exposure or voyeurism.
- Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway ([www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)).

**Coach**

Any adult who has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, schooling, training, or advising athletes of the organization.

**Covered Individual**

Any individual who:

- a) currently is, or was at the time of a possible violation of the Code, within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the ACA or who is seeking to be within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the ACA (e.g., through application for membership);
- (b) is an athlete or non-athlete participant that the ACA or the USOC formally authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of authority over athletes or to have frequent contact with athletes; or,
- (c) ACA identifies as being within the U.S. Center for SafeSport's jurisdiction.

**Misconduct**

Conduct that results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment, and hazing.

**Participants**

Participants are minors who participate in a sport activity through a club or organization and athletes 18 years and older and officials.

**Position of Power**

When one person has direct supervisory, evaluative or other authority over another. Examples: A person who may be in a position of power includes someone such as a coach, supervisor, employer or medical personnel.

**Power Imbalance**

Power imbalance may exist where one person is in a position of power such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, there is a power imbalance.

- Whether someone occupies a position of power such that there is a power imbalance depends on several factors including: the nature and extent of the supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the person; the actual relationship between the parties; the parties' respective roles; the nature and duration of the relationship; the age of the people

involved.

- Once a coach-athlete relationship is established, a power imbalance is presumed to exist throughout the coach-athlete relationship (regardless of age) and is presumed to continue for minor athletes after the coach-athlete relationship terminates and the athlete reaches 20 years of age .
- A power imbalance may exist, but is not presumed, where an intimate relationship existed before the sport relationship (e.g., a relationship between two spouses or life partners that preceded the sport relationship) .
- Based on the totality of the circumstances, including whether there is an aggressor, and/or a significant disparity in age, size, strength or mental capacity.

### **Organization**

The sports organization, the American Canoe Association (ACA), that has adopted this misconduct risk management program.

### **Grievance Committee (GC)**

The committee, appointed by the ACA Board, and Staff manages any and all allegations of misconduct and policy violations. The GC reports to the Board of Directors. The GC is convened case by case at the direction of the ACA Board Chair. Members of the committee are selected on a case by case basis to ensure subject matter expertise is given for a particular discipline.

### **Staff Member**

Any paid or unpaid member providing service to the organization including but not limited to officers, directors, administrators, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, and team parents. **ED** =Executive Director; **COO** = Chief Operating Officer; **SM** = staff member

## **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 the ACA.

- The SafeSport Code identifies prohibited conduct and serves as the benchmark by which the Center determines whether or not a policy violation has occurred.

- Aggregate data from Center investigations will be used to identify trends and patterns across sport, strengthening national prevention efforts.

### **SafeSport Jurisdiction and Authority**

The Center has jurisdiction over Covered Individuals (see definition on page 5) Covered individuals are defined as:

- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the ACA.
- The ACA 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 the ACA 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. The ACA will retain the authority to investigate and resolve alleged SafeSport violations that are non-sexual in nature. Although, at the ACA's request, the Center may exercise the discretionary authority to take on cases of this nature.

All individuals, including those who are not members of the ACA, 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 will be subject to disciplinary action.

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

Individuals shall report suspected sexual misconduct violations directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Online Reporting Form: <https://safesport.org/report-a-concern>

Phone: 720-524-5640

Other resources for assistance with state and federal reporting requirements:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
- [Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/mandatory](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/mandatory)
- [State Statute Search: http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/)

## *Section III*

### **SafeSport Policy**

All ACA members shall familiarize themselves with the rules regarding different scenarios for misconduct and each form of misconduct and shall not engage in such misconduct and/or violate any of these policies. The ACA has a ZERO tolerance policy for misconduct.

### **Clubs and Training Sites**

The SafeSport handbook below sets forth the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct and shall be implemented by athlete members, competition clubs, and competition sites to reduce the risks of potential misconduct. The ACA would like competition clubs and competition paddling venues to adhere to the guidance in this SafeSport Handbook.

### **Who is Required to take SafeSport Training?**

Who Must Complete the Online Training:

As the National Governing Body (NGB) for paddlesports in the U.S., the following ACA members and other individuals who come in contact with athletes will need to adhere to the ACA's SafeSport Policy and complete the three(3) free online training modules:

- Competition: Individual & Family Members
  - includes athletes (18 years and older) traveling to sanctioned national and international competitions
- Officials & Judges
- Coaches
  - Any individual coaching a U.S. athlete
- Professional medical personnel (outside of a hospital or doctor's office setting), including Doctors, Physicians Assistants, Physiologists, Physical Therapists, Psychologists and Masseuses
- Competition Council
  - Competitive Discipline Committees
- Volunteers Traveling with Teams (domestically & internationally)

- Sugar Island Trustees
- Camp Committee for Sebago
- National Office Staff
- Board of Directors

## How to Complete SafeSport Training

- Click on the [ACA Safesport link here](#)
- Enter ACA Access Code
  - CWDC-RNFK-77PV-KU9J
- Create online profile
- Complete all three training modules (approximately 1.5 hours)
  - Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education
  - Emotional & Physical Misconduct
  - Mandatory Reporting: Understanding Your Responsibilities
- Certificates
  - You will receive a digital certificate for completing each of the three modules ([sample certificate](#))
  - Upon completing all three, you will then receive a SafeSport Trained Certificate ([sample certificate](#))
- Online Training FAQ ([PDF](#))
- Training is valid for two(2) years
- If you took the training in 2016 or 2017, you need to re-take the new training as it has been updated as of November 7, 2017
- Previous SafeSport online profiles did not transition over to SafeSport's new platform

## Reporting Procedures

*\*No direct fees or other cost is involved with making a SafeSport report.*

In the event that any ACA member, club volunteer, official or staff observes inappropriate behavior (i.e. policy violations), suspected physical or sexual misconduct, or any other type of misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each such person to immediately report their observations to the appropriate person or entity. One should never attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual misconduct allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

*\*Contact 9-1-1 Immediately if you're facing a life-threatening emergency.*

**\*\* YOU MAY REPORT ANONYMOUSLY.**

## **Reporting Sexual Misconduct**

The U.S. Center for SafeSport handles ALL reports of sexual abuse within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Make a report to the Center if you have a reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct such as child sex abuse, non-consensual sexual conduct, sexual harassment or intimate relationships involving an imbalance of power.

If you choose to report anonymously, please write ANONYMOUS on the online SafeSport Report Form where it says "Your full name." If you would prefer to report by phone, please call 720-531-0340. Callers may remain anonymous.

- [Report a Concern to the U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)

## **Contact Local Authorities**

Contact your local authorities if you have a reasonable suspicion that child sexual abuse or neglect has occurred. All reports of child abuse or sexual assault of a minor must also be reported to local authorities. Reports of abuse not involving a minor may also be reported to local authorities.

## **Contact the SafeSport Crisis Line**

For 24/7 crisis support, contact the SafeSport crisis line for crisis interventions, referrals and emotional support. This confidential and secure helpline is operated by RAINN, the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. The SafeSport Helpline provides crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support specifically designed for athletes, staff, and other SafeSport participants affected by sexual violence. Through this service, support specialists provide live, confidential, one-on-one support. All services are anonymous, secure, and available 24/7.

- Call: (866) 200-0796
- [Crisis Line](#)

## **Reporting Other Forms of Misconduct**

To report other forms of misconduct to the ACA, such as emotional or physical misconduct, bullying in any form, hazing or harassment, please:

- [Report Online](#), or
- Contact the [ACA Executive Director](#)

*\*\* YOU MAY REPORT ANONYMOUSLY. If you choose to report anonymously, please write ANONYMOUS where it says "First Name" and "Last Name" on the ACA form.*

### **After Reporting to Law Enforcement**

After a report of reasonable suspicion of misconduct to law enforcement has been made, whether for reasons of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, or other illegal reportable misconduct, the GC and/or Executive Director should take the following actions:

- Do not engage in any internal investigations or attempt to investigate the credibility of any such allegation. An independent investigation may interfere with the investigation of law enforcement. Allow law enforcement to conduct its own investigation. However, the GC or board member may ask a few clarifying questions of the complainant or minor(s) involved to adequately report the suspicion to law enforcement.
- To the extent permitted by law and appropriate, the Executive Director, GC, and/or a board member should protect the names and confidentiality of the complainant (if requested), the accused, and the victims.
- Immediately remove the accused staff member from his/her duties. No hearing is required and the accused has no right to defend himself/herself at this point because the safety and wellbeing of the participant is of utmost importance. The GC may simply notify the accused staff member that he/she is no longer eligible to participate in the organization's activities.
- After consulting with legal counsel, the GC or Executive Director may decide at their discretion to inform other staff members, parents, and participants of any child sexual abuse or child physical abuse allegations that law enforcement is actively investigating, in an effort to find out if there may be other cases of child abuse that should also be reported to law enforcement.
- Once the investigation by law enforcement has concluded, the GC may reconvene to determine whether or not the accused can be reinstated or reassigned. Even if the investigation is inconclusive, the GC may use its discretion in deciding on reinstatement or reassignment.

### **Reporting Other Misconduct, including Emotional Abuse, Bullying, Harassment, Hazing, or Grooming Behavior**

Any staff member, participant, or parent who has a reasonable suspicion of emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, or grooming behavior should report within 24 hours such misconduct to the Executive Director or the online form. Depending on the severity and nature of the allegations, the Executive Director and/or the ACA's GC should determine whether to immediately report such allegation within 24 hours to the appropriate law enforcement authorities as required by state or federal law.

## **How to Report All Misconduct to the Organization**

Reports of all misconduct made to Executive Director or online or to any board member may be made orally or in writing. The information required is the name of complainant(s) making the report, the type of misconduct alleged, and the name(s) of the accused staff members who allegedly engaged in the misconduct, the approximate dates of misconduct, and any other relevant information. Online forms for reporting may be used as well found at [www.americancanoe.org/SafeSport](http://www.americancanoe.org/SafeSport)

## **Responding to Misconduct and Policy Violations**

Upon receiving a report of emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, or grooming behavior that is not reportable to law enforcement under state or federal law, the Executive Director and/or GC should investigate and take appropriate action.

Factors to be considered in an investigation include the age of the alleged victim, the age of the alleged perpetrator, and the extent, nature, and scope of the allegations. Before taking any disciplinary action, the accused should have an opportunity to present his/her defense. If the accused is a staff member such as a coach, the board should be notified of the pending investigation. If the accused is a minor, his or her coach and parents should be notified in advance.

The confidentiality of the complaint, complainant, victim, and accused should be protected by the organization until the outcome of the proceedings is finalized. Notice should be given about any sanction. The investigator should not discuss the ongoing investigation with anyone other than for the purposes of gathering information related to the investigation unless requested otherwise by law enforcement or child protective services. Likewise, participants in the hearing should be requested to keep all information confidential unless requested by law enforcement or child protective services.

Sanctions applied should be appropriate and reasonable under the circumstances. Sanctions that may be applied against a staff member, member (including athletes) or volunteer:

- Referral to law enforcement authorities if a crime is believed to have been committed
- Dismissal in the event of extreme cases
- Temporary suspension.
- Reassignment of duties.
- Formal warning.
- Place under the supervision of another staff member.

Sanctions that may be applied against a participant:

- Revocation of membership or participation in competitions
- Suspension of membership or participation in competitions
- Verbal/written warning
- Provided additional education and guidance

## **Whistleblower Protection and Bad Faith Allegation**

Whistleblowers who report misconduct suspicions in good faith should be protected against any retaliation, punishment, and other harm regardless of the outcome of any investigation. To allow otherwise would defeat the purpose of the child abuse and misconduct risk management plan. Anyone who retaliates is subject to disciplinary action.

Likewise, complainants who act in bad faith in making malicious or frivolous allegations are subject to civil and criminal actions and disciplinary action by the organization.

## **Dealing with the Media**

In the event of media inquiries involving an allegation of misconduct, a single board member or attorney should be appointed as the sole media contact and any comment should be based on the following principles:

- The ACA has notified the proper law enforcement authorities.
- The ACA is following its internal policies and procedures regarding the allegation(s).
- The privacy of all involved individuals should be respected and protected throughout the proceedings.
- The identity of any accused perpetrator should not be disclosed unless 1) law enforcement is actively investigating and the name is a matter of public record; 2) law enforcement believes that the accusation is likely valid; and 3) the organization has taken action to sanction or remove the alleged perpetrator.

## **Screening Volunteers**

The organization should select a criminal background check vendor that will run background checks and will assist in interpreting results and ensuring compliance with state and federal laws. All volunteers that will be in contact with athletes or minors will be required to pass a background check and take SafeSport training.

The criminal background check vendor should, at a minimum, run a national database check that pulls criminal records (not limited to just sexual offender records) from state and county databases. In addition, the organization may or may not choose to pay extra to purchase the following enhancements from the vendor: social security number verification, address trace, manual local county courthouse check based on intelligent choice of countries and national sexual offender registry check.

*Note: Background Checks on Volunteers” and “Criminal Background Check Vendors.”* All staff with access to youth, including directors, officers, coaches, assistant coaches, managers, concession workers, maintenance, etc., should undergo a background check for acceptability prior to initial assignment of duties. Thereafter, a subsequent background check should be run every **TWO** (2) years.

*Note: Certain employees or independent contractors from outside the sports organization may have access to youth. An example would be a janitor employed by the facility owner. Steps should be taken to make sure that a background check has been run on these individuals by their employer.*

The ED or Designated Staff member is responsible for implementing, monitoring, taking corrective action, disqualifying unfit candidates, and working with third-party background check vendors on all issues related to the criminal background check program. The ED or Designated Staff member will maintain confidentiality to protect against possible claims of slander or libel. The ED or Designated Staff should work with third-party vendors for assistance in interpreting background check results and to protect against possible claims under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, First Offender Act, and all other state and federal laws protecting those who undergo criminal background checks.

## **Administration of Criminal Background Checks**

- ACA will conduct SafeSport training and background checks at least 60 days before staff / volunteers / coaches are allowed to have contact with athletes, or until the results of the background check are available
- The ACA will keep records and maintain compliance of the SafeSport training and background checks
- The ACA will maintain the publication of a list, updated at least annually, of the categories of people included in the SafeSport education and training and background checks
- ACA will publish a list of those individuals banned or suspended from the sport at [www.americancanoe.org/SafeSport](http://www.americancanoe.org/SafeSport)

## **Disqualification Criteria**

To make sure that all staff are treated fairly and consistently, the following disqualification criteria should be used:

Individual staff members found to be guilty of the following crimes should be disqualified as a staff member as outlined below.

- All sex offenses including child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sodomy, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, etc.
- All felony violence including murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated burglary, etc.
- Found guilty within the past 10 years of all felony offenses other than violence or sex including drug offenses, theft, embezzlement, fraud, child endangerment, etc.
- Found to be guilty within the past 7 years of all misdemeanor violence offenses including simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, etc.
- Found guilty within the past 5 years of misdemeanor drug and alcohol offenses (or multiple offenses in the past 10 years) including 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 the staff member, including contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to a minor, theft (if the volunteer is handling funds), etc.
- Guilty means the applicant was found guilty following a trial, entered a guilty plea, entered a no contest plea accompanied by the court's finding of guilty, regardless of whether there was an adjudication of guilt (conviction) or a withholding of guilt. This policy does not apply if criminal charges resulted in acquittal, dismissal or in an entry of *nolle prosequi*.

Should any of the pending charges described above be uncovered, or should any of the above charges be brought against an applicant during the season, the applicant should be suspended from serving until the charges are cleared or dropped or the Executive Director approves reinstatement.

## **Staff Applications**

Prior to the running of any criminal background check, the applicant should complete a staff application form giving his or her consent to the running of such check. This form should include a question about the existence of any prior criminal convictions. A "yes" answer should require a detailed explanation including the type of offense, locations, and dates.

The application form should be provided by the third-party criminal background check vendor. The vendor's legal department can take on the risk of ensuring the form complies with the state and federal laws, which change frequently.

The information obtained in the staff application/consent form, as well as the results of criminal background checks, should be held in strict confidence to protect the confidentiality of the information. It should be kept in a secure location with access by the Executive Director or COO only. Confidential information should not be disclosed outside of the organization and should only be shared within the organization on a need-to-know basis. However, under certain circumstances, the organization may have a legal duty to disclose certain types of information to government agencies or law enforcement.

### **Run Criminal Background Check**

After collecting the staff application/consent forms, the COO should verify that they are complete and legible. Next, the applications or information therein should be forwarded to the selected criminal background vendor.

### **Results**

The results from the criminal background check vendor should be received by the COO. The COO may need the assistance of the vendor in interpreting the results against the predetermined disqualification criteria. In addition, the COO should ask the vendor about any applicable first-offender acts in a particular state that may disallow the use of the results in making a disqualification decision. All disqualified applicants should be provided with the following documents:

- 1) Fair Credit Reporting Act: Summary of Rights
- 2) Letter of disqualification
- 3) Copy of the criminal background check results.

The vendor should advise if there are any other requirements under state or federal law.

### **Appeals Process**

Staff candidates disqualified due to an unsatisfactory criminal background check should be given a right to appeal if they notify the COO in writing. Such appeals should be heard by a three-person GC. The GC should decide whether to uphold the decision of the ED. As a compromise, the GC may decide to reassign the applicant to a more appropriate position or to place the candidate under a probationary period. The results of all criminal background checks and appeals should be kept confidential.

The written appeal should include:

- Full name and address of the appellant
- Full name and address of any person making the request for an appeal on behalf of the appellant
- The grounds for the appeal, providing a detailed explanation of the appellant's objections to the decision, additional facts, or factual errors in the decision;

- The relevant particulars to the appeal, providing any background facts relating to the appeal, including how the appellant is affected by the decision and a detailed description of the requested relief (i.e. what appellant wants the GC to do)
- The signature of the appellant or the appellant's representative, and the date of the appeal.

### **Monitoring and Supervision Compliance**

The organization and its Executive Director and GC should monitor and supervise the implementation and compliance of the child abuse and misconduct plan as follows:

- Require all staff to review this risk management plan and agree to abide by its guidelines and requirements.
- Require all staff having repeated access to youth to undergo and pass a criminal background check.
- Require all staff to take SafeSport training.
- Promptly address any reports of child abuse or other misconduct and take appropriate action.
- Observe and periodically spot check compliance with interactions at practice and games, locker/changing rooms, travel arrangements, and social media.
- Stay in touch with staff members, participants and parents to learn of any potential instances of misconduct.

## **Staff Acknowledgment of SafeSport Handbook**

A hard or electronic copy of the ACA SafeSport Handbook should be distributed to each staff member prior to the start of every season. Each staff member should acknowledge in writing (print or electronic signature) that they have received and carefully reviewed the plan and that they will not engage in misconduct and will comply with the policies within this plan. The organization should maintain documentation, on an annual basis, that shows the plan was distributed and staff agreement signatures collected.

## *Section IV*

### **Overview of Misconduct and Examples**

The ACA is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional and social development and promoting an environment free from abuse and misconduct. As part of this program, the ACA has implemented policies addressing various types of abuse and misconduct. Certain policies intend to reduce, monitor and govern the areas where potential abuse and misconduct might occur. These policies address the following types of abuse and misconduct and set forth some of the boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate conduct:

The following six types of misconduct are prohibited by the organization

- Sexual Misconduct and Grooming Behaviors
- Physical Misconduct
- Emotional Misconduct
- Bullying, Threats, and Harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct, including Child Sexual Abuse, is defined as:

- Any sexual interaction, whether non-touching or touching, that is forced or perpetrated in an exploitative, harassing, aggressive, or threatening manner.
- Any sexual interaction between a participant and an individual with direct, indirect, or evaluative authority. Such relationships usually involve power imbalance; disparity in age, development, size, or intellectual capabilities; the existence of an aggressor; and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative.
- Any conduct or acts defined under state or federal law as sexual abuse or misconduct.

Sexual misconduct can be between adults, between adults and minors, or between minors. Minors don't have the legal capacity to consent to sexual activity with an adult, and as a result, any sexual interaction between a minor and adult is strictly prohibited.

Types of sexual misconduct include:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual abuse
- Rape
- Any other equal intimacies that exploit an athlete

- An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete, regardless of age, and an adult in a position of authority.
- Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited. Sexual misconduct of a minor occurs when an adult coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer touches a minor for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification of the minor or the coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer. Sexual misconduct of a minor also occurs when a minor touches a coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer for the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of either the minor or coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian, or volunteer, even if the touching occurs at the request or with the consent of the coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer.

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Last, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

### **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 paddlers, this assumption is rebuttable.

### **Imbalance of Power**

Factors relevant to determining whether there is an imbalance of power include, but are not limited to:

- the nature and extent of the adult coach's, official's, director's, employee's, parent/guardian's or volunteer's supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the athlete;
- the relationship between the parties; the parties' respective roles; the nature and duration of the sexual relations or intimacies;
- the age of the adult coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer; the age of the athlete or participant;
- and whether the adult coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer has engaged in a pattern of sexual interaction with other athletes or participants.

Sexual contact between children also can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or size that renders the younger child incapable of giving informed consent; if there is the existence of an aggressor; or where there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as exposure or voyeurism.

Neither consent of the minor to the sexual contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at an ACA function are defenses to a complaint of sexual misconduct.

Sexual misconduct may also occur between adults or to an adult. Sexual misconduct includes sexual interactions that are nonconsensual or accomplished by force or threat of force, or coerced or manipulated, regardless of the age of the participants. Sexual misconduct may also include non-touching offenses, such as sexually harassing behaviors, an adult discussing his/her sex life with a minor, an adult asking a minor about his/her sex life, an adult requesting or sending nude or partial dress photo to minor; exposing minors to pornographic material, sending minors sexually explicit digital messages or photos (e.g. "sexting"), deliberately exposing a minor to sexual acts, or deliberately exposing a minor to inappropriate nudity.

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 ACA member 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 Misconduct**

Touching offenses include:

- Fondling a participant's breasts or buttocks;
- Providing a sports-related reward (ex: playing time, position, lessons, award, praise) in exchange for sexual favors;
- Sexual penetration and sexual touching;
- Genital contact whether or not either party is clothed;
- Any intimacies or sexual relations between a staff member and participant when the staff member is in a position of authority, trust, control, or evaluative decision making over the participant.

Non-touching offenses include:

- 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 an athlete
- Exposing athletes to pornographic material
- Sending athletes sexually explicit or suggesting electronic 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 room and changing areas are shared)
  - Making innuendos, comments, or jokes of a sexual nature about a participant or other behavior that is sexually harassing.
  - A staff member referencing his or her sexual activities with a participant.

- Questioning a participant about his or her sexual activities.
- A staff member requesting or sending a revealing or nude photo to a participant.
- Exposing participants to pornographic material.
- Voyeurism
- Sending participants communications or photos, whether electronic (e.g. sexting) or otherwise, of a sexually suggestive or explicit nature.
- Intentionally exposing a participant to sexual acts.
- Intentionally exposing a participant to nudity (exception for shared changing areas or locker rooms).
- Non-verbal or verbal communication of a sexual nature; physical advances; or sexual solicitation.

The following are not defenses under any circumstances to an allegation of sexual misconduct: the consent of a minor, mistaking the age of a participant, or that the interaction did not occur during a sanctioned event of the organization.

### **Permissible Physical Contact**

Some level of physical contact between a coach and a participant may be appropriate, such as in instruction, celebration, or consolation of a distraught participant who has been injured or after losing a competition. Appropriate physical contact in training and instruction consists of the following elements:

- The physical contact takes place in public.
- There is no potential for or actual, physical, or sexual intimacies during the physical contact.
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the participant and not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

### **Prohibited forms of Physical Contact include**

- Lingering or repeated embrace that goes beyond acceptable physical touch.
- Tickling, horseplay, or wrestling.
- Continued physical contact that makes a participant uncomfortable.

### **Peer-to-Peer Child Sexual Misconduct**

Approximately one-third of all cases of sexual abuse are child peer-to-peer. Whether or not sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance in power and/or intellectual capabilities. Allegations or suspicions of peer-to-peer child sexual abuse must be reported to the Executive Director, COO, online form, or a board member.

# Grooming

Grooming is an intentional and effective strategy that sexual predators use to set up and prepare victims, parents, and staff to gain a position of trust and lower their defenses, which assists in the perpetration of misconduct.

The steps taken in the grooming or seduction process are:

- Identify a child and determine his or her vulnerable areas (ex: being misunderstood, lack of attention from parents, lack of spending money, absent parents, etc.)
- Through careful observation of the target, determine their needs to fill what is missing.
- Fill the needs to create a special bond and to gain their trust. Examples are providing gifts and spending money, helping with homework, providing transportation, special consideration on the team such as more playing time, special attention, sharing secrets, etc.
- Spend a disproportionate amount of time with the family to gain their trust.
- Isolate the victim from their peers to create situations where they are alone.
- Gradually introduce sexual interplay that may start with conversations of a sexual nature (in person, texting, and social media), providing alcohol and drugs to lower inhibitions, watching pornography, sharing nude photos, tickling, horseplay, massages, and other boundary invasions that lead to sexual touching and nudity.
- Maintaining control and silence to continue and keep the sexual abuse hidden.
- Use shame or fear as motivating factors to continue the relationship.

Staff and parents who understand the grooming process and the policies that are meant to prevent it through education are likely to identify it and notify the Executive Director, COO, online form or a board member of suspicious behavior.

## **One-on-One Interactions**

Two adults ( ex: any combination of coach(es), volunteer(s), parent(s)) should be present at all times so that a minor cannot be isolated one on one with an unrelated adult. This also helps to protect the staff member from false accusations. In the event it is not possible to have two adults, no one to one situations.

## **Individual Meetings**

An individual meeting to address a participant's concerns may be necessary on occasion. During such meetings, the following guidelines should be observed:

- Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as in the corner of a building.
- If the meeting takes place in an office or a locker room, the door should remain unlocked and open.

- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the staff member should inform another staff member and ensure the door remains unlocked.
- Meetings can take place in rooms where complete visibility through an opening, such as a window, door, or hall

### **Individual Training Sessions**

When necessary or requested, parent/guardian written consent should be obtained and a parent/guardian encouraged to attend.

### **Prohibited One-on-One Interactions**

Except as provided above with regard to individual meetings, individual training, or emergency situations, any one-on-one interaction between an adult and a minor participant should be avoided.

## **Physical Misconduct**

Physical misconduct includes:

- Intentional physical contact or threat of such that causes or has the potential to cause personal injury or bodily harm to the participant.
- Any act or conduct described as physical abuse under state or federal law, such as assault, child neglect, and child abuse.

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Physical Misconduct**

Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity; in practices and competition, athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete -- such as direct contact with coaches or other members, disciplinary actions, or punishment -- is unacceptable. Physical misconduct can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and diet. Two of the best ways to promote safe conditions are to set clear boundaries and take a team approach to monitoring athletes and participants. It is the policy of the ACA that there shall be no physical misconduct of any participant involved in any of its member clubs, programs and activities by any coach, official, director, employee, parent/guardian or volunteer.

### **Definition**

Physical misconduct means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical misconduct also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical misconduct may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit an athlete with objects or sports

equipment. In addition to physical contact or the threat of physical contact with a participant, physical abuse also includes the providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of 21 and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant. It also includes 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. Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as physical misconduct under applicable federal or state law constitutes physical abuse under this policy. Any ACA member who engages in any act of physical misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

### **Examples of Prohibited Physical Misconduct**

#### **Contact Offenses:**

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, or slapping an athlete
- Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
- Providing alcohol to a participant who is under the legal drinking age
- Providing non-prescription or illegal drugs to any participant
- Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play after an injury (e.g. concussion) or sickness prematurely or without clearance from a medical professional
- Prescribing diet or other weight control methods for humiliation purposes and without regard for the health of the athlete (e.g. public weigh-ins or caliper tests)

#### **Non-contact Offenses:**

- Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g. locking an athlete in a confined space)
- Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring the athlete to kneel on a hard surface)
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep

Physical misconduct does not include physical contact that is a professionally-accepted coaching method for teaching skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building or appropriate discipline. Appropriate physical contact has three elements:

1. The physical contact takes place in public
2. There is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
3. The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult. With these elements in place, physical contact with athletes for the safety and instruction, celebration or consolation may be appropriate. In particular, coaches improve skills and make the training environment safer through appropriate physical contact

## Emotional Misconduct

Emotional misconduct involves a pattern of intentional, noncontact behavior that causes or has the potential to cause psychological or emotional harm to a participant. Physical acts, verbal acts, or acts that deny support or attention are included in these behaviors.

### **Definition**

Emotional misconduct 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.

Examples of prohibited emotional misconduct:

- **Verbal Acts:** A pattern of verbal behaviors that personally attack a participant (e.g. calling them disgusting, worthless, or fat) or repeatedly screaming at participants in a way that does not serve a legitimate motivational or training purpose.
- **Physical Acts:** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing or punching sports equipment or other objects in the presence of participants.
- **Acts that Deny Support or Attention:** A pattern of ignoring or excluding a participant during practice or team discussions for an extended period of time.

Emotional misconduct does not include generally-accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, motivation, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. Note that a single incident such as a verbal outburst may be inappropriate but does not constitute emotional misconduct, which requires a pattern of harmful behaviors over time.

## Bullying, Threats and Harassment

Bullying involves an intentional and repeated pattern of committing or intentionally allowing or not preventing behaviors that are intended to cause physical harm, fear or humiliation in an effort to socially isolate, diminish or exclude another participant physically, emotionally, or sexually.

Bullying can occur through verbal, written or electronic communications or by means of a physical gesture or act.

Examples of prohibited bullying behavior:

### **Physical**

Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, spitting, or slapping; throwing objects such as sports equipment at another participant.

### **Verbal**

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

### **Social, including Cyberbullying**

Using electronic communication, social media or similar to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate someone; using rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person's reputation; 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.

It is often not the staff, but other participants who perpetrate bullying. However, it is a violation if a staff member knows or should have known of bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

A participant or parent/guardian who participates in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent ban, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

### **Difference between Mean, Rude, and Bullying Behavior**

Mean is defined as purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone very infrequently. Rude is defined as inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else. Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive behavior repeated over time that involves an imbalance of power. Mean or rude conduct does not rise to the level of bullying absent the imbalance of power, but may otherwise be a code of conduct violations and treated as such.

Bullying does not include group or team behaviors to encourage a culture of team unity and/or harder training effort.

While other members are often the perpetrators of bullying, 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 behalf of the targeted participant(s).

### **Harassment**

Harassment is a pattern of physical or nonphysical behaviors that cause annoyance, fear or humiliation; degrade or offend; reflect a discriminatory bias; or create a hostile environment for the purpose of creating superiority, dominance, or power over an

individual participant or participants based on gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, culture, national origin, race, or physical or mental disability. It also includes any conduct or acts defined as harassment under state or federal law.

Examples of prohibited harassment:

Name calling, taunts, threats, belittling, stalking, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed.

Sexual harassment is conduct towards a participant that includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical behaviors of a sexual nature and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive and objectively offensive that it negatively affects an individual's performance.

It is also a violation of this policy if a 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).

## Hazing

Hazing includes any behavior which is physically harmful, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive. Hazing typically is an initiation activity that is a precondition for being socially accepted or joining a team. It also includes any act that is described as hazing under federal or state law.

### **Definition**

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 prohibited by this policy include, without limitation, requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs; tying, taping, or physically restraining a participant; sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature; sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food; social actions or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault. Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of a person's willingness to cooperate or participate. Hazing does not include group 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. Team building promotes respect and dignity, creates a team atmosphere and is a shared positive experience.

It is also a violation of this policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the hazing but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted

participant(s).

Examples of hazing include:

- Using force or peer pressure to require the consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
- Restraining a person through tying or taping
- Requiring simulations of acts of a sexual nature.
- Depriving one of sleep
- Withholding water and/or food
- Requiring public actions that are illegal, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable (e.g. public nudity)
- Paddling, branding, beating or other forms of physical assault
- Requiring excessive training

Hazing occurs even when the participant agrees to cooperate.

## **Willfully Tolerating Misconduct**

It is a violation when a staff member knows of prohibited misconduct but takes no action to intervene to protect participants or other staff members. It is also a violation to observe illegal and prohibited misconduct and not report it in a timely manner to the appropriate entity or law enforcement authorities.

## *Section V*

### **Social Media, Mobile and Digital Communications**

Electronic communications and social media interactions between staff and participants and their parents/guardians is essential with regard to activities, schedules, and administrative issues. Furthermore, social media touting the positive aspects of competition and club promotion should be encouraged. However, the potential for misconduct exists including sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing.

#### **Social Media, including, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.**

The organization may create an official social media account which may connect with other staff, participants, and parents/guardians for the purpose of official organization

communications about activities, motivation, team building, and answering posts from staff, participants, and parents/guardians.

Staff and minor participants should not connect on social media outside of the organization's official social media account.

### **Email, Texts, and Instant Messaging**

A staff member and minor participant may communicate via email, text, or instant message if the communication is about official organization activities. A parent/guardian of minor participants should be copied on all such communications sent by a staff member.

### **Digital Photos and Videos**

Organizations frequently publish photos and videos of activities on their website and social media accounts, and transmit via email to various media outlets. Before publishing a photo or video of any participant, the organization should obtain an image release agreement signed by the parent/guardian. Also, all photos and videos should be taken in public view and should be appropriate and in the best interest of the participant and the organization.

Staff should immediately honor any request from parent/guardian to discontinue all digital communications or imagery with a minor participant without any repercussions.

Violations of the organization's electronic communications and social media policy should be reported to the ED or Staff or a board member for appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement.

## *Section VI*

### **Locker Rooms and Changing Areas**

Participants are particularly vulnerable to misconduct including bullying, harassment, and hazing in locker rooms/changing areas due to various stages of undress and less direct supervision. The organization should implement the following guidelines:

- Sufficient staff supervision that is not overbearing. Staff should always be located just outside of the room to be on call if a problem arises and should make periodic sweeps inside. The sweeps should be conducted by staff who are the same sex as the minor participants.

- Prohibit parents/guardians from entering unless it is truly necessary. In such cases, the parent/guardian should inform staff in advance and should be the same sex as the minor participants.
- Prohibit the use of all recording devices including smartphones.
- Comply with all misconduct rules.
- If a minor participant enters a bathroom/locker/changing during a competition, staff should be aware and check to ensure that such minor participant returns within a reasonable time.

In the special case of co-ed locker rooms, male and female athletes should use separate changing areas. When separate areas are not available, the male and female participants should take turns using the areas.

## Travel Guidelines

Travel to and from practices and competitions subject participants to risk not only from auto accidents, but also makes them more vulnerable to misconduct, particularly during overnight stays. During overnight stays, participants are away from their families and support networks and find themselves in unfamiliar and less structured settings, such as locker/changing rooms, sports facilities, autos, and hotel rooms.

Local travel is not planned or supervised by the organization, but the parent/guardian for each participant is responsible for making the travel arrangements. Local travel occurs when minor participants are driven to and from practices and local competitions, usually by parents/guardians in a carpool setting. The guidelines for local travel are as follows:

- Drivers have completed SafeSport training
- Drivers should have a valid driver's license, meet state insurance requirements, and operate a well-maintained vehicle in accordance with state laws.
- Staff drivers providing local transportation should not ride alone with an unrelated minor participant. There should either be at least two other participants or another adult in the vehicle at all times unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the parent/guardian of the participant.
- Staff drivers who are also the parents/guardians of a minor participant may provide shared transportation but should always pick up their own child first and drop him/her off last.
- Staff drivers should have the parent/guardian of participants sign a parental authorization and release form.

Team travel for training or competition may require overnight stays. Staff, volunteers, and chaperones often travel with participants to provide appropriate supervision. Staff, volunteers, and chaperones will follow specific guidelines when travelling with athletes:

- Adults traveling with the team will have completed SafeSport training
- All drivers should have a valid driver's license, meet state insurance requirements, and operate a well-maintained vehicle in accordance with state laws.

- Be sure to maintain appropriate adult-to-minor ratios(always two adults), which will vary with the age of the participants.
- Hotels and air travel should be booked in advance with schedules published for all staff and parents/guardians.
- Participants should share rooms with 2 to 4 participants per room depending on room size. Participants should be grouped according to sex and age group.
- Attempts should be made to have one chaperone of the same sex for each group.
- No chaperone or other staff members should spend the night in the same room with any unrelated minor participants.
- Chaperones must be cleared by a criminal background check and undergo awareness training before having any appropriate one-on-one interactions with a minor participant.
- The organization should ask the hotel to block pay-per-view channels in the rooms of each participant.
- Meetings should not occur in rooms and a large room or suite should be rented so that staff can meet and socialize as a group with minor participants.
- Family members attending the event should be encouraged to stay in the same hotel as participants.

### **Staff and Chaperone Responsibilities**

- Will have completed SafeSport training
- Brief participants and parents/guardians prior to travel on policy guidelines, expectations, and travel and competition schedules.
- Follow all policies on preventing misconduct including travel, locker/changing rooms, and two-deep leadership.
- Assist participants in preparing for competitions.
- Encourage minor participants to engage in daily communications with parent/guardian.
- Set curfews based on age and competition schedule.
- No use of alcohol or drugs by chaperones in the presence of minors and they should not be under the influence while performing duties.
- Chaperones should make sure that staff complies with all travel and other misconduct policies.
- Immediately report any violation of travel or misconduct policy to ED, Staff, online form or a board member.
- Notify parent/guardian not traveling with the minor participant of any injuries, discipline problems, or any other concerns.

## **Codes of Conduct**

ACA expects all participants and parents to adhere to a code of conduct that is becoming of someone representing the United States and the ACA. Athletes are expected to sign the following:



## AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION (ACA) ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT 2018

### ATHLETE PLEDGE

I pledge to uphold the spirit of the American Canoe Association's (ACA) Code of Conduct (the "Code"), which offers a guide to my conduct as a paddlesport athlete competing domestically and internationally, whether or not I am a member of a USA National Team (the "Team"). I acknowledge that I have a right to a hearing if my opportunity to compete is denied or if I am charged with a violation of this Code.

I have familiarized myself with the Code and understand that acceptance of its provisions is a condition of competing at the national and international levels and in my selection to the Team.

**As a paddlesport athlete, or if selected as a member of the Team, I hereby promise and agree that I:**

- will abide by all published rules related to the Team selection procedures as approved by ACA;
- have acted and will act in a sportsmanlike manner consistent with the spirit of fair play and responsible conduct;
- will maintain a level of fitness and competitive readiness that will permit my performance to be at the maximum of my abilities;
- will not commit a doping violation as defined by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) or the International Canoe Federation (ICF) rules;
- am not currently serving a doping violation and/or do not have a pending or unresolved doping charge;
- will not engage in any conduct that is criminal under any laws applicable to me, including, but not limited to laws governing the possession and use of drugs and alcohol and providing of drugs to any person and of alcohol to minors;
- will not participate or assist in any gambling or betting activities associated with any event related to my sport or my participation;
- am eligible to compete under the rules of International Canoe Federation;
- should I be chosen for an international team that requires a passport, I am in possession of a valid USA passport, that will not expire prior to six months following the conclusion of the international competition;
- will refrain from conduct detracting from my ability or that of my teammates to attain peak performance;
- will respect the property of others whether personal or public;
- will respect members of my Team, other teams, spectators and officials, and engage in no form of discriminatory behavior or verbal, physical or sexual harassment or abuse;
- will report abuse, or suspected abuse, according to the policies and guidelines of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and as described in the ACA SafeSport Manual;
- will follow my Team's written rules, including by way of example, written rules regarding curfew, required attendance at team meetings and prohibitions on the release of confidential team information;
- am aware that ACA sponsors, suppliers and licensees provide critical support for the Team and, in recognition of this fact, I will wear designated ACA apparel at all official Team functions and events;
- will not conceal or cover-up any ACA sponsor, supplier or licensee brand or other identification appearing on my ACA apparel;
- will abide by the rules of the International Canoe Federation concerning allowable trademark identification on clothing and equipment worn or used in competition or on visible body tattoos;
- agree to be filmed and photographed by the official photographer(s) and network(s) of ACA under conditions authorized by ACA and give event organizers and ACA the right to use my name, picture, likeness, and biographical information before, during and after the period of my participation in these activities to promote the activity in which I participate or to promote the success of the team on which I compete; in no event may ACA or the event organizers use or authorize the use of my name, picture, likeness, voice and biographical information for the purpose of trade, including any use in a manner that would imply an endorsement of any company, product, or service, without my written permission;
- will not use or authorize the use of photographs, films or videos of myself in my ACA apparel or equipment or the use of the ACA logo for the purpose of trade, without the prior written consent of the ACA;

- understand that if I require legal representation because I am accused of a doping violation or am accused of criminal misconduct, or if for any other reasons I require the services of an attorney, I will be personally responsible for payment of such legal fees and expenses;
- will stand in a dignified posture during the playing of the National Anthem of the United States;
- will not post or promote inappropriate, offensive or illegal behaviors in online communities (social media) to include, but not be limited to: photos, videos or comments showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco; photos, videos or comments that are of a sexual or pornographic nature; photos, videos or comments that condone drug-related activity; content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning, threatening or violent toward any other individual or entity; or derogatory comments against race, religion or gender.
- will register my whereabouts with the U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) while traveling for international events at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>;
- will act in a way that will bring respect and honor to myself, my teammates, the ACA and the United States; and
- will remember that at all times I am an ambassador for my sport, my country and the Olympic and Paralympic Movements.

**ATHLETE OMBUDSMAN**

I may contact the USOC Athlete Ombudsman, Kathleen (Kacie) Wallace via phone at 719-816-5000 or via email at [athlete.ombudsman@usoc.org](mailto:athlete.ombudsman@usoc.org), for further information regarding my rights under this Code that are not answered by the American Canoe Association.

**PARTICIPANTS' AFFIRMATION**

I have read and accept this Code of Conduct. I agree to the rules, guidelines, jurisdiction and procedures stated in these documents as a condition of competing nationally or internationally and if selected to participate as a member of the Team.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

American Canoe Association CANOE / KAYAK / PARACANOE  
NGB Name Sport

**PARENT/GUARDIAN CERTIFICATION  
(For Participants Under the Age of 18 as of Date of Signature)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name (Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship (Parent or Guardian)

# Section VII

## Revisions

Revisions to this policy shall be executed and be approved by the ACA Board of Directors. All revisions must be consistent with the prevailing ACA Bylaws. The ACA Secretary shall maintain historical versions of this document.

Revision History		
Rev	Description of Changes	Date
0	Original document - Draft	6/10/2018
1	Draft v2	8/7/2018
2	ACA Board of Director Approval	8/15/2018

## Staff / Volunteer / Athlete Acknowledgement

As an ACA member I have read the above SafeSport Handbook and will do my best to uphold SafeSport for the Paddlesports community.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_