



# Kalonji Soccer Academy

Safety and Wellbeing Policy					
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## 1.1 Recitals

Kalonji Soccer Academy (KSA) and any affiliated companies or organizations are hereafter referred to as the **Club**. Coaches, Players, Parents, and any volunteer personnel participating in activities operated by the Club are collectively referred to as **Members**. Refer to the Glossary for other terms used throughout this document.



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## 1.2 Purpose

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This Policy sets forth rules, minimum standards, and procedures for AYSF and for its Members regarding the safety and wellbeing of its Members. Further, this policy defines the risk management-based program to promote safety, protect the welfare of Members, and explicitly prohibit sexual abuse.

The Policy incorporates the Safe Soccer Framework of the United States Soccer Federation (“U.S. Soccer”). The Safe Soccer Framework is a comprehensive program of policies and processes for screening, training and education, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement designed to help participants detect and report abuse, respond to it, and prevent future occurrences.

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## 1.3 Scope

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This policy applies to all Members participating in Club activities.

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## 1.4 Policy

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### 1.4.1 Reporting

AYSF supports a culture of compliance, safety, and respect. AYSF encourages open communication in which all Members feel comfortable reporting concerns involving suspected abuse or any other misconduct. Members are encouraged to raise concerns in the manner that is suitable to them, whether it be to Coaches, Game Officials, Team Managers, and AYSF Staff or Board Members, or the Center.

The AYSF reporting contact information is: **add phone number** OR [abuse@kalonjisoccer.com](mailto:abuse@kalonjisoccer.com)

The identity of any individual submitting a report in good faith will be handled discreetly and kept confidential to the fullest extent possible, unless doing so does not comply with applicable law or prevents a full and effective investigation of the report.

#### 1. Covered Persons

“Covered Persons” means any individual aged eighteen or older (“Adult”) that is Member who has Regular Contact (defined below) with any Player or Game Official, who is a Minor, in connection with Covered Programs (defined below).

“Regular Contact” is defined as recurring, repeated, or periodic contact between an Adult and Minor, or a person with supervisory or decision-making authority over an Adult who has recurring, repeated, or periodic contact with Minors, including, but not limited to, overseeing, supervising, chaperoning, or otherwise interacting with Minors.

Even if a Club or individual is deemed by an applicable legal authority to not be subject to the jurisdiction of the Center or U.S. Soccer, the content of this Policy and all references to obligations and prohibitions of the Center’s code shall be fully applicable to such persons (who are deemed Covered Persons under this Policy) and entities, through their incorporation into this document.



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## 2. Covered Programs

For the purposes of this Policy, a “Covered Program” is any sporting event, program, or academy program operated or organized in whole or in significant part by AYSF or any Club (if the event is sanctioned by AYSF). This definition includes, but is not limited to, travel, tournaments, showcases, cups, playoffs, pre-season, regular season, post-season, invitational events, and camps run by AYS, including local affiliate organizations.

Note that while AYSF may not have authority or control over non-sanctioned events operated or organized by Clubs (i.e., non-Covered Programs), any act or omission prohibited by this Policy may serve as an independent basis for AYSF disciplinary action if it calls into question a Covered Person’s fitness to participate in Covered Programs.

## 3. Mandatory Reporter

A mandatory reporter is any “adult who is authorized, by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or an amateur sports organization that participates in interstate or international amateur athletic competition, to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or such an amateur sports organization.”

It is a crime for an individual involved in a national governing body sports organization to ignore, or not report to law enforcement, any reasonable suspicion of an act of Child Abuse, including sexual abuse, **within 24 hours**.

The Reporting Obligation is triggered when a mandatory reporter becomes aware of “facts that give reason to suspect” a child has suffered an incident of Child Abuse.

Failure to promptly report suspected Child Abuse to law enforcement authorities may constitute a violation of federal law and will also be deemed a violation of this Policy.

The obligation to report is not always satisfied by making an initial report. Covered Persons are required to report supplemental information that they become aware of that may be relevant to a pending investigation. Importantly, the passage of time, including civil or criminal statutes of limitations, do not affect or negate the obligation of a Covered Person to report possible Sexual Misconduct. Misconduct should always be reported, regardless of when it occurred or when it was discovered.

## 4. How to Report to the Center

Reports may be made directly to the Center, including on an anonymous basis, by visiting [www.safesport.org](http://www.safesport.org) and selecting the “Report a Concern” link, or by calling (720) 531-0340.

You may always report to the PDev Hotline or to the Center anonymously. If you do make a report of suspected Child Abuse to law enforcement or to the Center, please be aware that an anonymous report may not provide you with evidence that you discharged your mandatory Reporting Obligation.

## 5. How to Report to MLS NEXT

If incident involves an AYSF Member who is participating in MLS NEXT, the report must also be made to MLS NEXT.

In addition to Covered Persons being required to report certain violations, any MLS NEXT Participant may always raise a concern to Coaches, Game Officials, Team administrators, MLS NEXT Program Staff, or a Club’s Safety Lead. They may also report a concern to [SafeSport@mlsplayerdevelopment.com](mailto:SafeSport@mlsplayerdevelopment.com).



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However, any violations of this Policy involving suspected Child Abuse must be submitted to the MLS NEXT Hotline by calling **(646) 682-5200** and leaving a message. Reports submitted to the MLS NEXT Hotline will be handled as promptly and discreetly as possible, with facts made available only to those needed to investigate and resolve the matter. MLS NEXT is committed to safeguarding the confidentiality of individuals who submit reports. If MLS NEXT receives a report of suspected Child Abuse triggering a Reporting Obligation under this Policy and applicable federal law, MLS NEXT will make the report directly and/or work with the reporter to make the report to law enforcement.

Nothing in this Policy should discourage any reporter from using the **U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline**, which is available at **(312) 528-7004**, as well as via its website at <https://ussoccer.i-sight.com/portal>. For more information, see [www.ussoccer.com/report-a-concern](http://www.ussoccer.com/report-a-concern).

**Further, you can always contact the Police, Social Services, a doctor, parent, etc.**

## 6. Retaliation

Retaliation against anyone for reporting a violation of this Policy is prohibited. An AYSF Member, or someone acting on behalf of an AYSF Member, shall not take an adverse action against any person for making a good faith report of a possible violation of this Policy to AYSF, MLS NEXT, to the Center, or to a law enforcement agency, or for participating in any process under this Policy.

Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, Harassing, coercing, or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from making or participating in the review or investigation of a report required by this Policy. Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred.

Retaliation does not include good faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of a violation of this Policy.

## 7. Failure to Report

A Covered Person who fails to report actual or suspected Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse to AYSF, the Center and, when required, to law enforcement, has violated this Policy and may be subject to disciplinary action and may constitute a violation of federal and/or state law.

## 8. Intentionally Filing a False Report

Filing a knowingly false allegation that an individual engaged in Prohibited Conduct is a violation of this Policy and may also violate state criminal law.

## 1.4.2 Training and Education

The SafeSport Act requires amateur sports organizations to offer consistent training to Adult Members who are in Regular Contact with amateur athletes/Players who are Minors, and subject to parental consent, to Players who are Minors, regarding the prevention of Child Abuse. The “Core SafeSport Training” offered by the Center meets the requirements of this Policy. It consists of three modules:

1. Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education
2. Mandatory Reporting
3. Emotional & Physical Misconduct



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The training can be accessed at:

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/training-and-education-services>

## Training for Adults

All Covered Persons must successfully complete the required SafeSport training (either the Core Training or Refresher Course, as appropriate) every year to participate in the Club.

For the avoidance of doubt, AYSF requires at least the following Members to complete the Core SafeSport Training prior to the commencement of their association with the Club, or within 45 days of being hired, appointed, approved, or retained by the Club, but in all events before commencing any contact with Minors:

- AYSF Board Members who will have regular contact with Minors
- Coaches
- Contractors and vendors with access to Minors
- Adult Players who have regular access to Minors
- Volunteers, chaperones, or other individuals who have access to Minors

## Training for Minors

Minor Players who participate in the Club will be offered training from the Center every year and should take the training subject to parental consent.

Age-appropriate training can be accessed at: <https://athletesafety.org/training/index>.

The Club will keep track of which Minor Players have taken the SafeSport training and when they did so. Such information will be made available to MLS NEXT or other Leagues on request. Clubs should encourage participation in this training. Clubs should also recommend that parents take the SafeSport training.

## Diversity and Inclusion Training

AYSF is an Anti-Racist, inclusive, and non-discriminatory organization. AYSF will not tolerate racism or any discrimination based on age, gender identity (including gender expression), race, national origin, sexual orientation or any other social identity category and/or defining characteristic. AYSF recognizes that racism, sexism, and discrimination consist of principles and practices that cause and justify the inequitable distribution of rights, opportunities, and experiences. Each Member is required to create an inclusive environment and encourage equality, diversity, and inclusive behavior through communication, engagement, and programming. The goal for the Club is to be a place where diversity and inclusion are a fundamental part of the values and culture of the organization. AYSF also encourages each Member to report any behavior that violates this policy.

The Club is required to provide and mandate comprehensive diversity, equity, and awareness training for its Players and Club Representatives to explain the bounds of acceptable behavior. Such training shall be provided on an annual basis, and the Club shall ensure that its Players and Club Representatives complete such training, including, where possible, prior to the beginning of the Regular Season.

## 1.4.3 Prohibited Conduct

AYSF is committed to maintaining a work and competition environment that is free from all forms of abuse, misconduct, and other untoward acts. **IT IS A VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY FOR ANY COVERED PERSON TO ENGAGE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FORMS OF MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED BY THIS POLICY (“PROHIBITED CONDUCT”).**



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## Child Abuse

It is a violation of this Policy for Covered Persons to engage in any form of Child Abuse. Child Abuse includes, but is not limited to, physical, mental, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect, of a Minor. Each of these forms of Child Abuse is addressed in turn:

### 1. Physical Child Abuse

Covered Persons shall not engage in any purposeful attempt to inflict physical injury, meaning an impairment of physical condition or substantial pain (“Physical Injury”), upon a Minor by other than accidental means (“Physical Child Abuse”). Physical Injury may include, but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe bruising, or serious bodily harm.

### 2. Mental Child Abuse

Covered Persons shall not engage in any conduct that reasonably causes harm to a Minor’s psychological or intellectual functioning (“Mental Injury”). Mental Injury may include, but is not limited to, exhibiting severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or outward aggressive behavior, or a combination of those behaviors, which may be demonstrated by a change in behavior, emotional response or cognition (“Mental Child Abuse”).

### 3. Sexual Child Abuse

Covered Persons shall not engage in any activity involving a sexual act (“Sexual Interaction”) with a Minor. Sexual Interaction includes, but is not limited to: rape; sexual battery; physical sexual contact; molestation; sexually explicit or offensive verbal communication; sexually oriented conversations; verbal sexual harassment; voyeurism; sexual intercourse or sexual touching; sexual exploitation (including creating or disseminating pornographic images); exposing of genitalia; viewing of sexual activity; viewing or disseminating content or imagery of a sexual nature; or permitting, allowing, or encouraging a Minor to engage in prostitution, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children (collectively, “Sexual Child Abuse”).

### 4. Neglect

Covered Persons shall not engage in any activity involving the failure, refusal, or inability on the part of a caregiver, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, water, clothing, medical or dental care, or shelter so as to seriously endanger the physical health of a Minor (“Neglect”).

## Sexual Misconduct

It is a violation of this Policy for Covered Persons to engage in Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual or Gender-related Harassment;
- Non-consensual Sexual Contact (or attempts to commit the same);
- Non-consensual Sexual Intercourse (or attempts to commit the same);
- Sexual Exploitation; and
- Bullying Behaviors or Hazing, or other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature.



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Each of these forms of Sexual Misconduct is described below:

## 1. Sexual or Gender-related Harassment

“Sexual Harassment” is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual Harassment includes harassment related to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, which may include acts of aggression, intimidation, or hostility, whether verbal or non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise, even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature, when either of the conditions outlined below are present.

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of any person’s employment, standing in sport, or participation in events, sports programs and/or activities; or when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for sporting decisions affecting the individual (often referred to as “quid pro quo” harassment); or
- Such conduct creates a Hostile Environment. A “Hostile Environment” exists when the conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive such that it interferes with, limits, or deprives any individual of the opportunity to participate in any Covered Program or activity. Conduct must be deemed severe, persistent, or pervasive from both a subjective and objective perspective. Whether a Hostile Environment exists depends on the totality of known circumstances, including, but not limited to:
  - Frequency, nature, and severity of the conduct;
  - Whether the conduct was physically threatening;
  - Effect of the conduct on the victim’s mental or emotional state;
  - Whether the conduct was directed at more than one person;
  - Whether the conduct arose in the context of other discriminatory conduct;
  - Whether the conduct unreasonably interfered with any person’s participation in sports, education or work programs or activities; and
  - Whether the conduct implicates concerns related to protected speech.

A Hostile Environment can be created by persistent or pervasive conduct or by a single or isolated incident that is sufficiently severe. The more severe the conduct, the less need there is to show a repetitive series of incidents to prove a Hostile Environment, particularly if the conduct is physical. A single incident of sexual contact, for example, may be sufficiently severe to constitute a Hostile Environment. In contrast, the perceived offensiveness of a single verbal or written expression, standing alone, is typically not sufficient to constitute a Hostile Environment.

## 2. Non-Consensual Sexual Contact

It is a violation of this Policy for Covered Persons to engage in any intentional touching of a sexual nature, however slight, with any object or body part (as described below), by a person upon another person (“Sexual Contact”) without his/her/their affirmative consent. Sexual Contact includes but is not limited to: (i) kissing; (ii) intentional touching of the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals, whether clothed or unclothed, or intentionally touching of another with any of these body parts; or (iii) making another touch themselves, or someone else with or on any of these body parts. **Under no circumstances can a Minor AYSF Member give consent to any Sexual Contact with an Adult.**





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## 3. Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse

It is a violation of this Policy for Covered Persons to engage in any penetration, however slight, with any object or body part (as described below), upon another person (“Sexual Intercourse”) without his/her/their affirmative consent. Sexual Intercourse includes, but is not limited to: (i) vaginal penetration by a penis, object, tongue, or finger; (ii) anal penetration by a penis, object, tongue, or finger; and (iii) any contact, no matter how slight, between the mouth of one person and the genitalia of another person. **Under no circumstances can a Minor AYSF Member give consent to Sexual Intercourse with an Adult.**

## 4. Sexual Exploitation

It is a violation of this Policy for Covered Persons to engage in any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes (“Sexual Exploitation”). Sexual Exploitation occurs when an individual purposely or knowingly:

- Allows third parties to observe private sexual activity from a hidden location (e.g., closet) or through electronic means (e.g., live-streaming of images) without the consent of all parties involved in the sexual activity;
- Records or photographs private sexual activity and/or a person’s intimate parts (including genitalia, groin, breasts, or buttocks) without the consent of all parties in the recording or photo;
- Engages 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 the consent of all parties being viewed;
- Disseminates, shows, or posts images of private sexual activity and/or a person’s intimate parts (including genitalia, groin, breasts, or buttocks) without prior consent of the person depicted in the images;
- Intentionally exposes another person to a sexually transmitted infection or virus without that person’s knowledge; and/or
- Engages in prostituting or trafficking another person.

**Under no circumstances can a Minor AYSF Member give consent to any of the above-listed acts with an Adult.**

## 5. Bullying Behaviors, Hazing, or Other Inappropriate Conduct of a Sexual Nature

It is a violation of this Policy for Covered Persons and Players to engage in Bullying Behaviors, Hazing, and Other Inappropriate Conduct of a Sexual Nature, as further defined in the corresponding sections below.

### Discrimination

AYSF is an Anti-Racist, inclusive, and non-discriminatory organization. AYSF will not tolerate racism or any discrimination based on age, gender identity (including gender expression), race, national origin, sexual orientation or any other social identify category and/or defining characteristic. It is a violation of this Policy for any Member to engage in any conduct that amounts to unfair, adverse, or unequal treatment based on an individual’s Protected Status (status based on any of the following: race, color, religion, marital status, ancestry, citizenship, veteran’s status, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, protected activity, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law), i.e., to engage in Discriminatory behavior.





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AYSF is committed to maintaining an environment at all AYSF events that is free from all forms of Discrimination. Accordingly, AYSF does not permit any form of Discrimination by and/or between Members based on an individual's Protected Status. This Policy also prohibits Discrimination on the basis of the Protected Status of an individual's relatives, friends, or associates. Any Member who engages in any form of Discrimination or exhibits any Discriminatory behavior may be sanctioned.

## 1. Racism

AYSF recognizes that racism consists of principles and practices that cause and justify an inequitable distribution of rights, opportunities, and experiences across racial groups. Because of this reality, AYSF is committed to actively address these issues through engagement, reflection, and listening, and is further committed to making attempts to unlearn behaviors and assumptions. AYSF does not and will not tolerate any racist or inappropriately exclusive behavior by any Member. Any Member who engages in any form of racism or fails to report instances of racism, may face Sanctions, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent removal from the program.

## 2. Inciting Hatred and Violence

Any Member who publicly incites others to hatred or violence may be sanctioned. AYSF has a zero-tolerance policy towards the use of statements that: (1) include a symbol that represents the target and/or includes a visual of an armament or method to represent violence; (2) calls for threats that could lead to serious injury toward private individuals, unnamed individuals, or minor individuals; (3) include photos, videos, or images that show or simulate the end result of serious injury or death; (4) exhibit an intent to commit violence or calls for action of violence; or (5) any content created for the express purpose of outing an individual as a member of a recognizable social identify category and/or defining characteristic.

## 3. Offensive Behavior

Any Member who has engaged in objectively insulting behavior, especially by using offensive gestures or language on or off the field, may be sanctioned. AYSF has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use of derogatory slurs used in ANY context including equivalents in any other language. AYSF reserves the right to issue discipline at its sole and absolute discretion for any Member using these words in any context. Those who choose to use derogatory slurs can face Sanctions, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent removal from AYSF.

## Emotional and Physical Misconduct

It is a violation of this Policy for any Member to engage in Emotional Misconduct and/or Physical Misconduct in connection with participation in AYSF. Emotional Misconduct and/or Physical Misconduct can take the forms of Bullying, Hazing, or Harassment. Examples include, but are not limited to: gestures, ostracizing or freezing out, offensive publications, offensive letters or memos, offensive graffiti, threatening or isolating behavior, or taunting; malicious gossip comments/abuse/jokes, ridicule, derogatory nicknames, verbal threats, use of inappropriate terms to describe someone's sexuality, or inappropriate questions or comments about the individual's private life; jostling, assault, or vandalism of property; and mimicking the effect of a disability, disregarding wishes or feelings, ignoring, or staring.

Each of these forms of misconduct is addressed below:

### 1. Emotional Misconduct

"Emotional Misconduct" includes but is not limited to: (i) Verbal Acts; (ii) Physical Acts; (iii) Criminal Conduct; (iv) Acts that Deny Attention or Support; and (v) Stalking. Whether an act qualifies as Emotional Misconduct is determined objectively, and not whether harm is intended or results from the behaviors.



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- Verbal Acts

“Verbal Acts” are any acts that involve repeated and excessive verbal assaults or attacks against someone personally in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.

- Physical Acts

“Physical Acts” are any acts that involve repeated and/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.

- Criminal Conduct

Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., Child Abuse, child neglect) would be considered a type of impermissible Emotional Misconduct under this Policy.

- Acts that Deny Attention or Support

“Acts that Deny Attention or Support” are any acts that involve ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time, including routinely or arbitrarily excluding a Player from practice.

- Stalking

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) experience substantial emotional distress, meaning significant mental suffering or anguish (“Substantial Emotional Distress”).

Stalking also includes “cyber-stalking,” wherein a person stalks another using electronic media, such as the internet, social media networks, blogs, cell phones, texts, or other similar devices or forms of contact.

- Exclusion

Emotional Misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, Team building, appropriate discipline or improved Player performance. Emotional Misconduct also does not include conduct reasonably accepted as part of sport or conduct reasonably accepted as part of the Member’s participation.

## 2. Physical Misconduct

“Physical Misconduct” is any intentional contact or non-contact behavior that causes, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to another person. Physical Misconduct may include, without limitation, (i) Physical Contact Acts, (ii) Non-Contact Acts, or (iii) Criminal Conduct.

- Physical Contact Violations

“Physical Contact Acts” include punching, beating, biting, striking, strangling, slapping, or tackling; intentionally hitting another with an object, such as sporting equipment; encouraging or knowingly permitting a Player to return to play prematurely following a serious injury and without the clearance of a medical professional; or any involvement in a fight or brawl. Anyone who has tried merely to



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prevent a fight, shield others, or separate those involved in a brawl shall not be in violation of this Policy and will not be subject to punishment.

- Non-Contact Violations

“Non-Contact Acts” include isolating a person in a confined space, such as locking a Player in a small space; forcing them to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., requiring a Player 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.

- Criminal Conduct

Physical Misconduct includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal, state, or local law (e.g., Child Abuse, child neglect, assault).

- Exclusion

Physical Misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, Team building, appropriate discipline or improved Player performance. For example, hitting, punching and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in soccer. Physical Misconduct also does not include conduct reasonably accepted as part of sport or conduct reasonably accepted as part of the Member's participation.

### 3. Bullying Behavior

“Bullying Behavior” of any kind is expressly prohibited under this Policy. Bullying Behavior consists of 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. Examples of Bullying Behavior include, without limitation, repeated or severe: (i) Physical Bullying; (ii) Verbal Bullying; (iii) Sexual Bullying; (iv) Social Media Misconduct; and (v) Criminal Conduct, as detailed further below:

- Physical Bullying

“Physical Bullying” is contact and non-contact behavior that can cause physical or emotional injury to an individual. Physical Bullying includes the hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, strangling, slapping, spitting at, or throwing objects (such as sporting equipment) at another person, tying, taping, or otherwise physically restraining another person, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.

- Verbal Bullying

“Verbal Bullying” is the act of using words to forcefully criticize, threaten, insult, or denounce another person. Verbal Bullying constitutes Verbal Misconduct, which is any objectively inappropriate use of language aimed at another person that a reasonable person would find degrading or threatening. Such conduct generally includes ridiculing, taunting, name-calling, or intimidating and/or threatening to cause someone harm.

- Sexual Bullying



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“Sexual Bullying” is the ridiculing or taunting based on gender identity, sexual orientation (real or perceived), gender traits, appearance, and behavior, or teasing someone about their looks or behavior as it relates to sexual attractiveness.

- Social Media Misconduct

“Social Media Misconduct” is the use of rumors or false statements about someone to diminish that person’s reputation using electronic communications. It includes, but is not limited to, the use of social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, humiliate, and/or socially exclude someone, and asking others to do the same. Social Media Misconduct includes what is referred to as “Cyberbullying,” or bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else, causing embarrassment or humiliation.

- Criminal Conduct

Bullying Behavior includes any conduct described as bullying under federal, state, or local law.

- Exclusion

Conduct may not rise to the level of Bullying Behavior if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Bullying does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, Team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Player performance.

## 4. Hazing

“Hazing,” which includes, but is not limited to, any conduct that is intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group’s members, is expressly prohibited under this Policy. Purported consent by the person subjected to Hazing is not a defense, regardless of the person’s perceived willingness to cooperate or participate. Examples of Hazing may include (i) Physical Hazing; (ii) Emotional Misconduct (defined above); (iii) Verbal Misconduct (defined above); (iv) Sexualized Acts; or (v) Criminal Conduct, as detailed further below:

- Physical Hazing

Physical misconduct that takes the form of Hazing may occur via contact or non-contact acts, as outlined below:

- Contact Acts: Tying, taping, or otherwise physically restraining another person; beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.
- Non-Contact Acts: Requiring or forcing the consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances (or illegal/improper use of any drugs), 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 and/or food; restrictions on personal hygiene.



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- Sexualized Acts

Actual or simulated conduct of a sexual nature.

- Criminal Conduct

Any act or conduct that constitutes Hazing under applicable federal, state, or local law.

- Exclusion

Conduct may not rise to the level of Hazing if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Hazing does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, Team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Player performance.

## 5. Harassment

It is a violation of this Policy for any Member to engage in any conduct that amounts to “Harassment” of another individual, which is defined as repeated and/or severe unwelcome conduct that: (i) causes or is intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance; (ii) offends or degrades; (iii) creates a Hostile Environment; (iv) reflects Discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on their Protected Status; or (v) any act or conduct described as Harassment under federal or state law.

For avoidance of doubt, while Harassing conduct is unlawful only if it affects tangible job benefits and/or interferes unreasonably with work or sport performance and creates an abusive or Hostile Environment, this Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of law. Whether conduct qualifies as Harassment depends on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context, and duration of the behavior.

Harassment can come in the form of (i) Verbal; (ii) Physical; or (iii) Visual, that is based upon a person’s Protected Status. Some examples include making negative or disparaging comments about an Member’s gender, mental or physical disability, race, skin color, or ethnic traits; or withholding or reducing practice or game time to a Player based on his/her/their sexual orientation, gender expression, or religion. Conduct may not rise to the level of Harassment if it is merely rude (inadvertently saying or doing something hurtful), mean (purposefully saying or doing something hurtful, but not as part of a pattern of behavior), or arising from conflict or struggle between persons who perceive they have incompatible views or positions. Harassment does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved Player performance.

Two forms of Harassment require special mention:

- Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which constitutes Sexual Harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual’s employment or condition of participation in AYSF;
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- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment/participation decision affecting that individual; or
- 
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or sport performance and creating an intimidating, Hostile, or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment may involve individuals of the same or different gender. It may also occur between individuals of any employment status.

- Race, Religion, or National Origin Harassment

Racial, Religious, or National Origin Harassment includes any verbal, written, or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner that would make a reasonable person uncomfortable in the work/competition environment, or which would interfere with the person's ability to perform. This type of Harassment includes, but is not limited to: jokes, which include reference to race, religion, or national origin; the display or use of objects or pictures that adversely reflect on a person's race, religion, or national origin; or use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person's race, religion, or national origin.

## Illegal Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Vaping

The illegal use of drugs (as determined by federal law), alcohol, tobacco, or vaping by Players, Covered Persons, or Game Officials in AYSF is strictly prohibited during the AYSF Season. AYSF will not tolerate the use/consumption of performance-enhancing drugs. AYSF forbids the use of any Prohibited Substances and Methods outlined in the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency Athlete Handbook (available at <https://www.usada.org/resources/publications-and-policies/>) in effect at the time of the alleged use. Covered Persons shall support Players' efforts to be drug-free, and their participation in illegal activities is strictly forbidden. A violation of this provision may result in Sanctions.

## Other Inappropriate Conduct

### 1. Intimate Relationship

An Adult Covered Person violates this Policy by engaging in any intimate or romantic relationship with any Minor AYSF Participant. Further, a Covered Person violates this Policy by engaging in an intimate or romantic relationship where a Power Imbalance exists. A Power Imbalance may exist where, based on the totality of the circumstances, one person has supervisory, evaluative, or other authority over another. Whether there is a Power Imbalance depends on several factors, including, but not limited to: (i) the nature and extent of the supervisory role; (ii) the evaluative or other authority over the person; (iii) the actual relationship between the parties; (iv) the parties' respective roles; (v) the nature and duration of the relationship; (vi) the age of the parties involved; (vii) whether there is an aggressor; and (viii) whether there is a significant disparity in age, size, strength, or mental capacity.

Once a Coach-Player non-intimate or sport relationship is established, a Power Imbalance is presumed to exist throughout the Coach-Player relationship (regardless of age) and is presumed to continue for Minor Players after the Coach-Player relationship terminates and until the Player reaches 20 years of age.

A Power Imbalance may exist, but is not presumed, where an intimate relationship existed before the sport relationship (e.g., a relationship between two spouses or life partners that preceded the sport relationship).

An intimate or romantic 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, but not limited to, (i) regular contact and/or interactions





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(electronically or in person) outside of or unrelated to the sport relationship, (ii) the parties' emotional connectedness, (iii) the exchange of gifts, (iv) ongoing physical and/or intimate contact and/or sexual activity, (v) identity as a couple, or (vi) the sharing of sensitive personal information, and/or intimate knowledge about each other's lives outside the sport relationship.

## 2. Intentional Exposure of Private Area

A Covered Person violates this Policy by intentionally exposing breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals, or induces another to do so, to an Adult where there is a Power Imbalance, or to a Minor.

## 3. Inappropriate Physical Contact

A Covered Person violates this Policy by engaging in inappropriate physical contact with another person where there is a Power Imbalance. Such inappropriate contact includes, but is not limited to, intentionally (a) touching, slapping, or otherwise contacting the buttocks or genitals of another AYSF Member, (b) excessively touching or hugging another AYSF Member, or (c) kissing another AYSF Member.

## Aiding and Abetting

Aiding and Abetting occurs when one aids, assists, facilitates, promotes, or encourages the commission of Prohibited Conduct by Covered Persons, including, but not limited to, knowingly:

- Allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by the Center or AYSF to be in any way associated (officially or unofficially) with, or employed by, AYSF.
- Allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by the Center or AYSF to Coach or instruct Minor Players.
- Allowing any person who has been identified as ineligible by the Center or AYSF to have an ownership interest in a Club, or a Facility used by the Club.
- Providing any coaching-related advice or service to a Player who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by AYSF.
- Allowing any person to violate the terms of their suspension or any other Sanctions imposed by AYSF.
- In addition, a Covered Person also violates this Policy if someone acts on behalf of that person to engage in Aiding or Abetting, or if the parent/legal guardian, family member, or advisor of a Covered Person, including a Minor Player, engages in Aiding or Abetting.

## Prohibited Conduct by Minors

AYSF does not tolerate, and its Clubs shall not tolerate, abusive, Harassing, or Discriminatory conduct between its Players, regardless of their ages. Depending on the facts and applicability of the above prohibitions to Minors, AYSF and its Clubs may discipline Players based on the above Prohibited Conduct. For instance, prohibitions on intimate relationships and electronic communications shall not apply as between Minors unless a significant age or power disparity creates cause for concern, or they otherwise involve Prohibited Conduct. Disciplinary measures shall be appropriate to the infraction and in accordance with the AYSF Disciplinary Code. Nevertheless, Clubs shall have the authority to reasonably discipline their Players and are encouraged to do so. AYSF, when present, or Club Representatives shall have the authority to and are encouraged to take immediate action to stop abusive behavior in the





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moment of its occurrence or prevent its reasonably anticipated occurrence with the goal of protecting the victim.

## 1.4.4 Risk Mitigation Controls

The majority of Sexual Child Abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between Minors and Adults, the risk of Sexual Child Abuse is reduced. Although appropriate physical contact and one-on-one interaction between Minor Players and Coaches/ATCs, etc. may be conducive to improving physical skills, AYSF believes prudent limitations on one-on-one interactions can reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct without negatively impacting player development or unnecessarily limiting one-on-one time with trusted Adults.

### 1. Establishing Boundaries: Avoiding Gifts

Individuals who “groom” children will often provide special gifts or privileges, as one strategy to gain the child’s trust and fill a need in his/her/their life, in advance of sexually abusing the child. Accordingly, AYSF discourages all Adult Members from giving gifts or granting special privileges to Players and prohibits providing any such gift or privilege when not available to the entire Team.

### 2. Appropriate Physical Contact

AYSF adheres to the following principles and guidelines regarding physical contact with Players:

- Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact with Players—for safety, consolation, and celebration—or any other reason is prohibited unless done in a safe and appropriate manner as follows:

- The physical contact takes place in a location that is open and accessible to all MLS NEXT Participants, volunteers, and parents and has multiple Adults present (“Public”).
- There is no potential for, or actual, sexual contact during the physical contact.
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the Player, not to meet an emotional or other need of an Adult.

- Safety

The safety of our Players is paramount, and in many instances, we make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples of appropriate safe physical contact include:

- Spotting a Player so that they will not be injured by a falling piece of equipment.
- Positioning a Player’s body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination.
- Making Players aware that they might be in harm’s way because of other Players practicing around them or because of equipment in use.

- Celebration

Sports are physical by definition and we recognize Players and their Team often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. We encourage these Public expressions of celebration in a safe and appropriate manner:



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- Greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief “side hugs.”
- Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, “jump-arounds,” and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.
- Consolation

It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed Player (e.g., a Player who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes Publicly:

- Embracing a crying Player, but only in a Public place or circumstance.
- Putting an arm around a Player while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”).
- Lifting a fallen Player off the playing surface and “dusting them off” to encourage them to continue competition.
- Supervision Generally

No Minor should be left alone at a training session or at any other time until they are picked up by their parent, older sibling or other designated Adult. A Parent or legal guardian must provide advance written notice of such designation either through a pick-up list or one time designation. It is recommended that the last Adult in addition to the Coach wait at the site until the last Minor is picked up.

### 3. One-on-One Interactions/Individual Meetings

An individual meeting may be necessary to address a Player’s concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, Covered Persons are to observe the following guidelines when dealing with a Minor Player:

- Interactions Should Be Observable and Interruptible
  - One-on-one interactions between Minors and an Adult (who is not the Minor’s parent/legal guardian) are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another Adult.
  - Isolated, one-on-one interactions between Minors and an Adult (who is not the Minor’s parent/legal guardian) are prohibited, except with respect to medical emergencies. For all situations in which this arises, the Adult must provide a post interaction verification to the Club’s Safety Lead explaining the situation (providing details of the medical emergency) and certifying the necessity of the interaction based on the medical emergency.
- Interactions are Monitored
  - When one-on-one interactions between Covered Persons and Minors occur at an AYSF or Club venue for Team training and games, including all parking structures and grounds on or immediately surrounding the Facility, other Covered Persons must monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes: (i) knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, (ii) knowing the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and (iii) dropping in on the interaction unannounced.
- Meetings



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- Meetings between Covered Persons and Minors at AYSF or Club Facilities may only occur if another Adult is present. 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, 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.
- If a mental health care professional meets with Minors at AYSF or Club Facilities, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy—provided that (i) the door remains unlocked, (ii) another Adult is present at the Facility, (iii) the other Adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, and (iv) written consent of the parent/legal guardian of the Minor is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to the Club.
- At no time during these one-on-one meetings should a Minor be denied access to their cell phone or other personal device.
- Individual Training Sessions
  - An individual training session with a Player (meaning not a Team training, but training involving one Player and one Coach) may be necessary in order to further player development. Under these circumstances, the individual training session should be open and observable by others. Additionally, parent/legal guardian permission is required in advance of the individual training session(s), and parents/legal guardians are welcome to attend the individual training and must be allowed to observe individual training sessions. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months.
- Out-of-Program Contacts
  - Covered Persons are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with Minor Players, to whom they are not related, in private settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out of program contact. Such arrangements are nonetheless strongly discouraged.

## 4. Massage and other Athletic Training Interactions

Any massage or other athletic training therapy or modality must be provided by a non-Coach ATC or other certified professional. Such activities should never be done with only the Minor and Adult in the room. Where possible, without compromising a Player's privacy, such activities should be performed in open/Public areas (e.g., but not limited to, in a training room but not behind a screen) and in any event should be in an interruptible location.

Even if a Coach is a licensed professional provider, the Coach shall not perform a massage or athletic training therapy or modality on a Player under any circumstances.

Icing and taping, though not limited to certified professionals, should, where possible, without compromising a Player's privacy, be performed in open/Public areas (e.g., on the bench; in locker room with others present).

**Icing and taping near the intimate areas of the body (i.e., "bathing suit areas") is not permitted by anyone other than a licensed medical professional and in any event **cannot** be done with only the Minor**



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Player and professional alone in a room. Any and all contact with or near intimate areas of the body must be documented and the medical appropriateness verified by another medical professional (if not before it is performed then shortly thereafter).

## 5. Electronic Communication/Social Media

Electronic communications are an ever-changing aspect of the way we communicate today. The specific rules below may reference certain forms of electronic communication, and the specific application of principles may change with regard to a given app, platform, or method of communication, but regardless of the means, the following principles apply across all manner of electronic communication and should be used to guide Adult behavior when communicating with Minor Players:

- Content Must be Professional in Nature
  - All electronic communications between a Coach/Team personnel and a Minor Player must be professional in nature (i.e., soccer-related) and for the purpose of communicating information about Team activities or Team-oriented communication (i.e., motivation, instruction).
  - Communication or conversation regarding illegal or age-inappropriate topics (drugs, alcohol use, sexually explicit language or imagery, or discussion of Adult personal life, social activities, relationship, or family issues) is not permitted.
  - All communications must comply with the Prohibited Conduct section of this Policy.
- Communication Must Be Open and Transparent
  - The content of any electronic communication must generally be group-based and should always be readily available to share with the Player's family, the Club, and AYSF.
  - Administrators, Coaches, staff, and/or volunteers may not use SnapChat (or any similar app or app functionality that automatically deletes the content of a communication) to communicate with Minor Players.
  - If a Covered Person needs to communicate directly with a Minor via electronic communications, another Covered Person or the Minor's parent/legal guardian must be copied.
  - If a Minor communicates to the Covered Person privately first, the Covered Person should respond to the Minor, copying another Covered Person or the Minor's parent / legal guardian.
  - A Covered Person communicating electronically to the entire Team should copy another Covered Person.
  - Consider using group-focused platforms under Club administrative control (e.g., but not limited to, TeamSnap, Slack, etc.).
- Keep Imagery Public
  - In posting imagery, Adults are expected to be sensitive to the status of Minors. This means any imagery posted to a Team website or social media should be soccer-related, not private (e.g., taken in Public view), and age appropriate.



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- Under no circumstances should imagery depict any conduct that would violate any aspect of this Policy.
- Requests of parents/legal guardians of Minors to remove imagery in which their child is recognizable and individually featured will be honored to the extent practicable.
- Prohibited Electronic Communications—Direct Messaging
  - Covered Persons are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications (meaning directly message one individual versus a group message) with Minors.
  - Covered Persons are not permitted to “private message,” “instant message,” “direct message,” or send photos to a Minor privately, regardless of what platform is used.
  - Covered Persons are not permitted to maintain social media connections with Minors; such Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from Minors; and existing social media connections with Minors shall be discontinued (and, where necessary, the reason for discontinuing should be explained to the Minor). Instead, Players and parents can “friend” the official organization’s Team page and Coaches can communicate with Players through the site or through similar group-focused methods of communication.
  - Players and Coaches employed by Clubs may use email to communicate provided that the Coach is using only his/her/their official Club email account and further provided that all email content between Coach and Player otherwise complies with this Policy. When communicating with a Minor through email, another Covered Person or the Minor’s parent/legal guardian must be copied.
- Requests to Discontinue

Parents/legal guardians may request in writing that their Minor child not be contacted through electronic communication by the organization or by Covered Persons. AYSF will abide by any such request, absent emergency circumstances.

- Social Media (including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, texting, WhatsApp, GroupMe, TikTok, and similar apps)
  - Keep personal pages personal. Administrators, Coaches, staff, and/or volunteers may not invite or allow Minors to join a personal social media page unless they are directly related to that Player and have the permission of the Player’s parent/legal guardian. Players should be reminded that initiating a “friend” request to administrators/Coaches/staff/volunteers is not permitted.
  - Administrators, Coaches, staff and/or volunteers are encouraged to set their social media pages to private.
  - Similarly, those who work with Minors are reminded that they set an example for the Minors. If a page is not private, PDev expects administrators, Coaches, staff, and/or volunteers who work with Minors to refrain from posting inappropriate, off-color content, or content that would violate the Prohibited Conduct section of this Policy or otherwise commenting on posts that would.



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- Choose Apps that support group-based communication. Apps such as Teamwork and Slack often provide a helpful way to communicate, but again, individual messages must be avoided.

## 6. Locker Rooms/Changing Areas

Players (especially Minors) are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms and changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because Players are less supervised than at many other times. The risk of Player-to-Player problems, such as Sexual Child Abuse and Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing, is present when Coaches or staff members are not monitoring Players, which again is especially true in locker rooms. Adherence to a locker room and changing areas policy enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct. The following requirements are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

- Use of Cell Phones and Other Mobile Recording Devices Prohibited
  - Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras, increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. As a result, **USE OF A DEVICE'S RECORDING CAPABILITIES IN THE LOCKER ROOMS, REST ROOMS, CHANGING AREAS OR SIMILAR SPACES IS PROHIBITED.**
- Undress
  - Under no circumstances shall an Adult at an AYSF or Club Facility be undressed (disrobed or partial or full nudity where private body parts are exposed) in front of Minors.
- Isolated One-On-One Interactions/Monitoring
  - At no time are unrelated Adults permitted to be alone with a Minor in a locker room, rest room, or changing area when at an AYSF or Club Facility.
- Non-Exclusive Facility
  - If your Club uses a Facility not under its jurisdiction (e.g., for training or competition or similar events) and the Facility is used by multiple constituents, Covered Persons are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth here.

## 7. Local Travel

Local travel consists of travel to training, practice, and competition that does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

- It is the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians to ensure that the person transporting the Minor Player maintains the proper safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to: a valid driver's license, automobile liability insurance, a vehicle in safe working order, and compliance with applicable state laws.
- Covered Persons who are not also acting as a parent/legal guardian shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated Minor, absent a medical emergency. Covered Persons not also acting as a parent/legal guardian may only drive with Minors in groups of two or more and with another Adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minor's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.



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- In any case where a staff member and/or volunteer is involved in a Minor's local travel, a parental release is required in advance.

## 8. Team Travel/Overnight Stays

Team travel is travel that requires overnight stays away from home and occurs when any Club or Team sponsors, coordinates, or arranges for travel so that Teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Because of the greater distances, Coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the Players. Detailed travel plans should be provided to parents/legal guardians before any overnight travel. Parental consent must be obtained in advance of each Team travel.

- Covered Persons Requirements

Covered Persons who travel with a Team (to include parents/volunteers) must successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements in compliance with AYSF's screening policies and complete the Core SafeSport Training.

- Travel to Competition

When possible, all travel duties should be assigned to a common carrier, but when that is not possible, specific Club-developed protocols should be followed.

When only one Covered Person and one Minor travel to a competition, the Minor must provide evidence of his/her/their parent's/legal guardian's written permission in advance of each competition before traveling alone with the Covered Person to a competition.

- Hotel Rooms

Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a Minor (unless the Covered Persons/individual is the parent/legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the Minor Player). Clubs shall make every reasonable effort to avoid assigning Players to the same room who: (i) are not related and are more than two years apart in age (unless authorized in writing by the younger Player's parent/legal guardian); or (ii) have a known history of misconduct either with or against one another. In addition, no Adult should enter the hotel room or other sleeping arrangement of a Minor unless necessary for the safety of the Minor (e.g., in the event of emergency). Team meetings should never be conducted in a hotel room used for sleeping.

Parents/legal guardians who wish to stay in the Team hotel are permitted and encouraged to do so.

**Regardless of gender or age, a Coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a Player (unless the Coach is the parent/legal guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular Player).**

- Meetings/Supervision

Meetings may not be conducted in a hotel room used for sleeping. In the event that it is not possible, due to resources or availability, to reserve separate space to conduct meetings or allow for social interactions, then meetings may be conducted in rooms used for sleeping with adherence to strict protocols regarding time of day, number of individuals, and documentation of attendees, so long as the door to the room remains ajar, and/or with additional Adults present, with at least one of those Adults being the same gender as the Player(s), when no other options





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are available. At no time and under no circumstances may these meetings/interactions be between one Adult and one unrelated Minor.

- **Mixed-Gender and Mixed-Age Travel**

Players may only share a room with other Players of the same age group (e.g., Minors with Minors, Adults with Adults) and gender-identity (if requested). Every effort will be made to room together any younger Players that are “playing up”—i.e., Players participating in divisions that are typically designed for Players in greater age ranges (unless authorized in writing by the younger Player’s parent/legal guardian). Players will also be further grouped by age (and gender, if applicable) for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone. Clubs must make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same gender.

- **Coach and Staff Responsibilities**

During Team travel, Coaches and staff members will help Players, fellow Coaches, and fellow staff members adhere to this Policy. When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, Coaches and staff will monitor the safety and activities of Players, fellow Coaches and fellow staff during Team travel.

Coaches and staff will:

- Prepare Players for Team travel and make Players aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/legal guardians of Players who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to Team travel, or who are under the age of 14, to familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of Team travel;
- Conform, and monitor for others’ adherence, to all AYSF Rules and Policies during Team travel;
- Encourage Minors to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/legal guardians;
- Ensure Players are not alone in a hotel room with any Adult apart from a family member; this includes Coaches, staff, chaperones, or other Adults that are not AYSF Members;
- Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of Minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their Coaching/staff duties (this applies 24/7 throughout a camp or travel trip); and
- Immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations to AYSF, the Center, and the appropriate authorities.

## 1.4.5 AYSF Liability

AYSF is responsible for procuring and maintaining adequate insurance to meet standards for participating in sanctioned leagues in accordance with the league’s Membership Agreement.

AYSF assumes all risks, responsibilities, and liabilities for any and all costs, expenses, fines, losses, property damage, claims, injury, or death arising out of or in connection with its use, or Members’ use, of any Facility or venue for trainings or events, competitions, or other AYSF activities, regardless of whether any cost, expense, fine, loss, property damage, claim, injury, or death occurs as a result of any act or



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failure to act by the AYSF or any of their respective officers, employees, representatives, agents, or anyone acting under their direction or otherwise.

## 1.4.6 Player Assumption of Risk

As set forth in Participant Agreements and Waivers that all Players must sign before participation in AYSF, Players shall assume all risks, responsibilities, and liabilities for loss, damage, injury, or death to themselves while engaged as a Player for a Club or as a Player on a representative team of AYSF, subject to applicable state laws and regulations.

## 1.4.7 Liability Waiver & Indemnification Form

All AYSF Participants will be required to sign the Participant Agreements and Waivers prior to their participation in the AYSF event or season.

## 1.4.8 Screening Requirements

As noted by the Center, “[s]ound, practical and reasonable screening practices reduce the chances that an athlete will come in contact with potentially dangerous individuals.” Accordingly, AYSF requires background screening on all Covered Persons, AYSF Representatives, or AYSF Members.

### 1. Written Application

Any AYSF Member authorized to have Regular Contact with Minors within, or outside, the scope of Covered Programs as an employee, contractor, vendor, or volunteer should submit a written application for participation.

The written application shall at least:

- Ask for personal information, including the applicant’s name, address, phone number, and driver’s license number.
- Ask about previous work and volunteer experiences, particularly with regard to any involvement in youth programs.
- Ask questions intended to elicit information concerning high-risk behaviors intended to encourage a potential sexual predator to “self-select out.” Such questions may include, but are not limited to, whether the applicant ever consumed alcohol or drugs while working with children or mistreated or abused a child.
- Provide a written release for contacting personal references and performing a criminal background check, consistent with the procedures described below, including an indemnification clause.
- All Covered Persons have an immediate, mandatory self-disclosure obligation to report if they, at any point, have been disqualified or declared by another sport organization or league to be temporarily or permanently ineligible to participate.

### 2. Personal Interview



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AYSF Board of Directors can conduct personal interviews of potential Club Representatives—to be authorized by the Club to have Regular Contact with Minors within, or outside, the scope of Covered Programs as an employee, contractor, vendor, or volunteer. The personal interview is intended to not only elicit whether applicants are a “good fit” for the organization, but also screen for certain risk factors relating to Sexual Abuse. The goal here is to ask questions intended to elicit information concerning high-risk behaviors, which are intended to encourage a potential sexual predator to “self-select out.”

### 3. Reference Checks

Any potential Club Representative—to be authorized by the Club to have Regular Contact with Minors within, or outside, the scope of Covered Programs as an employee, contractor, vendor, or volunteer—shall be required by AYSF to submit names and contact information for three non-familial references who can speak to their character, history, and suitability for having Regular Contact with Minors.

### 4. Criminal Background Checks

Any person who is authorized by AYSF (either explicitly or implicitly) to have contact with Minors, but is not otherwise an AYSF Representative (who registers with MLS NEXT), shall be required by the Club to undergo a background screening. These people include, but are not limited to, contractors and vendors with access to Minors (e.g., security, other medical personnel not employed directly by AYSF), MLS NEXT Club scouts who wish to have access to Club’s Minor Players, chaperones, volunteers, and individuals advising with respect to various aspects of Team functions who have access to Minor Players.

All Covered Persons have a mandatory self-disclosure obligation, which means that if at any point during their association with AYSF, a Covered Person has been disqualified or declared by another sport organization or league to be temporarily or permanently ineligible, the Covered Person is required to self-disclose this information immediately. Failure to disclose is a basis for discipline/disqualification.

Unless otherwise prohibited by state law, any of the following criteria appearing on a background check may result in disqualification and removal from AYSF:

- Any felony (any crime punishable by confinement of greater than one year);
- Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person;
- Any lesser crime in which sexual misconduct is an element, including “victimless” crimes of a sexual nature (including pornography);
- Any lesser crime involving controlled substances or alcohol;
- Any lesser crime involving breaking and entering, loitering, trespassing, false impersonation, or theft;
- Any lesser crime involving neglect or cruelty to animals;
- Any lesser crime involving neglect or abuse of a child;
- Any sex offender registration; or
- Any violation noted in the Center’s Centralized Disciplinary Database.

### 5. Post-screening Intake Meeting



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Once AYSF authorizes any Club Representatives or other Covered Persons to have Regular Contact with Minors in accordance with the screening measures outlined above—and before such person undertakes their duties—AYSF leadership (such as the AYSF Board of Directors, Club Director, Club Administrator, and/or Coaches) should hold a preliminary intake meeting with the newly authorized Club Representative. Club leadership should communicate the job expectations, provide the all Rules and Policies, describe the employment evaluation process, the identification of any deficiencies that must be addressed (and a timeline for doing so), and be able to answer any questions the newly authorized Club Representative may have.

## 1.4.9 Dealing with the Media

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

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

## 1.4.9 Concussion Protocol

The recognition and management of concussion in the sport of soccer is an important component of this Policy. Please note that if more stringent minimum standards are issued in federal, state, provincial, or local laws, those more stringent standards are applicable.

The AYSF Concussion Protocol (as outlined herein) sets forth AYSF's position with regard to the education, recognition, evaluation, diagnosis and management of concussions. The U.S Soccer Foundation's "Recognize to Recover" program is incorporated into the AYSF's concussion protocol and can be viewed here: <http://www.recognizetorecover.org/head-and-brain#head-brain-conditions>.

Key observations regarding concussions include:

- Concussions are brain injuries.
- Concussions produce complex physiological processes that occur when traumatic biomechanical forces are applied to the brain.
- Concussions may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck, or elsewhere on the body, which causes an "impulsive" force to be transmitted to the head. Direct head-to-head contact, typically occurring when two athletes attempt to head the same ball, is the most common injury mechanism, although contact with any object or person on or around the field can result in injury.
- Loss of consciousness MAY occur but is NOT necessary for diagnosis of concussion.



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- Concussion results in a diverse set of clinical signs and symptoms.
- The symptoms of concussion may or may not appear immediately; in some cases, symptoms may evolve over a number of minutes to hours.
- Concussions typically are not visible on traditional neuroimaging (CT scans, MRI). Neuropsychological or “neurocognitive” tests may be used to detect abnormalities in thinking abilities caused by concussion. However, these tests are only one part of the return to play decision process and ideally should be interpreted in consultation with a neuropsychologist.
- Education plays a critical role in concussion identification and management, and therefore educational training is required for AYSF Players, technical staff, and all medical contractors or staff.

## 1. Recognition: Signs and Symptoms of Concussion

If the Player exhibits any of the six signs enumerated below, or a concussion is suspected for other reasons, the Player shall be first evaluated on the field. If after the on-field assessment, the Player has any concussion-related signs and symptoms, or a diagnosis of concussion cannot be ruled out, the Player shall then undergo an off-field evaluation. In such case, Player shall be removed from the game and precluded from playing in training or any other games (whether or not a Covered Program) until cleared to return to play pursuant to this AYSF policy. If the Player is diagnosed with a concussion by the Qualified Medical Professional (QMP) or the suspicion of concussion persists after the evaluation, under no circumstances shall that Player return to play in the same day.

- Lying Motionless/Loss of Consciousness
- Unsteady Gait/Motor Incoordination
- Impact Seizure
- Involuntary Limb Stiffness/Tonic Posturing
- No Protective Action/Floppy Fall
- Blank/Vacant Look
- Cognitive Signs/Symptoms:
- Physical (headache, dizziness, nausea)
- Emotional (depressed mood, sadness, anxiety, irritable)

## 2. Actions: What to do if potential concussion has occurred

Players, teammates, Coaches, and Game Officials, therefore, have an obligation to report a suspicion of concussion to medical personnel who will then evaluate the Player pursuant to this protocol. They should remove the athlete from participation (i.e., practice, conditioning, etc.) and not allow the Player to return until a QMP has performed an evaluation and has cleared the athlete to return, even if the signs or symptoms resolve. The order of actions to take from suspecting a concussion to a Players return to play are:

- Remove from play immediately – All Players suspected of having a concussion should be removed from play immediately.
- Evaluation and Diagnosis - All Players suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by a QMP
- Neuropsychological Testing- At a minimum, all Players in the MLS NEXT youth development league shall have baseline testing using ImPACT at the start of the season, and that test must be deemed valid. If the test is categorized as Invalid by the ImPACT program, the test must be repeated. If a second test is categorized as invalid, a neuropsychologist should be



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consulted. The baseline test scores are then compared to the scores of an ImPACT test conducted after a concussion.

- **Medial Management** – Treatment of concussions should be provided by QMP and followed by the Player. As the Player’s symptoms improve, day-to-day activities may be gradually increased under the guidance of a QMP as long as the introduction of activities (e.g., walking, reading, computer use, school work) does not elicit new concussion-related symptoms or cause significant exacerbation of existing concussion-related symptoms. Prior to return to contact play, the Player must be evaluated by the above-described healthcare professional who must provide written clearance for return to play, including exercise and training. No technical staff shall allow the Player to engage in full contact activity until a written clearance to do so by the healthcare professional has been received.
- **Return to Play** - Return to full contact play shall only occur once the Player is free of concussion-related symptoms and such return is permitted in writing by the healthcare professional who is specifically trained in concussion evaluation, management and return to play clearance, and licensed or certified by state or provincial law to do so.

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## 5.5 Violations

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Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The Club reserves the right to notify the appropriate law enforcement authorities of any unlawful activity and to cooperate in any investigation of such activity. The Club does not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within a Member’s course and scope of employment or volunteering, or the direct consequence of the discharge of the Member’s duties. Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, the Club reserves the right not to defend or pay any damages awarded against Members or partners that result from violation of this policy.

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## 5.6 Glossary

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**The “Center”** – The U.S. Center for SafeSport was established pursuant to the SafeSport Act to assist in the regulation and enforcement of the SafeSport Act.

**MLS NEXT** -- is organized, managed, and administered by Player Development, L.L.C. (“PDev”), a subsidiary of Major League Soccer, L.L.C. (“MLS”). MLS NEXT includes league and postseason competition, as well as other development-focused initiatives.

**Club Representative** –any Club personnel or an individual who the Club knows represents themselves as such, including but not limited to, any Club employees, Coach, trainers, Team administrators, other support or volunteer staff that assist the Club or Game Official, parent, spectator, volunteer, independent contractor (including, but not limited to, security or medical personnel that are not otherwise directly employed by a Club), or other individual that attends or contributes to an AYSF Event.

**Participant, Member** – Any athlete or non-athlete participant who participates in any tryouts, practices, drills, instructional sessions, competitions, camps, clinics, tournaments, or non-sport outings including travel, lodging, and health or medical treatment sponsored by the organization.

**Child, Children, Minor, and Youth** – Anyone under the age of 18. These terms are used interchangeably throughout this program.



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

**Misconduct** – Behavior that results in harm, the potential for harm, or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sports: sexual (including grooming behavior), physical, emotional, bullying, harassment, and hazing.

## 5.7 References

Public Law 115-126, Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017 (“SafeSport Act”)

Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act

U.S. Soccer’s Bylaw 212 and Policy 212-3

MLS NEXT’s Safety and Wellbeing Policy

U.S. Soccer’s “Recognize to Recover”: <http://www.recognizetorecover.org/head-and-brain#head-brain-conditions>

## 5.8 Related Documents

Appendix A – AYSF Risk Assessment – Safety and Wellbeing

## 5.9 Approval and Ownership

Owners	Title	Date	Signature
Bruno Kalonji		1 May 2022	





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## 5.10 Revision History

Version	Description	Revision Date	Review Date	Reviewer/Approver Name
2022.1	Initial Policy			Ryan Caldwell
2022.2	Added concussion protocol	7/14/2022		



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## Appendix A – Risk Assessment: Safety and Wellbeing

Index	Threat	Likelihood	Consequence	Initial Risk Rating	Mitigating Controls	Residual Risk Rating
<b>T001</b>	Lack of leadership, oversight, commitment, frequent messaging	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> </ul>	Low
<b>T002</b>	Inappropriate behavior is not reported and/or addressed	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Clear reporting procedures</li> <li>• No retaliation for reporting</li> </ul>	Low
<b>T003</b>	Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Refresher training</li> <li>• Board of Directors oversight</li> </ul>	Low
<b>T004</b>	Recruitment of an inappropriate person	Unlikely	Major	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Follow screening requirements</li> </ul>	Low
<b>T005</b>	Inappropriate engagement with children online	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> </ul>	Low
<b>T006</b>	Unknown people and environments (team travel, vendors, contractors, hotels)	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Follow screening requirements</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Adequate supervision</li> </ul>	Low
<b>T007</b>	Improper handling of suspected concussion incident	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented Policy</li> <li>• Follow baseline testing</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Adequate supervision</li> </ul>	Low