

# **Florida Youth Soccer Association Policy Statement On Sexual Harassment, Abuse, And Molestation Of Participants And Non-Participants.**

## **I. General Policy Statement<sup>1</sup>**

It shall be the policy of Florida Youth Soccer Association (FYSA) – consistent with the United States Youth Soccer Association’s (USYSA) “KidSafe Program,” Florida Statutes, and Federal Statutes – that participants and non-participants involved in or attending any FYSA event or activity shall be strictly prohibited from harassing, physically, mentally or sexually abusing, or molesting any other participant or non-participant involved in or attending any FYSA event or activity, and from engaging in sexually explicit conduct with or in the presence of any other participant or non-participant. Further, FYSA shall have the right to exclude a participant from FYSA events or activities in the event that he or she is found to have engaged in harassment, physical or mental abuse, molestation, or inappropriate sexually explicit conduct outside of FYSA events or activities. This policy is not limited to the prohibition of conduct that is or may be deemed unlawful, but also prohibits conduct that may be lawful but is found to be inappropriate by participants or non-participants in any FYSA event or activity. Additionally, participants shall be prohibited from harassing, discriminating, or otherwise abusing any other participant or non-participant based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability in connection with any FYSA event or activity.

It shall further be the policy of FYSA that participants shall be strictly prohibited from conditioning another individual’s selection, advancement, or participation in any FYSA program upon any sexual advance or request for sexual favors (or the refusal thereof), or from implying, suggesting, stating or making any threats to that effect. Such conduct is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by FYSA. If such conduct is found to have occurred, it will result in prompt disciplinary action by FYSA which may include, but is not limited to, lifetime exclusion from FYSA events or activities.

If a participant believes he or she has been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or other conduct in violation of this policy, or a participant is aware that another has been subjected to such conduct, the participant is encouraged to, without fear of reprisal or retaliation, promptly report the incident following the reporting procedures described below. Retaliation or reprisal in any form against a person who in good faith files a complaint under this policy or who assists in the investigation of or inquiry into a complaint is expressly prohibited.

FYSA acknowledges that, pursuant to State and Federal Statutes, certain obligations exist with respect to the reporting of child abuse and/or molestation. FYSA requires all participants to be familiar with these obligations and to remain cognizant of the circumstances under which such an obligation may arise, as a failure to comply with these obligations may result in civil or criminal penalties.

FYSA also acknowledges that sexual abuse awareness training is an important part of protecting soccer players from potential abuse. To that end, and in furtherance of this Policy Statement, FYSA is collaborating with USYSA to provide sexual abuse prevention training to all coaches, staff members, and volunteers for FYSA affiliate members. Further, the FYSA Board of Directors is mandating that all FYSA affiliated members implement a program of sexual abuse prevention training within their organizations using the free Abuse Prevention Online Training system that is being provided by FYSA and USYSA. In addition, the FYSA Risk Management Committee is requiring that

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions for terms used in this Policy Statement can be found in Addendum A.

anyone who receives a background check and CDC Heads-Up certificate at your organization must take the Abuse Prevention Online Training.

## **II. Abuse Prevention Online Training System**

Each FYSA affiliated club and/or league will have access to an Abuse Prevention Online Training System to train staff, coaches, trainers, referees, volunteers, and administrators. The system will allow each club to manage, track, and renew Sexual Abuse Awareness Training.

Each Affiliate member club and/or league shall appoint an administrator who will be responsible for setting-up and managing the Online Training System for the Affiliate. This administrator can begin the process by going to [www.AbusePreventionSystems.com/USYS](http://www.AbusePreventionSystems.com/USYS) and signing up using the code provided by FYSA.

A record of all training completed through the Abuse Prevention Online Training System shall be securely maintained by the Affiliate member club and/or league for a period covering the prior three calendar years. Such records will be available for review by FYSA at any time and will be voluntarily provided to FYSA upon request. Affiliate member clubs and/or leagues shall require their members to complete such training at least once each calendar year as part of the FYSA Risk Management Program.

## **III. Physical Contact**

Physical contact between coaches, trainers, instructors, evaluators, administrators, chaperones, parents/guardians, field marshals, referees, volunteer support and players should be limited only to that which is necessary and appropriate to teach a skill, treat an injury, and/or console or congratulate a player. Coaches, trainers, instructors, evaluators, administrators, chaperones, parents/guardians, field marshals, referees, volunteer support and/or players shall be prohibited from any form of physical contact that is intended to intimidate, coerce, or exert power over another.

Volunteers and other adults (other than a parent or legal guardian) must limit one-on-one interactions with players to visibly public sites or circumstances in which they are within an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, unless an emergency requires otherwise. While public displays of appreciation or congratulations (e.g. a pat on the back, a rub of the head, a “high-five”) may be permissible, staff, coaches, trainers and/or volunteers should not have any physical contact with any player in a one-on-one situation. Staff, coaches, trainers and/or volunteers must be mindful of their interactions with players and the circumstances surrounding those interactions and, in doing so, must make all reasonable efforts to avoid situations or circumstances that could give rise to any potential impression or appearance of impropriety.

During any out-of-town tournament(s), a non-parent/custodial adult shall not share any sleeping arrangement with a player or players. Adults should respect the privacy of players and should take all reasonable steps to maintain appropriate player privacy while players are in changing rooms, showers, and bathrooms.

It is FYSA’s and USYSA’s goal to exclude participation by those who have committed violent crimes or crimes that may bring an unnecessary risk to the health and well-being of the participants. FYSA will undertake reasonable steps to prevent participation in FYSA events by anyone who has a history or a record of criminal or other inappropriate and objectionable activity that may reflect or

suggest an inability to work with other individuals, or which may suggest that the health or wellbeing of kids may be jeopardized.

#### **IV. Requirements for Participants.**

The continued involvement of high quality participants who have the best interest of the kids at heart is in everyone's interest. To that end, every participant is expected to:

1. Adhere to this policy statement;
2. Comply with all applicable State and Federal statutes;
3. Report any alleged improprieties to the appropriate official and/or law enforcement agency; and
4. Complete the FYSA Background Screening Policy for all volunteers, coaches, administrators, and employees.

#### **V. Reporting Procedures.**

1. A complaint by a victim or their representative, or a report by another person who is aware of a possible offense, is to be made to local law enforcement and/or any other appropriate authorities as soon as possible. If considered an emergency, immediately call **911**.
2. A person who learns of facts that give reason to suspect that a child has suffered an incident of child abuse, including sexual abuse, or who has knowledge of an incident having reasonable cause to believe that an illegal act has been committed by a participant or non-participant, or that the health, safety and welfare of participants is at risk should report their concerns to law enforcement, child welfare services, and/or any other appropriate authorities as soon as possible. If considered an emergency immediately, call **911**.
3. Reports of criminal behavior or misconduct by a non-participant against a non-participant shall be reported to law enforcement if warranted. If considered an emergency, immediately call **911**.
4. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, FYSA must be notified in writing in the event any report is made to law enforcement or child welfare services pursuant to the procedures set forth above.
5. Notwithstanding the above procedures, participants should ensure that they take any and all additional steps required to comply with applicable State and Federal statutes.

## ADDENDUM A: DEFINITIONS

1. "Participant": is defined as any person(s) who are in any manner involved in the organization, operation, direction or support of an FYSA event or an event for which FYSA has granted permission to travel to or participate in, including but not limited to coaches, trainers, instructors, evaluators, administrators, chaperones, parents/guardians, field marshals, referees, volunteer support and players. Participant extends to visiting United States Soccer Federation (USSF) members (or guests of the USSF) in the event or activity, and event vendors where specified under contract as under control or jurisdiction of FYSA.
2. "Non-participant" is anyone who is not otherwise defined immediately above as a Participant.
3. "Harassment" includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. A course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such person and serves no legitimate purpose;
  - b. Sexual harassment;
  - c. Verbal harassment such as making graphic or degrading comments about an individual's body or personal characteristics, or using epithets, derogatory comments or slurs. Sexual advances, propositions of a sexual nature and vulgar talk or jokes are prohibited;
  - d. Physical harassment is an assault, unwanted touching, or physical interference with normal activity;
  - e. Visual harassment is the display of sexually oriented, sexually suggestive, or sexually explicit objects. Also, visual harassment includes the display of sexually degrading or pornographic posters, pictures, cartoons, drawings, screen savers, other graphic materials of a sexual nature, or inappropriate gestures; and
  - f. Written communications such as sending inappropriate jokes or comments in print or electronic form.
4. The terms "abuse," "child abuse," "sexual abuse," and "sexually explicit conduct" shall have the same meaning as those used in 34 U.S.C. § 20341.
5. Under Florida Statute §39.01 -- "Child" or "youth" means any unmarried person under the age of 18 years who has not been emancipated by order of the court.

*Note that there are no charges associated with the reporting of anything set forth in this document.*