

Vermont Soccer Association ATHLETE SAFETY POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

This policy was developed to meet the requirements set forth by Public Law 115-126 *Protecting Young Victims for Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017* (the “SafeSport Act”). The Vermont Soccer Association Athlete Safety Policy sets the standard for all clients to implement as their own policy where one does not exist.

Vermont Soccer Association has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and misconduct. All participants in the Vermont Soccer Association community must play an active role in creating an environment free from emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. In that regard, the policy set forth was developed to help all participants detect and report abuse, respond to it and prevent future occurrences. This policy includes six (6) key components: Prohibited Conduct, Mandatory Reporting, Background Screening, Education and Training, Limiting One-on-One Interactions (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies) and Enforcement.

ADULT PARTICIPANTS, MINOR ATHLETES, AND POLICY EXCEPTIONS

This policy uses the term “Adult Participants” to refer to those adults (aged 18 years and older) to whom these policies apply. Adult Participants are required to follow all policies included in Vermont Soccer Association’s Athlete Safety Policy. Adult participants are defined as any adult (18 years of age or older) who is:

1. A member or license holder of a National Governing Body (NGB), Paralympic Sport Organization (PSO), Local Affiliate Organization (LAO), or United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC);
2. An employee or board member of an NGB, PSO, LAO, or USOPC.
3. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of an NGB, PSO, LAO, or USOPC; or 4. Authorized, approved, or appointed by an NGB, PSO, LAO, or USOPC to have regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes.
5. Any member, employee, board member or authorized approved or appointed individual of an amateur sport organization outside of the Olympic Movement with regular contact or authority over Minor Athletes.

Vermont Soccer Association defines Adult Participants as:

1. Organization Board Members, Officers, and Directors

2. Organization Employees and Independent Contractors
3. Coaches and Trainers
4. Team Managers and Club Administrators
5. Tournament Directors
6. Athletic Trainers
7. Referees and eSports Moderators
8. Adult Athletes - rostered athletes who are 18 years of age or older and participating on teams with "Minor Athletes" as described below.
9. Spectators when attending games, leagues, practices or any event associated with or sponsored by the Vermont Soccer Association.

Many aspects of this policy are issued to protect "Minor Athletes" who participate in Vermont Soccer Association's programming. A Minor Athlete is an amateur athlete under 18 years of age who participates in, or participated within the previous 12 months in, an event, program, activity, or competition that is part of, or partially or fully under the jurisdiction of, an NGB, PSO, USOPC, LAO or amateur sport organization outside of the Olympic Movement. Although this policy focuses in many areas on concerns unique to Minor Athletes, these may be applicable and are designed to protect participants of all ages.

Please note that a "Close in Age" Exception exists within the different components of this policy. This exception applies to certain policies and allows for "In-Program" contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete if:

- The Adult Participant has no authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- The Adult Participant is not more than four (4) years older than the Minor Athlete.

There are also exceptions for Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants working with a Minor Athlete. A PCA is an individual who assists an athlete who requires help with the activities of daily living or in preparation for athletic participation. This support can be provided by a Guide for Blind or visually impaired athletes, or can include assistance with transfer, dressing, showering, medication administration, and using the restroom. When assisting a Minor Athlete, PCAs must be authorized by the athlete's parent/guardian. For a PCA to be considered an Adult Participant, the PCA must have Regular Contact with additional Minor Athlete(s) besides the Minor Athlete for whom they provide care, or the PCA must be hired by Vermont Soccer Association or a member organization. In these circumstances, the following requirements must be met before a PCA Exception will be granted:

1. The Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must provide written consent to the Vermont Soccer Association or the member organization for the PCA to provide care/work with their Minor Athlete;
- and 2. The PCA must complete the required training as defined in the Education and Training Policy;
- and 3. The PCA must meet all screening requirements of the Vermont Soccer Association or the member organization.

Further, Adult Participants with a dual role or relationship with a minor creates an exception to certain policies set forth within this document. A "Dual Relationship" exception exists when:

- An Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete. The exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually. • Many of the exceptions require parent/guardian consent.

- Examples of a dual role relationship can include, but is not limited to:

1. Adult Participant who is a Parent/Guardian of a minor athlete
2. Adult Participant who is an Aunt/Uncle of a minor athlete; or
3. Adult Participant who is a family friend of a minor athlete.

"In Program" contact includes sanctioned events and facilities, but it also applies more broadly to sport related interactions, and is defined as:

- Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport.

Examples of in-program contact include, but are not limited to competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post-game meals or outings, team travel, review of game film, team or sport-related relationship building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport related fundraising or community service, sport education, or competition site visits.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

It should be noted that all defined Adult Participants and Minor Athletes of Vermont Soccer Association's programming are subject to specific prohibited conduct as outlined below. Prohibited behaviors include Criminal Dispositions, Child Abuse, Sexual Misconduct, Emotional and Physical Misconduct, including Stalking, Bullying, Hazing, and Harassment. All Adult Participants have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a direct violation of this policy. Any violation of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Adult Participants or Minor Athletes may subject the individual to disciplinary action and the Vermont Soccer Association prohibits any retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct, including potential violations of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Adult Participants or Minor Athletes.

Criminal Charges or Dispositions

Criminal conduct is relevant to an individual's fitness to participate in sport. It is a violation of this policy for a participant to be subject to a Criminal Disposition analogous to Prohibited Conduct. When assessing whether a Criminal Charge or Disposition is analogous to Prohibited Conduct the underlying allegations, original charges, amended charges, or those to which a plea was entered will be reviewed under Vermont Soccer Association Background Check and Appeals Policy.

Child Abuse

Defined as physical or sexual abuse or neglect of a child, including human trafficking and the production of child pornography.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct offenses include, but are not limited to:

1. **Sexual Harassment** is any unwelcome physical or verbal conduct or any written, pictorial, or visual communication directed at an individual or group of individuals because of the individual's or group's actual or perceived sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and related circumstances), gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, which may include acts of aggression, intimidation, or hostility, when the conditions outlined in (a), (b) or (c) below are present.
 - a. Submission to such conduct or communication is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of any person's employment, education, standing in sport, or participation in events, sports programs, or activities;
 - b. Submission to, objection to, or rejection of such conduct or communication is used as the basis for employment, education or sporting decisions affecting the individual; or
 - c. Such conduct or communication creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists when the conduct or communication does or is likely to interfere with, limit, or deprive any individual of the opportunity to participate in any employment, education, or sports program, event, or activity. Conduct or communications must be deemed a hostile environment from both a subjective and an objective perspective.

Whether a hostile environment exists depends on the totality of known circumstances. Purported Consent by the person subjected to Sexual Harassment is not a defense, regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.
2. **Nonconsensual Sexual Contact** – sexual contact is any intentional touching of a sexual nature, however slight, with any object or body part by a person upon another person. Sexual contact includes but is not limited to kissing, intentional touching of the breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals, whether clothed or unclothed, or intentionally touching or another with any of these body parts and making another touch themselves, the Participant, or someone else with or on any of these body parts.
3. **Nonconsensual Sexual Intercourse** – Sexual Intercourse is any penetration, however slight, with any object or body part by a person upon another person. Sexual intercourse includes, (a) vaginal penetration by a penis, object, tongue, or finger, (b) anal penetration by a penis, object, tongue, or finger and (c) any contact, no matter how slight, between the mouth of one person and the genitalia of another person.
4. **Sexual Exploitation** – occurs when a Participant purposely or knowingly, or attempts or threatens to:
 - a. Allow(s) third parties to observe private sexual activity from a hidden location, or through electronic means without Consent of all parties involved in the sexual activity
 - b. Record(s) or photograph(s) private sexual activity or a person's intimate parts (including genitalia, groin, breasts, or buttocks) without Consent of all parties in the recording or photo;
 - c. Engage(s) in voyeurism (e.g. watching private sexual activity or viewing another person's intimate parts when that person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy), without Consent of all parties being viewed;
 - d. Disseminate(s), show(s), or post(s) content depicting private sexual activity or a person's intimate parts (including genitalia, groin, breasts, or buttocks) without prior Consent of the person depicted, referenced, or involved in the content;
 - e. Expose(s) another person to a sexually transmitted infection or virus without that person's knowledge;
 - f. Engage(s) in solicitation of prostitution or prostituting or trafficking another person;
 - g. Require(s) a third party to visually observe or listen to any of the conduct described above.
5. **Exposing a Minor to Sexual Content/Imagery** – An adult participant shall not intentionally expose a Minor to content or imagery of a sexual nature, including but not limited to pornography, sexual comment(s), sexual gestures, or sexual situations.

6. **Sexual Bullying Behavior** - is repeated or severe behaviors of a sexual nature that are (a) aggressive (b) directed any minor and (c) intended or likely to hurt control or diminish the minor emotionally physically or sexually.

Sexual Bullying behavior also includes bullying behavior related to an individual or group of individuals because of that individuals or groups actual or perceived sex (including pregnancy childbirth breastfeeding and related medical conditions) gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of Sexual Bullying Behavior may include, without limitation, ridiculing or taunting that is sexual in nature or based on gender or sexual orientation (real or perceived), gender traits or behavior, or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.

7. **Sexual Hazing** – is any conduct of a sexual nature that is intended or likely to subject another person, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, affiliate, degrade, or intimidate the person as a condition of joining or being socially accepted by a group, team, or organization.

Sexual hazing also includes hazing related to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Purported consent by the person subjected to sexual hazing is not a defense regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.

Emotional and Physical Misconduct

Emotional Misconduct - includes (a) Verbal Acts, (b) Physical Acts, (c) Acts that deny attention or support, (d) Criminal Conduct, or (e) Stalking. Emotional Misconduct is determined by the objective behaviors, not whether harm is intended or results from the behavior.

- a. Verbal Acts – Repeatedly and excessively verbally assaulting or attacking personally in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- b. Physical Acts – Repeated or severe physically aggressive behaviors, including but not limited to, throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of others, punching walls, windows or other objects.
- c. Acts that Deny Attention or Support – Ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time with the intent to deny attention or support, including routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Participant from participation.
- d. Criminal Conduct – Emotional Misconduct includes any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect).
- e. Stalking – occurs when a person purposefully engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person, and knows or should know, that the course of conduct would cause a reasonable person to (i) fear for their safety, (ii) fear for the safety of a third person, or (iii) to experience substantial emotional distress. "Course of conduct" means at least two or more acts, in which a person directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils threatens, or communicates to or about another person, or interferes with another person's property. "Substantial emotional distress" means significant mental suffering or anguish. Stalking also includes "cyber-stalking" wherein a person stalks

another using electronic media, such as the internet, social networks, blogs, cell phones, text or other similar devices or forms of contact.

2. **Physical Misconduct** – is any intentional contact or non-contact behavior that causes, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to another person. It is not conduct reasonably accepted as part of sport or conduct reasonably accepted as part of Participant's participation. As example hitting, punching, and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in non-combat sports such as swimming.

Physical Misconduct may include, without Limitation:

- a. Contact violations – punching, beating, biting, striking, strangling, or slapping another; intentionally hitting another with objects, such as sporting equipment; encouraging or knowingly permitting and Athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional.
- b. Noncontact 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 legal drinking age; providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to another.

3. **Bullying Behavior** – is repeated or severe behavior(s) that are (a) aggressive (b) directed at a Minor, and (c) intended or likely to hurt, control, or diminish the Minor emotionally, physically, or sexually. Petty slights, minor inconveniences, and lack of good manners do not constitute Bullying Behavior unless the slights, inconveniences, or lack of manners, when taken individually or in combination and under the totality of the circumstances, meet the standards set forth above.

Bullying Behavior may include, without limitations, repeated or severe:

- a. Physical – hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, strangling, slapping, spitting at, or throwing objects (such as sporting equipment) at another person.
- b. Verbal – Ridiculing, taunting, name-calling, or intimidating or threatening to cause someone harm.
- c. Social, including cyberbullying – use of 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.
- d. Criminal Conduct – Bullying Behavior includes and conduct described as bullying under federal or state law.

4. **Hazing** – is any conduct that is intended or likely to subject 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 subjected to Hazing is not a defense, regardless of the person's perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.

Hazing includes but is not limited to:

- a. Contact Acts – tying, taping, or otherwise physically restraining another person, beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault.
- b. Noncontact Acts – requiring or forcing the consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances, 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 or food; restrictions on personal hygiene.

- c. **Criminal Acts** – Any act or conduct that constitutes hazing under applicable federal or state law.
2. **Harassment** – is repeated or severe conduct that is intended or likely to (a) cause hear, humiliation , or annoyance; (b) offend or degrade; (c) create a hostile environment; (d) reflect a discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; (e) any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Other Inappropriate Conduct

As defined below, may be non-sexual in nature

1. **Intimate Relationship** – is a close personal relationship – other than a familial relationship that exists independently and outside of the sport relationship. Whether a relationship is intimate is based on the totality of the circumstances, including regular contact or interactions outside of or unrelated to the sport relationship (electronically or in person), the parties' emotional connectedness, the exchange of gifts, ongoing physical or intimate contact or sexual activity, identity as couple, the sharing of sensitive personal information, or intimate knowledge about each other's lives outside the sport relationship.

MANDATORY REPORTING

All Adult Participants of the Vermont Soccer Association are mandatory reporters of any known or suspected child abuse. All reports must be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities within 24 hours; the abuse does not need to be confirmed. Adult Participants should never seek to conduct their own investigations.

The Vermont Soccer Association does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. Any Adult Participant or Minor Athlete who makes a good faith report will not be subject to retaliation, including harassment, as a result of making a report. The SafeSport Act of 2017 also includes qualified immunity for good faith reports. The obligation to report is not always satisfied by making an initial report and an Adult Participant is required to report supplemental information of which he/she becomes aware that may be relevant in a pending investigation.

Regardless of the method for reporting any known or suspected child abuse, all Adult Participants of Vermont Soccer Association are also required to report the information to Vermont Soccer Association.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Vermont Soccer Association's Background Check Policy is in place to set forth requirements pertaining to appropriate background screening. This Background Check Policy does not apply to individuals under 18 years of age. All Adult Participants shall be known collectively as "Adult Applicant" for the purposes of this Background Check Policy.

Any athlete, referee, coach, or otherwise, who is under the lesser of (1) the age of 18, or (2) the age of

majority in the applicable state and who is participating in Vermont Soccer Association sanctioned activities and competitions, will be known as a “Minor Athlete” for the purposes of this Background Check Policy.

Every Adult Applicant is required to apply for a background check every year by using the Vermont Soccer Association digital compliance platform by the earlier of 1) prior to regular contact with a Minor Athletes; or 2) within the first 45 days of the Adult Applicant taking on the role giving them access to Minor Athletes.

A comprehensive background check, including a national search, national sex offender search (50 states plus U.S. territories) and 7-year county of residence criminal record and/or state criminal record repository search will be conducted on every Adult Applicant submitted every year. In addition, all Adult Applicants should be vetted against Vermont Soccer Association’s suspension database, and the SafeSport Centralized Disciplinary Database. The complete Vermont Soccer Association Background Check Policy is available upon request.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

The following Adult Participants must complete the Vermont Soccer Association Abuse Prevention Training through the Vermont Soccer Association) digital compliance platform:

- Adult Participants who have regular contact with any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor; • Adult Participants who have authority over any amateur athlete(s) who is a minor; or • Adult Participants who are an employee or board member of Vermont Soccer Association or its direct and indirect members.
- Minors who are participating as coaches (Minor Coaches).

Adult Participants must complete this training:

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

REQUIRED POLICIES FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Vermont Soccer Association recognizes that youth-adult relationships can be healthy and valuable for development. Policies on one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. As child sexual abuse is often perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations, it is critical that organizations limit such interactions between youth and adults and implement programs that reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Observable and Interruptible

All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable

and interruptible, except in emergency circumstances. The exceptions below may apply to specific policies, and if the exceptions apply, they are listed in the policy. These exceptions also apply to all one-on-one In-Program Contact not specifically addressed in other policies:

- When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Vermont Soccer Association's screening policy; or
- In other circumstances specifically addressed in this policy that allow for certain one-on-one interactions if OS receives parent/ guardian consent.

MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must follow the one-on-one interaction policy in all meetings and training sessions where Minor Athlete(s) are present.

Individual Training Sessions

One-on-one, In-Program, individual training sessions must be observable and interruptible except if:

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Vermont Soccer Association's screening policy.

The Adult Participant providing the individual training session must receive advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually, which can be withdrawn at any time; and parents/guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

Meetings with Licensed Mental Health Care Professionals and Health Care Providers *(Other Than Athletic Trainers)*

If a licensed mental health care professional or licensed health care provider meets one-on-one with a Minor Athlete at a sanctioned event or a facility, which is partially or fully under Vermont Soccer Association's jurisdiction, the meeting must be observable and interruptible except:

- If the door remains unlocked; and
 - Another adult is present at the facility and notified that a meeting is occurring, although the Minor Athlete's identity needs not be disclosed; and
 - Vermont Soccer Association is notified that the provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and
- The provider obtains consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.

ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES, MESSAGES, AND RUBDOWNS

Athletic Training Modality, Massage, or Rubdown

All In-Program athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns of a Minor Athlete must:

- Be observable and interruptible; and
- Have another Adult Participant physically present for the athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown; and
- Have documented consent as explained in subsection (2) below; and
- Be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals are always covered; and
- Allow parents/guardians in the room as an observer, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing.

Consent

Consent must be obtained at least annually from Minor Athletes' parents/guardians before providing any athletic training modalities, massages, or rubdowns. Minor Athletes or their parents/guardians can withdraw consent at any time.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

Observable and Interruptible

Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program Contact with Minor Athlete(s) in a locker room, changing area, or similar space where Minor Athlete(s) are present is observable and interruptible, except if:

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs an Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the (Organization)'s screening policy.

Conduct in Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces

No Adult Participant or Minor Athlete can use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in locker rooms, changing areas, or any other area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing.

- Adult Participants must not change clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes their breasts, buttocks, groins, or genitals to a Minor Athlete.
- Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes unless:
 - o The Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age Exception; or
 - o The shower is part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear.

Parents/guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with Adult Participant(s) during In-Program Contact. Vermont Soccer Association and the Adult Participant(s) shall abide by this request.

Media and Championship Celebrations in Locker Rooms

Vermont Soccer Association may permit recording or photography in locker rooms for the purpose of highlighting a sport or athletic accomplishment if:

- Parent/legal guardian consent has been obtained; and
- Vermont Soccer Association approves the specific instance of recording or photography; and
- Two (2) or more Adult Participants are present; and
- Everyone is fully clothed.

Personal Care Assistants

Adult Participant Personal Care Assistants are permitted to be with and assist Minor Athlete(s) in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces where other Minor Athletes are present, if they meet the requirements above.

Availability and Monitoring of Locker Rooms, Changing Areas, and Similar Spaces Vermont Soccer Association will provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes that need to change clothes or undress at sanctioned events or facilities partially or fully under Vermont Soccer Association's jurisdiction.

Vermont Soccer Association will monitor the use of locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces to ensure compliance with these policies at sanctioned events or facilities partially or fully under the Vermont Soccer Association's jurisdiction.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Open and Transparent

All one-on-one electronic communications between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be Open and Transparent except:

- When a Dual Relationship exists; or
- When the Close-in-Age Exception applies; or

- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Vermont Soccer Association's screening policy.

Open and Transparent means that the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant.

If a Minor Athlete communicates with the Adult Participant first, the Adult Participant must follow this policy if the Adult Participant responds.

Only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication may be used to communicate with Minor Athletes.

Team Communication

When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any number of Minor Athletes on the team, the Adult Participant must copy or include another Adult Participant or the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians.

Content

All electronic communication originating from an Adult Participant(s) to a Minor Athlete(s) must be professional in nature unless an aforementioned exception exists.

Requests to Discontinue

Parents/guardians may request in writing that the Organization or an Adult Participant subject to this policy not contact their Minor Athlete through any form of electronic communication. The Organization and the Adult Participant must abide by any request to discontinue, absent emergency circumstances.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

An Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program travel, except if:

- A Dual Relationship exists; or
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and

- o (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Vermont Soccer Association's screening policy; and
- The Adult Participant has advance, written consent to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one obtained at least annually from the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian.

Minor Athlete(s) or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time.

An Adult Participant meets the In-Program transportation requirements if the Adult Participant is accompanied by another Adult Participant or at least two minors.

Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian is required for all transportation sanctioned by Vermont Soccer Association at least annually.

LODGING

Hotel Rooms and Other Sleeping Arrangements

All In-Program Contact at a hotel or lodging site between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible, and an Adult Participant cannot share a hotel room or otherwise sleep in the same room with a Minor Athlete(s), except if:

- A Dual Relationship Exists, and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided the Organization with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement.
- The Close-in-Age Exception applies, and the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided Vermont Soccer Association with advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement; or
- If a Minor Athlete needs a Personal Care Assistant, and:
 - o (1) the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian has provided written consent to the Organization for the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant to work with the Minor Athlete; and
 - o (2) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Education & Training Policy; and
 - o (3) the Adult Participant Personal Care Assistant has complied with the Vermont Soccer Association's screening policy.

Written consent from a Minor Athlete's parent/guardian must be obtained for all In-Program lodging at least annually.

Monitoring or Room Checks During In-Program Travel

If the Organization or team performs room checks during In-Program lodging, the one-on-one interaction policy must be followed and at least two (2) adults must be present for the room checks.

Additional Requirements for Lodging Authorized or Funded by Vermont Soccer Association

Adult Participants traveling with Vermont Soccer Association must agree to and sign the lodging policy at least annually.

Adult Participants that travel overnight with Minor Athlete(s) are assumed to have Authority over Minor

Athlete(s) and thus must comply with the Education & Training Policy.

ENFORCEMENT

Vermont Soccer Association's Policy on Enforcement is set forth to establish procedures for monitoring and enforcing compliance with Vermont Soccer Association's Athlete Safety Policy, as well as to establish an appropriate grievance process to address allegations of misconduct following the report or complaint of misconduct.

Vermont Soccer Association takes all reports of potential violations of this Athlete Safety Policy seriously and is committed to confidentiality and investigation of allegations.

Vermont Soccer Association reserves the right to, either directly or through a contracted third-party service provider, survey, audit, require certifications of compliance with, or otherwise review compliance with Vermont Soccer Association's Athlete Safety Policy. All violations of the Policy will be subject to the current Vermont Soccer Association Disciplinary and Appeals Process.

The decision of the Vermont Soccer Association Executive Committee shall be final and binding on all parties. The individual has the right to appeal a final decision rendered by Vermont Soccer Association's process for violations of the Vermont Soccer Association Athlete Safety Policy, excluding those decisions rendered pertaining to the Background Screening Policy of the Vermont Soccer Association Athlete Safety Policy, which is outlined in the Vermont Soccer Association Disciplinary and Appeals Process (policy is available upon request).

