

MINNESOTA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION  
PLAYER/ADULT PROTECTION PROGRAM

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## MINNESOTA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION PLAYER/ADULT PROTECTION PROGRAM

Purpose: 1) To protect and provide a safe and healthful environment to the players participating in MYSA's sponsored or sanctioned leagues, programs, tournaments and activities. 2) To provide Member Clubs with guidelines to help reduce organizational risk.

Background: As awareness increases about the risks associated with individuals working with children who may abuse their authority by committing sexual, physical, mental and emotional abuse on those children, there is a need to provide a means of protection. In August 1994, the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) approved the KidSafe Program and placed it into effect immediately. The USYSA charged each state organization with the responsibility of developing a written program outlining safety guidelines and procedures for their players.

### Position Statement:

The Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) and its Member Clubs shall not knowingly permit any person convicted of any of the crimes listed below within the last 15 years to become or remain in any position for the organization. MYSA requires annual background checks of its adults having regular contact with players or those that have access to personal information about players. If the MYSA background check reveals convictions of any of these crimes within the past 15 years from the date of application, the person's application shall be rejected or s/he will be dismissed from any position s/he holds in the organization. Any convictions occurring more than 15 years ago may be considered by the MYSA State Risk Manager in the determining of the applicant's suitability for the position, but may not automatically disqualify the applicant.

Convictions of the following or similar crimes mean that an individual will not be allowed to be a coach, trainer, team manager, board member, officer, administrator, referee or volunteer having regular contact with players or personal information about players registered with MYSA or its Member Clubs:

*Any Assault Against a Minor*

*Controlled Substance Crimes Against a Minor Victim*

*Solicitation of a Minor to Engage in Sexual Conduct*

*Child Pornography*

*Child Abuse*

*Kidnapping*  
*Felony Assault*  
*Criminal Sexual Conduct*  
*Manslaughter*  
*Murder*

Convictions of the following or similar crimes mean that an individual may not be allowed to be a coach, trainer, team manager, board member, officer, administrator, referee or volunteer having regular contact with players or personal information about players registered with MYSA or its Member Clubs or that the individual may have conditions placed upon them:

*Domestic Assault or Abuse*  
*Assault*  
*Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor*  
*Child Neglect*  
*Malicious Punishment of a Child*  
*Felony DUI/DWI*  
*Violation of a Restraining Order*  
*Harassment*  
*Controlled Substance Crimes*  
*Embezzlement*  
*Felony Theft*  
*Indecent Exposure*

Applicability: The policy applies to any of the following that have regular contact with those defined as “Players,” as stated in the Player/Adult Protection Guidelines (included in this document):

- A. Coaches, Assistant Coaches and coaching-related positions
- B. Trainers
- C. Team Managers/Responsible Adults affiliated with the team, Board of Directors, officers or administrators of all Member Clubs, leagues and programs associated with MYSA, including those serving on the MYSA Board of Directors and Elected Committees
- D. All employees of MYSA
- E. Adult referees who wish to referee at MYSA or Member Club's games, tournaments, events, etc.
- F. All independent contractors who enter into contracts with MYSA and its Member Clubs, if they have contact with those identified as ‘Players’

Responsibilities: Note: The MYSA Board of Directors has identified the MYSA Vice President as the MYSA State Risk Manager to assist and advise Member Clubs in this endeavor.

1. **Member Club Board of Directors or Presidents will:**
  - A) designate a local Risk Manager and alternate to serve as the liaison to the MYSA State Risk Manager.
  - B) ensure that all individuals listed in a-f above comply with this policy by annually submitting to the MYSA background check process.
  - C) ensure complaints of abuse are reviewed and reported to the MYSA State Risk Manager or the local authorities, whichever is more appropriate.
  
2. **Member Club Risk Managers will:**
  - A) serve as a liaison to the MYSA State Risk Manager.
  - B) forward to the MYSA State Risk Manager, complaints of violations of the Risk Management Guidelines and Policies, including complaints of physical or sexual abuse of a player. Complaints of such abuse may be reported immediately to the local law enforcement authorities.
  - C) advise their Member Club Board of Directors on modifications, additions and enforcement of Risk Management Guidelines and Policies.
  
3. **MYSA State Risk Manager will:**
  - A) ensure that all Member Clubs comply with the Risk Management Guidelines and Policies.
  - B) serve as liaison to the Member Club Risk Managers and will be responsible for sharing information, publications, materials and ideas to better prepare Member Club Risk Managers for this duty.
  - C) work with the MYSA Executive Director to contract with a reliable agency to perform background checks on persons designated by these policies.
  - D) work with the MYSA Executive Director to determine if a person should be excluded from participation or involvement in MYSA programs, based on the information received through the MYSA background checks.
  - E) work with the MYSA Executive Director to notify applicants or existing members in writing by certified mail of their rejection or expulsion.

- F) review any complaints of violations of the Risk Management Guidelines and Policies, except complaints of physical or sexual abuse of a player. Complaints of such abuse may be reported immediately to the local law enforcement authorities and the MYSA State Risk Manager or MYSA Executive Director.
- G) compile a written report of each non-abuse violation reviewed, including steps taken, persons spoken to, and findings regarding the allegation.
- H) upon completion of the review, impose discipline on persons found to have violated the guidelines and policies.
- I) notify the complainant and the accused of the findings regarding alleged violations and discipline imposed.
- J) provide information regarding the right to appeal with the notification of findings.
- K) if decision is appealed, submit written report to MYSA Appeals Committee and appear at hearing.
- L) advise the Member Club Board of Directors on modifications, additions and enforcement of Risk Management Guidelines and Policies.
- M) along with the MYSA Executive Director, periodically review and update this policy as needed.
- N) receive copies of all written reports of Member Club Risk Managers regarding alleged player physical or sexual abuse and harassment. The MYSA State Risk Manager or MYSA Executive Director shall maintain confidential files of all abuse and harassment reports made against persons involved with the sport.
- O) upon request by a Member Club Risk Manager, or in the event a complaint is made against a risk manager or a member of his/her immediate family, review the complaint, make findings and determine the appropriate discipline, if necessary.

General Procedures:

1. Information gathering:
  - A) The MYSA background check process will be posted on the MYSA website and can be provided directly upon request. The individuals listed in the Applicability Section above must complete the

- MYSA background check upon initial involvement and every year thereafter.
- B) Background checks will be conducted under the auspices of the MYSA authorized background check provider.
  - C) All information is to be held in strictest confidentiality.
2. Notification:
- A) All notification must be conducted in writing and delivered by certified mail. If the MYSA State Risk Manager or MYSA Executive Director determines that a person should be excluded from participation in MYSA programs, a request for their resignation (within ten days of receipt of the letter) shall be included.
  - B) All involved parties must be notified of any findings resulting in discipline.
  - C) Information regarding the appeals process must be made available, in writing, at the time of notification of decision.
3. Appeals Process:
- A) Either party in a complaint may appeal the decision rendered by the MYSA State Risk Manager. This does not apply to a person that has never been affiliated with MYSA or its Member Clubs or to a person that has been disqualified for failure to successfully pass the MYSA background check.
  - B) Appeals will follow the MYSA / US Soccer Federation guidelines. Please refer to the MYSA / US Soccer Federation policies for appeals procedures.
4. Failure to Comply:
- A) If a Member Club does not identify a Risk Manager, the roles and responsibilities of that position will fall to the Member Club President or Executive Officer.
  - B) If a Member Club allows a person to continue to participate after information indicates that individual should be excluded, that Member Club will be in violation of the Risk Management Guidelines and Policies and liable to disciplinary action from MYSA. Failure to comply may place

the Member Club in bad standing with MYSA and may also include:

1. First Violation - The Member Club will be assessed a \$500 penalty.
  2. Second Violation - The Member Club will be assessed a \$500 penalty and its teams will not be allowed to compete in any post-season tournaments.
  3. Third Violation - The Member Club will have its MYSA affiliation revoked for not less than two years.
- C) If an applicant or existing volunteer refuses to provide information for the MYSA background check, they will automatically be excluded from participation in the organization.

## MINNESOTA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION PLAYER PROTECTION POLICIES

MYSA has adopted the following Player Protection Policies:

1. The Member Club shall distribute to all members of the organization copies of the Player/Adult Protection Guidelines.
2. All applicants for positions of coaches, assistant coaches, athletic trainers, team managers/responsible adults, board members, officers, administrators or adult referees shall complete the MYSA background check process each year prior to beginning their work with the organization's youth.
3. MYSA and its Member Clubs shall not knowingly permit any person convicted of any of the crimes listed below within the last 15 years to become or remain in any position for the organization. MYSA requires annual background checks of its adults having regular contact with players or those that have access to personal information about players. If the MYSA background check reveals convictions of any of these crimes within the past 15 years from the date of application, the person's application shall be rejected or s/he will be dismissed from any position s/he holds in the organization. Any convictions occurring more than 15 years ago may be considered by the MYSA State Risk Manager in the determining of the applicant's suitability for the position, but may not automatically disqualify the application.

Convictions of the following or similar crimes mean that an individual will not be allowed to be a coach, trainer, team manager, board member, officer, administrator, referee or volunteer having regular contact with players or personal information about players registered with MYSA or its Member Clubs:

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*Kidnapping*

*Felony Assault*

*Criminal Sexual Conduct*

*Manslaughter*

*Murder*

Convictions of the following or similar crimes mean that an individual may not be allowed to be a coach, trainer, team

manager, board member, officer, administrator, referee or volunteer having regular contact with players or personal information about players registered with MYSA or its Member Clubs or that the individual may have conditions placed upon them:

*Domestic Assault or Abuse*

*Assault*

*Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor*

*Child Neglect*

*Malicious Punishment of a Child*

*Felony DUI/DWI*

*Violation of a Restraining Order*

*Harassment*

*Controlled Substance Crimes*

*Embezzlement*

*Felony Theft*

*Indecent Exposure*

4. The Member Club shall appoint a local risk manager to act as a liaison between the Member Club and the MYSA State Risk Manager.
5. The Member Club, and/or MYSA, shall discipline persons found to have violated its Risk Management Guidelines and Policies.
6. If appropriate, the MYSA State Risk Manager or MYSA Executive Director shall share information found in performing background checks with the Member Club President and/or Risk Manager. All information provided to the Member Club is to be held in strictest confidentiality.
7. In the event the Member Club receives a complaint of physical or sexual abuse of a player, the Member Club Risk Manager shall report the abuse to the local law enforcement authorities.
8. After a physical or sexual abuse complaint has been formally lodged with the local law enforcement authority, the risk manager shall inform the alleged offender, in writing and by registered mail, that s/he is suspended immediately from all activities within the organization until the complaint is dismissed.
9. If any complaint is filed with MYSA regarding a violation of Player/Adult Protection Guidelines or the organization's Harassment Policies, other than physical or sexual abuse, the MYSA State Risk Manager shall speak to all parties involved, make a written report of the complaint and his/her findings, and shall

make a decision regarding discipline (if appropriate). If either party, the complainant or the accused, wishes to appeal the decision or discipline rendered by the MYSA State Risk Manager, they may do so to the MYSA Appeals Committee.

10. The Appeals Committee shall hear the complaint in person or in writing. After hearing the complaint and any response, and reviewing the report of the MYSA State Risk Manager, the Appeals Committee shall make its findings and determination.
11. The Member Club shall send copies of such reports regarding alleged physical or sexual abuse of a player to the MYSA State Risk Manager. The MYSA State Risk Manager or MYSA Executive Director shall maintain confidential files of all abuse complaints made against persons involved in the organization.

## MINNESOTA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION PLAYER/ADULT PROTECTION GUIDELINES

### DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, we will define **ADULT** as those persons in their roles as coach, assistant coach, trainer, team manager, board member, officer, administrator or adult referee who works with, for or around **PLAYERS**. This would include anyone older than the age group they are interacting with; for example, a 15-year-old assistant coach of a U-11 team would be considered an **ADULT** for the purposes of these Guidelines.

**PLAYER** defines all persons who are members of or play on a soccer team. This definition does include those players who participate at the U-19 level, even though they may be of legal age.

In the example of the 15-year-old assistant coach: if s/he is also a rostered participant on a U-16 or higher team, that person is also subject to the guidelines applicable to a **PLAYER**.

### GUIDELINES

These guidelines recognize that the lines of authority and separation between adults and players must be recognized and respected. Generally, players are children and as such, deserve special protection. These guidelines provide that protection while setting levels of acceptable conduct for adults.

- I. Physical Contact
  - A. **ADULTS** must be aware that any physical contact with **PLAYERS** can be misinterpreted. Physical contact should be limited to that necessary and appropriate to teach a skill, treat an injury, or console or congratulate a player. In the instance of teaching a skill, minimal contact should be involved and none which places the **ADULT** in a position of power and/or intimidation; for example, taking a **PLAYER** by the shoulders and physically moving them to another field or body position.
  - B. Sexual contact of any kind or type is prohibited between **ADULTS** and **PLAYERS**, whether or not contact is consensual. [The exemption to this guideline would be in the event of player/coach spouses or legally-declared domestic partners.]

## II. Social Contact

- A. **ADULTS** should not socialize or spend time alone with **PLAYERS** except at games, practices, or team functions. An **ADULT** in a one-on-one situation with a **PLAYER** is generally inappropriate.
  - 1. **ADULTS** should avoid instances such as driving alone with a non-family **PLAYER**. However, in the event that a **PLAYER** remains on a field waiting for transportation, the **ADULT** should wait with the **PLAYER** on the field to guarantee the **PLAYER'S** safety and well-being. (**ADULTS** should stress with their **PLAYERS'** parents the responsibility for safe and timely transportation to and from the field.)
  - 2. During out-of-town tournaments, a non-parent/custodian **ADULT** shall not share any sleeping arrangements with a **PLAYER** or **PLAYERS**.
  - 3. **ADULTS** should respect the privacy of **PLAYERS**. If shower or changing room facilities are available, schedules should be arranged so that **ADULTS** and **PLAYERS** have separate use. If using a changing room, **ADULTS** should provide privacy for **PLAYERS** to make necessary preparations before entering for pre/post-game discussions. In addition, **ADULTS** should not allow others to enter except by the expressed wish of the **PLAYERS** still present.

## III. Health and Well-being

- A. **ADULTS** share the responsibility for the **PLAYERS'** health while at practices, scrimmages and games. **ADULTS** should have **PLAYERS'** release forms and medical kits with them at all times. **ADULTS** are also responsible for seeing that the field conditions are safe for the **PLAYERS** and that the field equipment is in good, safe condition prior to the start of any activity.
- B. Head injuries resulting in disorientation should result in a **PLAYER** remaining out of the game.
- C. **ADULTS** transporting players must model safe driving techniques and enforce seat belt use with **PLAYERS** and other vehicle occupants.
- D. **ADULTS** need to be aware of signs of neglect and abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) of the **PLAYERS**. Observations should be reported to the local law enforcement agency.

## IV. Language

- A. Offensive and insulting language by **ADULTS** or **PLAYERS** is unacceptable. **ADULTS** should model good communication skills.

- B. Language that is denigrating in nature, content or tone or refers to one's gender, race, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion is unacceptable.
  - C. Inappropriate language targeting officials, opponents or spectators may be grounds for **PLAYER** penalties or **ADULTS'** removal from the game and/or the premises.
- V. Violations
- A. Violations of these guidelines by **ADULTS** or **PLAYERS** will subject them to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to, warnings, sanctions, suspensions or release by the Member Club and/or MYSA.
  - B. Appropriate legal authorities may be called upon based on the nature of the violation.
  - C. Anyone witnessing a violation of these Guidelines should report the violation to the MYSA State Risk Manager or MYSA Executive Director.