

USA CURLING

# SAFESPORT HANDBOOK



**USA Curling**

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## INTRODUCTION

The United States Curling Association (USCA) is committed to encouraging participation and the pursuit of excellence at all levels of the sport. In order to create a safe and positive environment in which curlers can excel, the USCA promotes good sportsmanship and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy, and tolerance. Abuse or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

The *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* is designed to help protect athletes, volunteers, staff, and others while participating in events conducted under the auspices of the USCA, including championships, curling camps, and educational clinics. Among others, it also applies to individuals who have been certified by the USCA as a coach, instructor, official, or ice technician. This policy encompasses requirements from the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, which became federal law on February 14, 2018.

The USCA and all member organizations, along with individuals who are members, employees, or volunteers in these organizations must comply with the policy and procedures outlined in this document including investigation and, as applicable, resolution procedures under the auspices of the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Questions can be directed to USA Curling at [safesport@usacurl.org](mailto:safesport@usacurl.org).



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The Chicago Community Trust and  
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for their generous financial support  
of this program.



## Definitions

**Applicable Adults:** Adults to whom items regarding minor athlete abuse prevention in Section 2 of the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* apply are referred to as Applicable Adults. Applicable Adults always include:

- Any adult authorized by the USCA to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor (e.g., coaches); and
- Adult staff of USA Curling and USCA board members.

Some aspects of the policy also directly apply to all adult members of organizations that are members of the USCA. Specific requirements that are applicable to USCA member organizations are detailed in Section 2. Applicable Adults are also Covered Individuals, but all Covered Individuals are not necessarily Applicable Adults.

**Covered Individuals:** Any individual who currently is, or was at the time of a possible violation of the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook*, (a) within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the USCA or that of a USCA member organization; (b) an athlete or non-athlete participant that the USCA formally authorizes, approves, or appoints to a position of authority over athletes or to have frequent contact with athletes; or (c) otherwise identified in this document as a Covered Individual. Covered individuals also fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport (Center) and its policies. In some instances, actions committed prior to involvement with curling or other Olympic sports (e.g., past sexually-based convictions) will cause these Covered Individuals to be subject to the jurisdiction of the Center and/or the USCA. Not all Covered Individuals are also Applicable Adults.

**Minors:** Individuals who are under the age of 18. The phrase “amateur athlete who is a minor” refers only to minors involved in the sport of curling. This policy is limited to activities within the sport of curling, which, in some instances, includes travel to and from a venue.

**U.S. Curling Association (USCA):** The national governing body for the sport of curling. The USCA does business as USA Curling.

## SECTION 1: ABUSE AND HARASSMENT GUIDELINES

### Covered Individuals

Individuals covered under the policy include the following:

- Employees of USA Curling and employees of contractors engaged by USA Curling;
- U.S. Curling Association board members and other national and international representatives of the organization;
- Volunteers serving on committees, operational groups, and selection panels recognized by the national organization;
- Volunteers for and participants in USA Curling events, camps, and other USA Curling programs (including athletes, coaches, course conductors, ice technicians, instructors, officials, and organizers);
- Individuals who have been certified by USA Curling as a coach, instructor, official, or ice technician;
- Members of national, state, regional, and local USCA member organizations (e.g., curling clubs);
- Individuals authorized by member organizations to have regular contact with minors;
- Staff and boards of national, state, regional, and local USCA member organizations;
- All non-athletes who are authorized by USA Curling to reside, train, or work at an Olympic Training Center; and
- All athletes receiving funding from USA Curling, representing the United States in curling at world championship events, and/or designated for the required USADA testing pool.

All member organizations are required to adopt prevention policies as outlined in Section 2 to limit one-on-one interactions between adults and minor athletes. Member organizations are also required to ensure individuals identified in Section 3 complete online abuse and harassment training through the U.S. Center for SafeSport (Center).

All covered individuals shall refrain from misconduct including: sexual misconduct, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing. Each of these prohibited behaviors is outlined below. Covered individuals are obligated to report actual or perceived violations of the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* pursuant to Section 5.

Please note: Certification of coaches, instructors, officials, and ice makers by the USCA does not make those individuals agents or employees of the USCA, and the USCA is not liable for actions of such persons. The USCA's duty is limited to taking appropriate action to screen such individuals under the circumstances set forth in this Handbook, to investigate allegations, to revoke certification or impose other sanctions where appropriate, and to report complaints to appropriate authorities, the Center, or to local club personnel or parents where appropriate.

## **Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct as defined by the US Center for SafeSport in the *SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (Code)* is prohibited. The Center has exclusive authority to investigate and resolve conduct involving (a) sexual misconduct; (b) prohibited conduct under the Code that is reasonably related to the underlying allegation of sexual misconduct, and (c) retaliation related to an allegation of sexual misconduct. The most current definitions as found in the Code take precedence over what is published in this Handbook should the definitions published by the Center change. The current version of the Code can be found online at <https://safesport.org/response/policies>. As of March 3, 2017, that policy read as follows:

### Sexual misconduct

#### **(1) Generally**

Sexual misconduct offenses include:

- a. Sexual Conduct (or attempts to commit the same), without Consent.
- b. Sexual Conduct (or attempts to commit the same), where there is a Power Imbalance, regardless of purported Consent.
- c. Sexual Harassment.
- d. An Intimate Relationship involving a person in a Position of Power where a Power Imbalance exists.

#### **(2) Sexual misconduct involving Minors**

Regardless of any purported Consent, a sexual misconduct offense involving a Minor includes:

- a. Sexual Conduct (or attempt to commit the same) between a Covered Adult and a Minor where the age difference is three or more years.
- b. Sexual Conduct (or attempt to commit the same) between a Covered Adult and a Minor where the age difference is less than three years, but a Power Imbalance exists.
- c. An Intimate Relationship (or attempt to establish the same) between a Covered Adult and a Minor where the age difference is three or more years and a Power Imbalance exists.
- d. Sexual Conduct between a Covered Minor and another Minor if: (1) the age difference is three or more years, or (2) there is a Power Imbalance based on the totality of the circumstances.

#### **(3) Child sexual abuse**

A Covered Individual shall not engage in any behavior that constitutes child sexual abuse as defined by federal or applicable state law.

#### **(4) Criminal Disposition**

It is a violation of the *Code* for a Covered Individual to be convicted of or subject to a

Criminal Disposition for a crime involving (a) any form of sexual misconduct or (b) a Minor.

(5) **Other**

A Covered Individual shall not engage in any other form of sexual misconduct, including Bullying Behaviors or Hazing of a sexual nature.

More information on conduct reasonably related to sexual misconduct and retaliation, as well as definitions of terms used above, can be found in the most recent version of the *SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement*, <https://safesport.org/response/policies>.

Please Note: Romantic or sexual relationships, beginning during the sport relationship, between athletes and those individuals with direct supervisory or evaluative control, or who are in a position of power and trust over the athlete, are prohibited. Except in limited circumstances where no imbalance of power exists, coaches have this direct supervisory or evaluative control and are in a position of power and trust over the individuals they coach.

**Physical Abuse<sup>1</sup>**

Physical abuse includes:

- (1) Deliberate contact or non-contact conduct intended to and that results in, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).

Examples of contact offenses prohibited by this Handbook include, but are not limited to: punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, or slapping. Prohibited non-contact offenses include, but are not limited to, isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a locker); 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); and withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Bullying, harassment and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of physical abuse.

## **Emotional Abuse**<sup>2</sup>

Emotional abuse includes:

- (1) A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that causes emotional or psychological harm; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).

Examples of prohibited verbal acts include a pattern of verbal behaviors that attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat, or disgusting) or repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose. Prohibited physical acts include, but are not limited to, a pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing equipment in the presence of participants or punching walls or other objects. Acts that deny attention or support are also prohibited.

Emotional abuse does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.

## **Bullying**

Bullying includes:

- (1) An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law.

Examples of bullying prohibited by this Handbook include, but are not limited to, physical behaviors (e.g., hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an individual) and verbal and emotional behaviors (e.g., teasing, ridiculing, intimidating; spreading rumors or making false statements; and using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate).

Bullying does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion. For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and to push through a difficult training regimen within the normal scope of the coach/athlete relationship.

Please note: While bullying often occurs between peers, particularly among minor athletes, it is a violation of this policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows of the bullying behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted individuals.

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<sup>2</sup> Bullying, harassment, and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of emotional abuse.

## **Harassment**

Harassment includes:

- (1) A repeated pattern of behavior that (a) is intended to cause fear or humiliation, (b) offends or degrades, (c) creates a hostile environment, or (d) reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, and/or other protected classes; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Examples of harassment prohibited by this Handbook include, but are not limited to, making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols related to religion or race; and withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation.

## **Hazing**

Hazing includes:

- (1) Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

Examples of hazing prohibited by this Handbook include, but are not limited to: forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs; tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an individual; sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature; extreme sleep deprivation; public displays that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule (e.g. public nudity); beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault; and excessive training requirements focused on individuals or specific members of a team. Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

Please note: While hazing often occurs between peers, particularly among minor athletes, it is a violation of this policy if a coach, or other responsible adult, knows of the hazing behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted individuals.

## **Other Prohibited Conduct**

No individual governed by this Handbook shall:

- (1) Provide alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age; or
- (2) Provide illegal drugs or non prescribed medication to any athlete; or
- (3) Encourage or permit an athlete to return to play pre-maturely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) without the clearance of a medical professional; or
- (4) Consume alcohol while actively coaching minor athletes during an event under the jurisdiction of USA Curling or qualifying events leading to USA Curling competitions (e.g., U18 playdowns, qualification bonspiels leading the Junior Nationals).



## SECTION 2: MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, Olympic sports reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. USA Curling's policy for minor athlete abuse prevention is detailed below. Throughout this section, adults to whom each item applies are referred to as Applicable Adults. Applicable Adults always include:

- Any adult authorized by the USCA to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor (e.g., coaches); and
- Adult staff of USA Curling and USCA board members.

Some aspects of the policy also directly apply to all adult members of organizations that are members of the USCA. Requirements surrounding USCA member organizations are detailed in each section below.

Minors are individuals involved in the sport of curling who are under the age of 18. The phrase "amateur athlete who is a minor" refers only to minors involved in the sport of curling.

All organizations that are members of the U.S. Curling Association are required to adopt a minor athlete abuse prevention policy by June 23, 2019. Each policy must, at minimum, include items identified below as applicable to adult members of organizations that are members of the USCA. USCA member organizations are encouraged to include the optional components of USA Curling's policy and/or develop stricter guidelines to help ensure the safety of minors. If a member organization does not develop its own policy that meets the minimum standard, the mandatory components outlined in this document become the default policy of the member organization as of June 23, 2019. While member organizations have the right to revise their policies at any time, all policies must continue to meet the minimum standards outlined in this document.

Parents/guardians of minors are encouraged to actively supervise youth involved in curling during practices, games, competitions, travel, and/or other events. The more parents/guardians are involved, the less likely it is that abuse situations will develop. All parents of youth athletes are also encouraged to take the free online SafeSport training for parents created by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. This course explains issues of misconduct in sport and helps parents ensure their children have a positive and safe sport experience. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the free training. Additional educational resources for parents can also be found on the [USA Curling website](#).

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

All adult members of organizations that are members of the USCA must comply with items A and B. USCA member organizations are also encouraged to incorporate items C and D into their respective minor abuse prevention policies as best meets the needs of their organizations.

- A. All one-on one interactions must be observable and interruptible:
- One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under USA Curling's jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of a member organization are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.
  - Other one-on-one interactions between minor athletes and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under USA Curling's jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of a member organization are prohibited, except in the circumstances described in part C of this section and under emergency circumstances.
- B. Additionally, meetings must comply with the following:
- Meetings between Applicable Adults and minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under USA Curling's jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of a member organization may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
  - If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office at a facility partially or fully under USA Curling's jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of a USCA member organization, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- C. Meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers:
- If a mental health care professional and/or health care provider meets with minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under USA Curling's jurisdiction, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:
    - (1) the door remains unlocked;
    - (2) another adult is present at the facility;
    - (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and
    - (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the mental health care professional and/or health care provider, with a copy provided to an appropriate representative of USA Curling.
- D. Individual training sessions:
- Individual training sessions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted at a facility partially or fully under USA Curling's jurisdiction if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult.
  - It is the responsibility of the Applicable Adult to obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session if the individual training session is not observable and interruptible by another adult.
  - Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.

## Massages and Rubdowns/Athletic Training Modalities

This aspect of the policy shall apply to all adult members of organizations that are members of the USCA.

- A. Guidelines regarding massages and rubdowns/athletic training modalities:
- Any massage or rubdown/athletic training modality performed at a facility, training, or competition venue must be conducted in an open and interruptible location.
  - Any massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the massage or rubdown/athletic training modality in the room.

## Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

All adult members of organizations that are members of the U.S. Curling Association must comply with items A and B. USCA member organizations are encouraged to adopt items C and D into their respective minor abuse prevention policies.

If USA Curling uses a facility not fully under the organization's jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Applicable Adults listed above are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth below.

- A. Use of recording devices:
- Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under USA Curling's jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of a USCA member organization is prohibited.
  - Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by USA Curling or a USCA member organization and two or more Applicable Adults are present.
- B. Undress:
- Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Applicable Adult at a facility under USA Curling's jurisdiction/partial jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of a USCA member organization intentionally expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a minor athlete.
- C. One-on-one interactions:
- Except for athletes on the same team, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area when at a facility under USA Curling's partial or full jurisdiction, except under emergency circumstances.
  - If USA Curling is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, USA Curling will designate separate times for use by Applicable Adults, if any.

D. Monitoring:

- USA Curling will regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas at facilities under the organization’s jurisdiction to ensure compliance with these policies.

## **Electronic Communications and Social Media**

All adult members of organizations that are members of the U.S. Curling Association must comply with items A and C. USCA member organizations are encouraged to incorporate item B into their respective minor abuse prevention policies.

A. Communication content:

- All electronic communication originating from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

B. Open and transparent:

- Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), another Applicable Adult or the minor’s legal guardian will be copied.
- If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor’s legal guardian.
- When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult will copy another adult.
- Minor athletes may “friend” USA Curling’s official pages, including team and high performance program pages.

C. Requests to discontinue:

- Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted directly through any form of electronic communication by the organization or by the Applicable Adults subject to this policy. Applicable Adults, USA Curling, and USCA member organizations will abide by any such request that their minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

## **Local Travel**

Organizations that are members of the USCA, including clubs, state/regional, and national associations, are encouraged to adopt these guidelines as best suited to their organizations.

A. Transportation:

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

- USA Curling encourages parents/legal guardians to pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangements.

### **Team Travel**

Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

All adult members of organizations that are members of the USCA must comply with items B and C. Member organizations are encouraged to incorporate item A into their respective minor abuse prevention policies as best suited to their organizations.

#### **A. Team/competition travel:**

- When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete must have his/her legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.

#### **B. Hotel rooms:**

- Applicable Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the Applicable Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the minor athlete).
  - However, a parent/legal guardian may consent to such an arrangement in advance and in writing.
  - Furthermore, a parent/legal guardian may consent in advance and in writing to the minor athlete sharing a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an adult athlete.

#### **C. Meetings:**

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

### **Minor athletes who become adult athletes**

With the exception of athletes who are members of the same team, Minor Athletes who reach the age of majority (i.e. 18 years of age) must adhere to the provisions found in Section 2 of this document when interacting with minor athletes who are 14 years of age or younger.

Minor Athletes who reach the age of majority and then obtain a non-athlete position of authority that presents a power imbalance, such as becoming a coach or official, must also comply with these prevention policies regardless of the age of the minor athletes with whom they will interact. Please see above to determine appropriate application of these policies to a particular situation.

## Appropriate Physical Contact

Guidelines for appropriate physical contact are aimed at reducing the potential for misconduct in sport. Although these guidelines are directed primarily toward adult coaches of minor athletes who are not directly related (for example, parent/child), we encourage all adults to adopt these basic principles.

In order to be both safe and appropriate, all physical contact with athletes—whether it is for safety, celebration, or consolation—should meet the following criteria:

- (1) the physical contact takes place in public;
- (2) there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact; and
- (3) the physical contact is not initiated to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

*Safety:* The safety of our athletes is paramount. In some instances, coaches or instructors can make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact. This may include positioning an athlete's body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill or making athletes aware that they might be in harm's way because of equipment on the ice.

In non-emergency situations, coaches, volunteers, and officials are encouraged to seek permission of athletes of all ages before touching them in any manner.

*Celebration:* The USCA recognizes participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement, and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs; and congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, "jump-arounds" and pats on the back for recognition of athletic or personal accomplishment. However, the coach should always refrain from touching an athlete in celebratory situations if the athlete appears to be uncomfortable.

*Consolation:* It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation can include publicly embracing a crying athlete, putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging him or her in effort to calm the athlete down ("side hugs"), and lifting a fallen athlete off the ice and "dusting them off" to encourage them to continue competition. However, the coach should refrain from touching an athlete in consolatory situations if the athlete appears to be uncomfortable.

## SECTION 3: EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS AND TRAINING

Education is a key component of abuse and harassment prevention. In addition to providing information on various types of abuse, training helps enhance knowledge of administrators, volunteers, coaches, and others regarding how to minimize the opportunities for abusive situations to occur.

Individuals/groups required to complete awareness training include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- All coaches, including those at USCA events, championships, and playdowns leading to championship events;
- All newly certified officials, instructors, and ice technicians (as of July 1, 2019);
- The head ice maker at a USA Curling championship or event;
- The chairs of the organizing committees for the USCA U18 and Junior National Championships and qualifying events;
- All course conductors for USA Curling Sport Education classes;
- All adult participants in junior camps and any other junior program receiving financial or administrative support from the USCA;
- All adults who are in any way associated with national, state, regional or local organizations that are members of the USCA (e.g., curling clubs) and who have regular contact with and/or authority over athletes who are minors (this includes, but is not limited to, members, volunteers, and contractors (as per the U.S. Center for SafeSport, this does not mean all adults who play in a league with a minor athlete need to take the training);
- All staff and boards of national, state, regional, and local USCA member organizations;
- All USA Curling employees, including High Performance staff, and USCA board members;
- All non-athletes who are authorized by USA Curling to reside, train, or work at an Olympic Training Center; and
- All athletes receiving funding from USA Curling, representing the United States in curling at world championship events, and/or designated for the required USADA testing pool.

All adults (18 and over) who are listed above as required to complete this training must do so:

- **Before regular contact** with an amateur athlete/participant who is a minor begins, or,
- **Within the first 45 days** upon beginning a new role subjecting the adult to this policy if there is no direct contact with minors involved in the role.

SafeSport training can be found at <https://safesport.org>. Codes for participation can be obtained from the Development Associate at USA Curling or through emailing [safesport@usacurl.org](mailto:safesport@usacurl.org). The training should take approximately 90 minutes, but does not need to be completed in one sitting. Successful completion of all quizzes is required.

The required training consists of three sections:

- Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education
- Emotional and Physical Misconduct
- Mandatory Reporting

All three sections must be completed with passing scores on the final test for the training requirement to be met. These sessions do not, however, need to be completed in a single sitting. Training other than the core U.S. Center for SafeSport modules listed above does not satisfy this policy.

Following completion of the initial training, all individuals listed above must complete the SafeSport Refresher course on an annual basis. Failure to complete the program will result in the inability to participate in events conducted under the auspices of the USCA and all member organizations.

Individuals completing the training at the request of an organization other than the USCA (e.g., local club) should check with that organization regarding submission of proof of completion. It is the individual's responsibility to show proof of completion to the organization president or other individual who has been identified by that organization.

USA Curling staff will track and ensure compliance of individuals required to complete the training program who are associated with USA Curling programs. Periodic checks for compliance of member organizations will be conducted at least once annually. Such compliance checks may be conducted on a randomized basis. In addition, periodic reviews, at least once annually, of groups or people included in this requirement will be made by USA Curling staff with changes to the list published online.

### **Training for Minors**

The USCA will also offer annual training regarding prevention of child abuse for minors involved in USCA programs. Member organizations in the USCA are also required to communicate about training for minors to parents of minor participants. This training is subject to parental consent. Training will begin to be offered following the release of online minor training programs by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. The USCA will track a description of the training, date the training was offered and given, and a description of how the training was offered and given.

### **Exceptions**

Exception to this Educational Awareness and Training policy may be made on a case-by-case basis for victims/survivors of abuse. Requests may be made directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, [training@safesport.org](mailto:training@safesport.org), or to USA Curling, [safesport@usacurl.org](mailto:safesport@usacurl.org). Member organizations within the U.S. Curling Association, such as local clubs, do not have the authority to waive this requirement.

Exceptions may also be granted to organizations that have no minors in any programs and no potential for any minor participants (e.g., paper clubs) in any organizational event, including training sessions or private parties. Contact USA Curling at [safesport@usacurl.org](mailto:safesport@usacurl.org) with requests for exemptions.



## SECTION 4: SCREENING PROGRAM

The USCA has implemented a screening program in order to prevent known offenders from being placed in a position of authority in an event or program conducted under the auspices of the organization. Annual background checks will be required of anyone the USCA formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following individuals:

- All coaches, including those at USCA events, championships, and playdowns leading to championship events;
- All officials serving in the capacity of chief umpire or deputy chief umpire at a USA Curling championship or other event, including all active Level III apprentices;
- The head ice maker at a USA Curling championship or event;
- The chair of the organizing committee for the USCA Junior National Championship;
- All course conductors for USA Curling Sport Education classes;
- All volunteers for junior camps receiving financial or administrative support from the USCA;
- All USA Curling employees, including independent contractors that directly support the High Performance Program or Junior High Performance Program, and USCA board members; and
- All non-athletes who are authorized by USA Curling to reside, train, or work at an Olympic Training Center.

All background checks must be completed prior to contact with athletes and/or 45 days following acceptance of a new role requiring completion of such training. Background checks are not conducted on individuals under the age of 18. While not currently required by Federal law or the U.S. Center for SafeSport policy, USA Curling also recommends that national, state, regional, and local organizations that are members of the USCA background screen all adults who have regular contact with and/or authority over minors within their organizations.

Background check registration information can be obtained from the Development Associate at USA Curling or by emailing a request to [safesport@usacurl.org](mailto:safesport@usacurl.org). (Do not use codes from previous years.) Upon completion, each applicant will receive either a “green light” or “red light” status. While a “red light” finding means the criminal background check revealed information that may suggest the applicant does not meet the criteria to work/volunteer with the USCA, it does not mean the applicant will be automatically disqualified. A designated USA Curling staff member will contact an applicant to discuss a “red light” status before a decision is made. In certain situations, it may be necessary to notify parents of participating athletes or others of the “red light” status. These decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

While passing a background check indicates that no criminal history was found that would disqualify the individual from working with children or others, it does not mean the individual is necessarily safe to work with children or others. As such, it is possible that other factors may disqualify an applicant from working or volunteering for an event or program conducted under the auspices of the USCA. Such factors may include having resigned, been terminated, or asked to resign from a position – paid or unpaid - due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors. In certain situations, it may be necessary to notify parents, clubs, and/or regional representatives of such disqualification.

Note: All coaches are required to notify the Development Associate or Event Services Manager at USA Curling about arrests, indictments, and/or criminal convictions within thirty (30) days of occurrence. Failure to do so will result in an automatic suspension of the individual's status as a coach in good standing with the USCA for a period of at least one year.

USA Curling staff will track and ensure compliance of individuals required to pass a background screen for USA Curling programs and events. Periodic reviews, at least once annually, of groups or people included in this requirement will be made by USA Curling staff with changes to the list published online.

## SECTION 5: REPORTING POLICY

Actual or perceived misconduct or wrongdoing as delineated in the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* at an event conducted under the auspices of the USCA and/or the US Center for SafeSport must be reported by Covered Individuals (as defined by this Handbook) according to the following guidelines. All others are also highly encouraged to report incidents.

- (1) All allegations of physical or sexual abuse must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities. As required by federal law, participating adults who learn about information giving reason to suspect that a child has suffered an incident of child abuse, including sexual abuse, must make a report to law enforcement and the U.S. Center for SafeSport within 24 hours of potential abuse. Individuals who choose not to report face a potential fine and imprisonment of up to one year.
- (2) **Please note: Most states have mandatory reporting laws requiring persons holding certain positions, such as a coach, to report suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse;** and
- (3) All suspected violations must be immediately reported to the person in charge of the event (e.g., chief umpire, camp director) or the second in command if the person in charge is not available or the allegation has been made toward that individual; and
- (4) All suspected violations should be reported to USA Curling (See p. 14, “How to Report to USA Curling”) within 48 hours or two business days of learning about the incident or the US Center for SafeSport through the process defined in this Handbook. **It is the policy of USA Curling to immediately report any claims of child physical or sexual abuse to the authorities if a report has not already been made.**
  - a. Conduct by a Covered Individual that could constitute sexual misconduct should be reported to the US Center for SafeSport as directed in the *SafeSport Practices and Procedures for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (Appendix A)*. USA Curling will forward all complaints under the jurisdiction of the US Center for SafeSport to that organization. USA Curling also reserves the right to forward other complaints to the US Center for SafeSport.

Please note: The USCA, its staff members, and/or volunteers **will not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of a child physical or sexual abuse claim as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities or to the U.S. Center for SafeSport**. As necessary, however, representatives of the USCA may ask clarifying questions of the minor or person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities and/or the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Out of concern for the protection of youth athletes, the USCA reserves the right to suspend an individual until the matter is investigated and resolved by proper authorities.

Since the USCA does not own, operate, or otherwise control local curling clubs and/or other curling organizations, the USCA has no formal authority over these groups. However, it is the responsibility of persons governed by this Handbook to report violations by an individual who has been certified by USA Curling as a coach, instructor, official, or ice maker if it takes place at a non-USCA event or in a member club (e.g., misconduct by a certified coach at a bonspiel or misconduct by a certified instructor during a junior league). USA Curling also encourages all member organizations to adopt similar SafeSport policies and procedures. Member organizations are also encouraged to reach out to USA Curling and/or the US Center for SafeSport for assistance in cases of abuse or harassment within their organizations.

### **How to Report to USA Curling**

Reports to USA Curling can be made by (1) clicking the “Report an Incident” link on the USA Curling website, <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Curling/Sport-Education/SafeSport>; (2) emailing [SafeSport@usacurl.org](mailto:SafeSport@usacurl.org); or (3) calling (888) CURLERS (287-5377) and speaking to a designated SafeSport coordinator. SafeSport coordinators include the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Growth & Development, Development Associate, and Event Services Manager.

While USA Curling will accept an anonymous complaint, it is strongly encouraged that the following information be included in all reports:

- Name and contact information of complainant
- Type of misconduct alleged
- Name(s) of individual(s) who allegedly committed the misconduct
- Name(s) of victim(s) of the alleged misconduct
- Approximate date, time, and location the alleged misconduct was committed
- Names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct
- Reasons suggesting that the misconduct has occurred

NOTE: No direct fees or other costs are involved in making a complaint.

### **How to Report to the US Center for SafeSport**

Covered Individuals (as defined in Section 1) MUST report to the U.S. Center of SafeSport conduct of which they become aware that could constitute (a) sexual misconduct (b) misconduct that is reasonably related to the underlying allegation of sexual misconduct and/or (c) retaliation related to an allegation of sexual misconduct.

Reports can be made by (1) calling the US Center for SafeSport office at 720-524-5640 Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm MT; (2) reporting online at <https://safesport.org/response/reporting> (online reports are accepted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week); or (3) through mail at the U.S. Center for SafeSport, C/O Response and Resolution Office, 1385 South Colorado Boulevard, Suite A-706, Denver, CO 80222. More details about reporting and the Center in general can be found online at <https://safesport.org>.

Any reports made to USA Curling that fall under the jurisdiction of the US Center for SafeSport will be forwarded to the Center. The Center has exclusive jurisdiction over cases as defined in Section 1 and possible jurisdiction over additional cases referred to the US Center for SafeSport by USA Curling. Allegations that fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the US Center for SafeSport and/or are accepted by the US Center for SafeSport at the request of USA Curling are investigated and resolved according to

the policies of the US Center for SafeSport. Please see the *SafeSport Practices and Procedures for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement* and Supplementary Rules for U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement SafeSport Arbitrations at <https://safesport.org/response/policies> for more information.

Reporting to the Center and/or USA Curling DOES NOT satisfy any legal reporting requirements under state or federal law. If the suspected conduct may also be criminal, you are strongly encouraged to report to law enforcement. For state-by-state reporting requirements, see [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).

### **Confidentiality of Cases Under the Jurisdiction of USA Curling**

The USCA cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of complaints under the jurisdiction of the USCA. However, the USCA will strive to ensure that all complaints are handled in a manner that, to the greatest degree possible, protects the rights of all parties. In an attempt to maintain confidentiality of complaints, records shall be produced and/or persons contacted only as may be necessary to process the complaint.

### **Complainant Protection of Cases Under the Jurisdiction of USA Curling**

Regardless of outcome, USA Curling supports the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. USA Curling will not tolerate attempts by any individual to retaliate, punish, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Any such retaliation will be grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Bad-Faith Allegations in Cases Under the Jurisdiction of USA Curling**

Any individual who alleges misconduct under the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* that, upon review, is determined to be malicious, frivolous, or made in bad faith will be in violation of the policy and subject to disciplinary action. Bad-faith reports may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings.

### **How Reported Alleged Violations Under the Jurisdiction of USA Curling Are Handled**

Reports to USA Curling alleging misconduct or wrongdoing as delineated in Section 1 of the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook*, or reports of activities that potentially put athletes, volunteers, staff, or others involved in USCA organizational activities in danger of harm will be handled according to the following process. Exceptions include allegations that fall under the jurisdiction of the US Center for SafeSport and additional cases that are referred by USA Curling to and accepted by the US Center for SafeSport for investigation and response.

Please note that the USCA reserves the right to restrict participation in events conducted under the auspices of the USCA and/or member organizations pending the outcome of an investigation or hearing if deemed to be in the best interest of the alleged victim(s) or the organization(s) as a whole.

- (1) **Review:** USA Curling shall review complaints judged to potentially fall under the purview of the USA Curling SafeSport policy that contain enough information to proceed with an investigation. Complaints determined to fall under the jurisdiction of another USCA policy or code will be processed according to the relevant policy or code.

USA Curling will use reasonable efforts to gather initial information regarding the complaint within two weeks of receipt of the complaint, or as soon as possible depending on the severity and time frame of the initial allegations.

(2) Course of Action: Following completion of the initial investigation, USA Curling may:

- i. **Take No Further Action**: USA Curling may take no further action on the complaint because of a lack of evidence of any misconduct or wrongdoing. USCA shall notify the accused and the complainant of this determination. The complainant may appeal this determination to the SafeSport Hearing Panel within thirty (30) days following receipt of notice. The appeal must be made in writing to USA Curling's Chief Executive Officer.

Should it be determined that, following the initial investigation, the situation falls under another USA Curling policy or code, it will be processed under such.

- ii. **Interim Sanction**: In instances where the evidence clearly suggests misconduct or wrongdoing, USA Curling may offer the accused a sanction proportional and reasonable to the violation. Sanctions could include, but are not limited to, temporary or permanent suspension of involvement in USCA events or membership in the organization. USA Curling may impose a time limitation as it determines is applicable for acceptance of the sanction.

The parties may appeal this determination to the SafeSport Hearing Panel within thirty (30) days following receipt of notice. The appeal must be made in writing to USA Curling's Chief Executive Officer.

- iii. **Refer to Hearing Panel**: USA Curling may report the wrongdoing to a Hearing Panel for adjudication.

(3) Hearing Panel Composition: The USCA SafeSport Hearing Panel shall consist of three (3) disinterested individuals. The Chief Executive Officer of USA Curling shall appoint the Panel members. One (1) athlete will be selected to serve on this panel. Should the CEO have a direct interest in the matter, the panel will be appointed by another officer of the USCA who is a disinterested party.

(4) Hearing/Decision: The following procedures shall be followed.

- i. **Notice**: The accused shall be informed in writing of the alleged misconduct or wrongdoing.
- ii. **Evidence**: The accused shall be afforded an opportunity to present oral and written evidence. If the complainant/victim is a minor, a written report may substitute for the minor's direct testimony. The rules of evidence will not be strictly enforced; instead, rules of evidence generally accepted in administrative proceedings shall be applied.
- iii. **Conduct of Hearing**: The Hearing Panel may set such rules regarding the proceeding and the conduct of the hearing as it deems necessary. Hearings will not be open to the public. Hearings may be conducted telephonically or by other electronic means.

The Hearing Panel may proceed in the accused's absence if the accused cannot be located or if the accused declines to attend the hearing.

- iv. **Finding:** After considering the evidence presented, the Hearing Panel will make a determination as to whether or not the accused has violated Section 1 of the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* or has put athletes, volunteers, staff, or others involved in USCA organizational activities in danger of harm.
  - v. **Sanction:** If the Hearing Panel determines that a violation has occurred or that there is danger of harm, the Hearing Panel may impose sanctions it deems appropriate that are proportional and reasonable to the violation. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, temporary or permanent suspension of involvement in USCA events or membership in the organization.
- (5) **Appeals.** The complainant or accused may appeal the decision of the Hearing Panel to the American Arbitration Association, provided that such appeal is filed within thirty (30) days of notice of the Hearing Panel's determination.
- (6) **Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.** A proceeding that involves denial of an individual's opportunity to participate in protected athletic competition shall comply with the requirements of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.
- (7) **Employees.** An employee of USA Curling accused of misconduct or wrongdoing as delineated in Section 1 of the *USA Curling SafeSport Handbook* may be dealt with pursuant to the USA Curling's internal employment procedures, and not pursuant to this policy, if that approach is deemed appropriate to the situation. Any situation that may fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport must be reported to the Center.

### **Public Notification**

The USCA's primary concern is the safety of our members. When warranted, the USCA reserves the right to inform relevant members of the public of the alleged incident (e.g., parents of children who attended an event at which an accused individual coached, members of the club at which the incident took place, president of regional association). As previously noted, public notification may also be warranted based on the arrest or subsequent conviction of an individual.