

# **Athlete Safety Policy for the Fort Worth Rowing Club – 2021**

## **PREFACE**

**The purpose of this document is to create a plan to recognize, reduce and respond to the following situations: bullying, hazing, harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct and sexual misconduct of club members, most notably children. As of 2021, the Fort Worth Rowing Club, FWRC, does not support an active junior program. However, the creation of a viable junior program is a goal of the club as stated in our Bylaws. Upon creation of a junior program or training camp for minors, this Athlete Safety Policy will be reviewed to ensure applicability to club operations and implementation. While the primary focus is to safeguard children, these policies extend to all age groups including masters and college level.**

## **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Our policies and procedures require members/volunteers to report abuse, misconduct and violations of the Fort Worth Rowing Club, FWRC, Athlete Safety Policy. To do so members acting as coaches, boatmen and/or volunteers should have a basic understanding of the categories of abuse and misconduct as noted in this document.

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse

Accordingly, members and/or volunteers will be required to complete an awareness training concerning misconduct in sport before performing services for FWRC that will include an assessment. This training will be required at two (2) year intervals.

## **SCREENING**

A screening process that will include a background check must clear club members and volunteers active in the execution of the program.

If the program, due to club growth, requires the hiring of coaches and support staff, applicants will complete an application form consisting of personal, identifying information and a general release with applicant's signature.

References of applicants will be contacted (either by phone or in writing) and asked specific questions regarding the applicant's professional experiences, demeanor and appropriateness for involvement with minor athletes and participants.

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Each applicant will also provide a signed release, consistent with federal, state and local laws regulating employment practices, that allows references to speak freely about the applicant's qualifications without fear of reprisal and authorizing FWRC to obtain information concerning an applicant's past employment, volunteer experience and information provided by the applicant during the screening process.

All applicants will be asked to undergo a criminal background check that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act **before** providing services for FWRC. The Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release form must be submitted and the applicant cleared before he or she may perform services for FWRC.

Information that could disqualify an applicant includes, but is not limited to, arrests, pleas of no contest and criminal convictions—especially if the underlying criminal behavior involved sex or violence.

Each applicant has the duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest plea or conviction history in an application or any other information provided by an applicant during the screening process is grounds for employment, volunteer and/or membership revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered.

***Any applicant who has been banned by another sport organization, as temporarily or permanently ineligible, must self-disclose this information. A failure to disclose is a basis for disqualification for potential applicants.***

Criminal background checks will be refreshed every 2 years or as otherwise required by law, for members and/or volunteers who are 18 years of age or older and perform services for FWRC.

Even if an applicant passes a criminal background check, other factors may disqualify an applicant. An individual may be disqualified and prohibited from providing services for FWRC if the individual has:

- Been held liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor
- Been subject to any court order involving any sexual or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order or protection
- A history with another organization (employment, volunteer, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors
- Resigned, been terminated or been asked to resign from a position - paid or unpaid - due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors
- A history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to participants in FWRC; or
- Not met the job requirements

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## **BOUNDARIES**

In the event that any member or volunteer of the FWRC observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse, or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each member and volunteer to immediately report his or her observations to a Board Member of FWRC.

FWRC is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes' physical, emotional and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

FWRC recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in rowing as sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

Members, volunteers, athletes and all participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse.

## **PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

### **Child Sexual Abuse**

(1) Any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

(2) Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under federal or state law.

### **Emotional Misconduct**

(1) A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behaviors include:

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1. verbal acts - verbal behaviors that (a) attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting) or (b) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
2. physical acts - physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or (b) punching walls, windows or other objects.
3. acts that deny attention or support - (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

(2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).

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

### **Physical Misconduct**

(1) Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threaten to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants; or

(2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).

### **Exceptions**

Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance. For example, hitting, punching, and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in swimming.

### **Examples**

Examples of physical misconduct prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:
  - (a) punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete;
  - (b) intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
  - (c) providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law);

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- (d) providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
- (e) encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play pre-maturely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;
- (f) prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of athlete.

### **(2) Non-contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);
- (b) forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface);
- (c) withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

(1) Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner;

(2) Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative; or

(3) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape)

### **Bullying**

(1) An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership

(2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law

### **Exceptions**

Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion. For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and to push through a difficult training regimen.

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## **Harassment**

(1) A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability; or

(2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law

## **Hazing**

(1) Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members; or

(2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law

## ***Exception***

Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

## **REPORTING**

Although these policies are designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Members, volunteers and participants of FWRC shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in FWRC's Reporting Policy.

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## **MANAGING TRAINING AND COMPETITION**

### **SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS**

During training and competition, FWRC strives to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions to create a safe training environment and to protect athletes and participants.

#### **Appropriate ONE-ON-ONE Interactions**

An individual training session(s) with an athlete or participant may also be desired or necessary. Under these circumstances, written permission of a minor athlete's parents or guardians is required in advance of the individual training session(s), and FWRC encourages parents and guardians to attend the training session.

#### **Prohibited ONE-ON-ONE Interactions**

Minor athletes and participants will not be left unattended or unsupervised during FWRC activities and FWRC coaches, members and/or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual athlete or participant in any room or building.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ATHLETES**

Appropriate physical contact between athletes and coaches, staff members, contractors or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for misconduct in sport.

#### **Appropriate Physical Contact**

FWRC adheres to the following principles and guidelines in regards to physical contact with our athletes:

#### **Common Criteria**

Physical contact with athletes – for safety, consolation and celebration – has multiple criteria in common which make them both safe and appropriate. These include:

- the physical contact takes place in public
- there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact

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- the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult

### **Safety**

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

- spotting an athlete so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
- positioning an athlete'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 athletes aware that they might be in harm's way because of other athletes practicing around them or because of equipment in use
- releasing muscle cramps

### **Celebration**

Sports are physical by definition and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs
- 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 athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes publicly:

- embracing a crying athlete
- putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down ("side hugs")
- lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and "dusting them off" to encourage them to continue competition

### **Prohibited Physical Contact**

Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:



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- asking or having an athlete sit in the lap of a coach, administrator, staff member or volunteer
- lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact
- slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete
- “cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay
- playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., tickling or “horseplay” wrestling)
- continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not
- any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

### **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy must be reported to the FWRC Board. Some forms of physical contact may constitute child physical or sexual abuse that **must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

As part of FWRC’s emphasis on athlete safety, all electronic communications between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

**As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete’s family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the athlete’s parents or guardians.**

### **FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES**

Coaches may not have athletes of FWRC’s Team or umbrella teams to the parent organization join a personal social media page. Athletes and parents can friend the official FWRC or umbrella page and coaches can communicate to athletes through the site. All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

### **TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA**

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Coaches and athletes may “follow” each other. Coaches cannot “re-tweet” athlete message posts. All posts between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### **EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. All email content between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Where the coach is a staff member and/or volunteer, email from a coach to any athlete should come from the club website email center.

### **TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes. All texts between coach and athlete must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### **ELECTRONIC IMAGERY**

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be submitted to local, state or national publications, used in club videos, posted on club or club associated websites, or offered to the club families seasonally on disc or other electronic form. It is the default policy of FWRC to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the club. Imagery must not be contrary to any rules as outlined in FWRC’s Safety Handbook.

### **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS OR IMAGERY**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by coaches; including the use of photography or videography.

### **MISCONDUCT**

Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our Safety Handbook.

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## **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of FWRC's Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy should be reported to a FWRC Board member for evaluation. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under FWRC's Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

## **PHYSICAL FACILITIES OF THE CLUB**

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

## **FACILITIES**

The following is a description of our practice and competition facilities to allow athletes and their families to plan their use:

We practice at: FWRC Boathouse at Beach Street and the Trinity River  
This location has: A single changing area with an exterior restroom/port-a-potty.  
Our home competitions will be held at: FWRC boathouse.

When we travel for competition the facilities may differ from location to location. We will work with the host team to provide as much information about the locker room and changing areas as early as possible, and post that information as soon as it's available.

## **USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES**

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, **THERE WILL BE NO USE OF A DEVICE'S RECORDING CAPABILITIES IN THE LOCKER ROOMS OR CHANGING AREAS.**

## **TRAVEL**

Travel will be a standard aspect of our competitive season and FWRC has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

### **Local Travel**

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Local travel occurs when FWRC does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. For local travel, athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances it is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) to ensure the person transporting the athlete maintains all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, FWRC members, coaches and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and should only drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the athlete's parent or guardian in advance of travel. In any case where a staff member and/or volunteer is involved in the athlete's local travel, a parental release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that staff and/or volunteers are not alone with an athlete or participant, by, e.g., picking the athletes up in groups.

Coaches, staff members and volunteers who are also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). We encourage guardians to pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/guardians of any minor athlete who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

## **INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL**

The nature of our sport and competition structure means that individual athletes may sometimes need to travel overnight without other athletes. Under these circumstances, we encourage minimizing one-on-one time between a coach and athlete by:

1. Traveling with an additional coach or chaperone
2. Inviting parents/guardians to travel with their athlete (for athletes under age 18)

When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, *the athlete must have his or her parents' or legal guardian's written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.*

## **TRAVEL NOTIFICATION**

## **MIXED-GENDER AND MIXED-AGE TRAVEL**

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FWRC is made up of male and female athletes across various ages. Athletes are responsible for their own lodging and any sharing between members. Should competitors be minors, we rely on parents to serve as chaperones.

Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of that particular athlete). Where an adult is registered both as a coach and an athlete member of FWRC, and is functioning primarily as a coach, he or she may share sleeping arrangements with another registered coach.

## **COACH AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

During team travel, coaches and members will help athletes, fellow coaches and members adhere to policy guidelines, including, without limitation, the Travel Policy, Locker Rooms and Changing Areas Policy and Reporting Policy.

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches will monitor the activities of athletes, fellow coaches and staff during team travel.

Coaches and staff will:

1. prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/guardians of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14
2. familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel
3. conform to, and monitor for others' adherence, the Athlete Protection Policy and all policies during team travel
4. encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/guardians
5. help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible)
6. assist with team travel logistical needs (as possible)
7. support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary
8. ensure athletes are complying with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age bracket requirements
9. make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff and chaperones
10. not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching duties
11. immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations

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12. notify parents before taking any disciplinary action against a minor athlete if the athlete is traveling without his or her parents.

### **CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Chaperones accompany team travel to ensure that the athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers adhere to the FWRC's policy guidelines. While these include the travel policy, it also includes all other relevant policies contained in FWRC's Safety Handbook.

If a chaperone has not undergone a criminal background check and FWRC's awareness training, the chaperone will not be permitted to have any one-on-one interactions with athletes or other youth participants. If a chaperone has undergone a criminal background check and awareness training, he or she may have appropriate one-on-one interactions as outlined in FWRC's Safety Handbook.

If a chaperone will be operating a private car for team travel, a copy of the chaperone's valid driver's license is required.

Chaperones will monitor the activities of all coaches, staff members, volunteers and athletes during team travel. Specifically, chaperones will:

1. familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before team travel
2. monitor for adherences to club policies during team travel
3. encourage minor athletes to participate in regular, at least daily, scheduled communications with their parents/guardians
4. help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible)
5. assist coaches, staff and other volunteers with team travel logistical needs (as possible)
6. monitor athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions set based on age and competition schedule as listed in travel itinerary
7. ensure athletes comply with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age bracket requirements
8. not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their chaperone duties
9. make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes coaches, staff and chaperones
10. immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations to a CLUB administrator or a member of CLUB's Participant Safety Committee.

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## **RESPONSES**

### **REPORTING POLICY**

Every FWRC member and/or volunteer must report:

- (1) violations of the Safety Handbook,
- (2) misconduct as defined in FWRC's Athlete Protection Policy, and
- (3) suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse.

### **Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse**

#### ***Child Physical or Sexual Abuse***

Members and/or volunteers at FWRC are required to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse by a colleague or co-worker, to a FWRC Board member or where applicable, **appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

#### ***Grooming***

Because sexual abusers “groom” children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that a member and/or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to a FWRC Board member.

#### ***Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse***

Approximately 1/3 of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on

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the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. **If you have any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, report it to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and a FWRC Board member.**

## **Reporting Misconduct and Policy Violations**

If any member and/or volunteer receives an allegation or observes misconduct or other inappropriate behavior, such as grooming, that is not reportable to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, it is the responsibility of each member and/or volunteer to report their observations to a FWRC Board member.

FWRC also encourages member parents, athletes and other sport participants to communicate violations of FWRC's Safety Handbook and/or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse to a FWRC Board member. Where applicable, parents may also report to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

### **To Whom to Report**

Members and volunteers may report violations to the safety policy to any FWRC Board member: A member and/or volunteer may, and in many cases must, report any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse to relevant law enforcement authorities.

### **How to Report**

FWRC will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report including an anonymous, in-person, verbal or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to FWRC for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s); (2) the type of misconduct alleged and the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

There is no formal report form for FWRC; however, the information noted above at a minimum is required. Reports will be held in the club files held by the president of the club.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMOUS REPORTING AND BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS**

### **Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, FWRC will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the



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accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

## **Anonymous Reporting**

FWRC recognizes it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend or family member to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. **Anonymous reports may be made.**

- by expressing concerns verbally to a FWRC Board member
- through email, texts or notes left for a FWRC Board member

**However, anonymous reporting may make it difficult for FWRC to investigate or properly address allegations.**

All suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **“Whistleblower” Protection**

Regardless of outcome, FWRC will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. FWRC will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of our Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action.

## **Bad-Faith Allegations**

A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of our Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

## **HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED**

For mandatory reporting laws, visit [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).

## ***Immediate Suspension or Termination***

When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against a member, youth and/or volunteer, FWRC may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated by an official agency. As necessary, FWRC may suspend a member and/or volunteer.

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A member or volunteer's failure to report to a FWRC Board member is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a member and/or dismissal of a volunteer.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Following FWRC's notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of a member, coach or other volunteer, FWRC may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. In FWRC's discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with counsel, FWRC may notify its members, volunteers, parents, and/or athletes of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other criminal behavior that (1) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (2) that FWRC is investigating internally. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES AND PROCEDURE**

While FWRC endeavors to provide support and guidance to participants on a day-to-day basis, it is also important for FWRC to have a formal procedure for disciplinary action to address alleged violations of its policies and other inappropriate behaviors, which is consistent with FWRC's Bylaws and Constitution.

### **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

FWRC recognizes that there are varying levels of misconduct. For example, physical and sexual misconduct are serious violations that may result in immediate dismissal. In contrast, a youth participant who tells a single sexually risqué joke constitutes less serious misconduct and depending on the circumstances, might be dealt with more appropriately through dialogue and a verbal warning. In all cases, FWRC's disciplinary procedures and actions will be proportionate, reasonable and applied fairly and equally.

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

On receipt of an allegation, FWRC will determine in its discretion the appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including (i) the age of the complainant or victim, (ii) the age of the accused and (iii) the nature, scope, and extent of the allegations.

FWRC will address allegations against a member and/or volunteer under its Bylaws and Constitution.

FWRC's disciplinary response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident and in extreme cases, misconduct will result in immediate summary

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dismissal, provided that the accused individual shall be advised of their right to a hearing. If the accused individual is a minor, FWRC will contact his or her parents or guardians.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Sanctions for violations of the Safety Handbook will be proportionate and reasonable under the circumstances. In addition to day-to-day guidance, the FWRC may take the following disciplinary actions, without limitation:

- Inform, in the case of a youth participant, the youth's parent or guardian
- Temporary suspension from competition
- Issue a written and/or final written warning
- Implement a limited access agreement (e.g., limiting an individual's access to certain buildings or to youth)
- Provide informed supervision, where at least one staff member is informed of the allegation and is instructed to vigilantly supervise the accused participant or stakeholder in his or her interactions with the program and/or organization
- Engage in restorative practices, i.e., creation of a respectful and safe dialogue when a misunderstanding or harm has occurred
- Suspend or terminate membership

### **ONGOING PARTICIPATION**

On receipt of a credible and specific allegation of child abuse or other serious misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual abuse as defined in our Athlete Protection Policy), FWRC may immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual to ensure participant safety.

### **COMPLAINANT PROTECTION**

Regardless of outcome, FWRC will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. FWRC will not encourage or tolerate attempts to retaliate, punish or in any way harm any individual(s) who report(s) a concern in good faith. Such actions will be grounds for disciplinary action.

### **BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS**

Any individual who alleges misconduct under the Safety Handbook that, upon review, is determined to be malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith will be a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook. Bad-faith allegations may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings.

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FWRC may suspend the accused individual where there is a reasonable belief that the individual has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct. Evidence which may be found sufficient to support a reasonable belief includes, at a minimum:

- the suspension or termination of employment or membership by one of organization's member clubs
- an Incident Report Form with specific and credible information
- other legal documentation or report supporting a reasonable belief that the individual has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct, including abuse of a child (e.g., a criminal indictment).

For the purposes of this Policy, a suspension from sport involvement shall mean that for the duration of the period of suspension, the accused individual may not participate in any capacity or in any role in the business, events, or activities of the FWRC.

## **INVESTIGATION**

As appropriate, and at its discretion, FWRC may institute a formal investigation and hearing procedure to address serious allegations of misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual misconduct). However, FWRC anticipates that an investigation and hearing will be undertaken to address only the most serious allegations and patterns of behavior that warrant significant sanctions. Accordingly, FWRC anticipates that this disciplinary procedure will be used rarely.

If an investigation is conducted, the complainant, victim and accused individual shall have the right to:

- a) Receive written notice of the report or complaint, including a statement of allegations
- b) Present relevant information to the investigator(s)
- c) Legal counsel, at his or her own expense

## **FWRC Reporting:**

Non-sexual misconduct: SafeSport Incident Reporting Form is available on the Safe Sport Page of the Clubs Website. The process will be confidential. [Link to Complaint Form](#)

All issues of sexual misconduct that occur within an organizational member must be reported directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport following the procedures found at <https://safesport.org>, as well as to state and local enforcement agencies as required.

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## **MONITORING YOUR STRATEGY**

By monitoring the interactions among members, volunteers, athletes, and other, FWRC works to prevent, recognize and respond to inappropriate and harmful behaviors as set forth in our Safety Handbook, while reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

## **MONITORING METHODS**

FWRC utilizes multiple monitoring methods to observe how individuals are interacting, including without limitation (1) formal supervision, including regular evaluations; and (2) informal supervision, including regular and random observation (e.g., roving and checking interactions throughout practices), and (3) maintaining frequent contact with members, volunteer and athletes who interact off-site.

## **RESPONDING TO INTERACTIONS**

While FWRC has a reporting policy, members and volunteers should be prepared to respond immediately to inappropriate or harmful behavior, potential risk situations and potential boundary violations.

Members and volunteers will redirect inappropriate behaviors to promote positive behaviors, confront inappropriate or harmful behaviors, and report behaviors if necessary.