



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB

"The Strength of the Wolf is in the Pack"



Athlete and Participant Safety Policy

Version 2.0 - August 2026



Houston Wolves Soccer Club Mission and Vision Statement

Empowering Excellence, On and Off the Pitch: Houston Wolves Soccer Club is dedicated to fostering a thriving and inclusive community of soccer enthusiasts. Our mission revolves around instilling values of hard work, dedication, perseverance, and sportsmanship, developing skilled soccer players and well-rounded individuals.

At the grassroots level, children learn and develop to their full potential through game-like experiences in an enjoyable environment that supports individual growth.

Committed to holistic development, we instill a passion for the beautiful game while nurturing character, teamwork, and resilience. We seek to develop outstanding players through community engagement initiatives and contribute positively to the Houston community. With a foundation built on the values of dedication, growth, inclusivity, and community, Houston Wolves Soccer Club aspires to be a beacon for soccer excellence in Houston and beyond.

PRIORITIZING SAFETY

The safety, welfare, and well-being of every participant are fundamental priorities of Houston Wolves Soccer Club. We are committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive, and respectful environment in which children and young people can participate in soccer, develop their abilities, and enjoy the game free from abuse, harassment, discrimination, bullying, neglect, and exploitation.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the club. All coaches, directors, administrators, volunteers, parents, and participants are expected to contribute to a culture that places player welfare at the center of every decision. Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to ensuring that appropriate safeguarding procedures, preventative measures, and reporting mechanisms are established, communicated, and consistently implemented throughout its programs and activities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy is to establish clear safeguarding standards, promote the welfare of all participants, prevent abuse and misconduct, and provide effective procedures for recognizing, reporting, and responding to safeguarding concerns.

This policy has been developed with reference to applicable safeguarding legislation and governing-body requirements, including:

1. The Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, as amended.
2. The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017.
3. U.S. Soccer Federation safeguarding and participant safety requirements.
4. US Club Soccer Participant Safety and Risk Management requirements.
5. The U.S. Center for SafeSport Code and applicable Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).
6. Applicable Texas child protection and mandatory reporting laws.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to maintaining appropriate standards for adult screening, safeguarding education, professional conduct, adult-minor interactions, participant supervision, reporting procedures, and accountability.

This policy applies to all individuals participating in or representing Houston Wolves Soccer Club during club-sanctioned activities, including training sessions, matches, tournaments, camps, events, and other organized club activities.

Where applicable law or governing-body requirements establish stricter safeguarding obligations than those contained in this policy, the stricter applicable requirements shall take precedence.



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB RISK MANAGEMENT AND ATHLETE SAFETY PROGRAM

SAFESPORT TRAINING AND BACKGROUND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to ensuring that all coaches, administrators, employees, volunteers, and other applicable Adult Participants meet the safeguarding and eligibility requirements established by US Club Soccer and the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

All applicable safeguarding requirements must be completed and approved before an individual participates in club activities requiring registration and clearance.

INITIAL SAFESPORT TRAINING FOR ADULTS

All applicable Adult Participants must complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's approved SafeSport Trained Core course before undertaking activities requiring this training.

The course addresses the recognition, prevention, and reporting of sexual abuse, emotional and physical misconduct, bullying, hazing, and harassment.

Training completion must be verified through the applicable US Club Soccer registration process.

ANNUAL SAFESPORT REFRESHER TRAINING

SafeSport training must be completed annually in accordance with US Club Soccer requirements.

The four-year training cycle consists of:

1. Year 1 – SafeSport Trained Core
2. Year 2 – SafeSport Refresher 1
3. Year 3 – SafeSport Refresher 2
4. Year 4 – SafeSport Refresher 3

The cycle then repeats.

For the 2026–2027 season, annual SafeSport training must have been completed on or after June 1, 2026.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING

All applicable Adult Participants must successfully complete the required criminal background screening and eligibility checks before participating in club activities requiring clearance.

US Club Soccer requires applicable staff background screening every other seasonal year, with an automatic mid-cycle recheck.

All individuals must maintain current screening and eligibility status throughout their involvement with Houston Wolves Soccer Club.

STAFF REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

All applicable staff must complete the US Club Soccer registration process, including:

- Current SafeSport training.
- Required background screening.
- Staff Registrant Annual Certification, completed in accordance with US Club Soccer's annual registration requirements.
- Applicable adverse eligibility and disqualification checks.
- Any additional governing-body registration requirements.

Individuals who are suspended, disqualified, or otherwise ineligible are prohibited from participating in activities covered by those restrictions.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will verify applicable staff eligibility and safeguarding credentials before authorizing participation.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITY

Safeguarding compliance is an ongoing responsibility.

All Adult Participants must promptly report safeguarding concerns and comply with applicable reporting requirements, conduct standards, and governing-body policies.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will take appropriate action when safeguarding credentials expire or eligibility restrictions arise.



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB REPORTING PROCEDURES

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to ensuring all suspected abuse, misconduct, neglect, and safeguarding concerns are promptly reported and handled appropriately.

All coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, and participants must comply with applicable reporting obligations under Texas law, federal law, US Club Soccer policies, and U.S. Center for SafeSport requirements.

MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Under Texas Family Code Section 261.101, any person with reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately report the concern to an appropriate authority.

Certain professionals have a specific reporting deadline of no later than 24 hours after reasonable cause arises and cannot delegate their reporting responsibility.

Applicable federal SafeSport reporting requirements also require suspected child abuse to be reported to the appropriate authorities within 24 hours.

Reporting must never be delayed while seeking approval from club leadership or conducting an internal investigation.

MECHANISM FOR REPORTING

1. Immediate Danger

If a child or participant is in immediate danger, call 911 immediately.

2. Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

Phone: 1-800-252-5400

Online: <https://www.txabusehotline.org/>

Online reporting should only be used where appropriate for non-emergency concerns. Contact law enforcement or the hotline directly when urgent action is required.

3. U.S. Center for SafeSport

Reports involving suspected sexual misconduct, child abuse, or other matters reportable to the Center must be submitted in accordance with applicable SafeSport requirements.

Phone: (833) 587-7233

Online: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/>

4. US Club Soccer

Adult Participants have an affirmative duty to report suspected abuse and other reportable misconduct to US Club Soccer.

Online: <https://usclubsoccer.org/report/>

Reporting to US Club Soccer does not replace any required report to law enforcement, child protective services, or the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

5. Houston Wolves Soccer Club

Safeguarding concerns should also be communicated to the club's designated Risk Manager, provided this does not delay mandatory external reporting.

Club Risk Manager: Angela Williams

Email: admin@houstonwolvessoccerclub.com

If a report concerns the Risk Manager or senior club leadership, individuals should report directly to the appropriate external authority and an alternative independent club representative where available.

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Individuals receiving a safeguarding disclosure must:

- Listen carefully and take the concern seriously.
- Avoid investigating, questioning excessively, or making assumptions.
- Record relevant factual information accurately.
- Report the concern promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone making a good-faith report.

All staff must cooperate with authorized investigations and must not interfere with or compromise the reporting process.



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants. Any violation of this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy may result in appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with club procedures, applicable law, and relevant governing-body requirements.

Disciplinary measures may include warnings, additional safeguarding education, temporary suspension, removal from club activities, or termination of an individual's role or affiliation.

Where misconduct falls within the jurisdiction of law enforcement, child protective services, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, or US Club Soccer, Houston Wolves Soccer Club will comply with applicable reporting requirements and respect the authority of those organizations.

The safety and welfare of participants will remain the primary consideration in all safeguarding decisions.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT POLICY

This policy applies to all Houston Wolves Soccer Club coaches, directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, Adult Participants, and Minor Participants during club-sanctioned activities.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club prohibits all forms of abuse, harassment, discrimination, bullying, hazing, exploitation, and other misconduct identified under applicable safeguarding policies.

Harassment

Harassment includes unwelcome verbal, physical, written, visual, or electronic conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, threatening, humiliating, or offensive environment, where such conduct meets the applicable definition of prohibited harassment.

Examples include:

- Threatening or intimidating behavior.
- Offensive or discriminatory language.
- Derogatory comments, slurs, or negative stereotyping.
- Repeated unwanted conduct directed toward an individual.
- Inappropriate electronic communications or social media activity.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will not tolerate harassment, regardless of whether the conduct also constitutes a violation of criminal or civil law.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are strictly prohibited.

Examples of prohibited behavior may include:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors.
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact.
- Sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or propositions.
- Sexually explicit or suggestive messages, images, or communications.
- Repeated comments about an individual's body or appearance of a sexual nature.
- Exploitation of a position of trust, influence, or authority for sexual purposes.

All allegations or suspicions of sexual misconduct must be reported in accordance with the applicable safeguarding and mandatory reporting requirements.

Non-Retaliation

Houston Wolves Soccer Club strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a good-faith report of suspected misconduct, participates in an authorized investigation, or raises a safeguarding concern.

All participants are expected to cooperate with applicable safeguarding procedures and uphold the standards of conduct established by the club and its governing bodies.



RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN HARASSMENT

Houston Wolves Soccer Club prohibits harassment and discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

All participants must be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of their background, beliefs, or personal circumstances.

Examples of prohibited conduct include:

- Offensive jokes, slurs, or discriminatory remarks.
- Derogatory comments about race, religion, ethnicity, or nationality.
- Displaying or distributing offensive images or materials.
- Intimidating, threatening, or excluding individuals because of protected characteristics.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all players feel safe, respected, and valued.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Any form of child sexual abuse, exploitation, or prohibited sexual conduct involving a minor is strictly forbidden.

Sexual activity between an adult and a minor is prohibited in accordance with applicable safeguarding policies and laws. A minor's apparent consent does not remove the adult's responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries or override legal prohibitions.

Any suspected child sexual abuse must be reported promptly in accordance with applicable legal and governing-body requirements.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Houston Wolves Soccer Club prohibits sexual misconduct, including inappropriate sexual conduct involving an imbalance of power, authority, or trust.

Coaches, staff, volunteers, and other Adult Participants must maintain professional boundaries with athletes at all times. Sexual misconduct includes conduct prohibited under the applicable SafeSport Code, US Club Soccer policies, or relevant law.

EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT

Emotional misconduct includes behavior that meets the applicable safeguarding definition of emotional abuse or misconduct, including repeated or severe non-contact conduct that causes, or has the potential to cause, psychological harm.

Examples may include:

- Repeated humiliation, intimidation, or degrading language.
- Threats, personal insults, or sustained verbal abuse.
- Deliberate isolation or targeting of an individual.
- Conduct designed to undermine a player's dignity, confidence, or emotional well-being.

Appropriate coaching instruction, constructive criticism, reasonable discipline, and age-appropriate performance expectations are permitted when conducted professionally and consistently with safeguarding standards.

PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT

Physical misconduct includes prohibited contact or non-contact conduct that causes or reasonably threatens physical harm.

Examples include:

- Hitting, kicking, punching, or intentionally injuring a participant.
- Inappropriate physical punishment or excessive conditioning used as punishment.
- Forcing a player to participate despite an injury or unsafe condition.
- Withholding necessary hydration, medical attention, or appropriate recovery.

Physical conditioning, athletic development, and disciplinary measures must remain age-appropriate, safe, reasonable, and consistent with participant welfare.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club prohibits physical abuse or misconduct under the guise of coaching, discipline, or athletic performance.



BULLYING

Houston Wolves Soccer Club prohibits all forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, social, and electronic behavior that meets the applicable safeguarding definition of bullying.

Bullying may involve repeated or severe behavior intended to intimidate, humiliate, isolate, threaten, or harm another participant.

Examples of prohibited conduct may include:

- Repeated intimidation, threats, or humiliation.
- Deliberate social exclusion or targeting of an individual.
- Offensive, degrading, or threatening messages.
- Cyberbullying through social media or electronic communication.
- Behavior intended to cause fear, emotional distress, or physical harm.

Appropriate team standards, constructive coaching, and activities intended to promote positive team relationships are permitted when conducted respectfully and consistently with safeguarding requirements.

HAZING

Houston Wolves Soccer Club strictly prohibits hazing in any form.

Hazing includes prohibited humiliating, degrading, abusive, or dangerous activities associated with joining, remaining in, or gaining acceptance within a team or group.

Examples include:

- Forcing participants to complete humiliating or unsafe activities.
- Requiring inappropriate physical challenges as a condition of team membership.
- Pressuring players to participate in degrading activities.
- Encouraging or tolerating abusive initiation rituals.

Hazing is prohibited regardless of whether participants describe an activity as voluntary, traditional, or intended to build team spirit.

RESPONSIBILITY OF COVERED ADULTS

All Covered Adults are responsible for promoting and maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for Minor Participants.

Covered Adults must:

1. Prioritize participant safety, welfare, and well-being.
2. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Minor Participants.
3. Comply with all applicable safeguarding policies and procedures.
4. Report suspected abuse, misconduct, or safeguarding concerns through the appropriate channels.
5. Cooperate with authorized safeguarding investigations.
6. Refrain from retaliation against individuals who raise concerns in good faith.
7. Take appropriate action when immediate intervention is necessary to protect a participant.

Failure to comply with safeguarding obligations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with applicable club and governing-body policies.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to providing an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, abuse, bullying, hazing, and exploitation.

The club prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

All players, coaches, administrators, volunteers, and other participants must be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to maintaining a positive, player-centered environment that promotes personal development, teamwork, accountability, and the physical and emotional well-being of every participant.



POLICY TO LIMIT ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to protecting Minor Athletes by establishing appropriate boundaries and safeguards for interactions with Adult Participants.

While positive relationships between coaches and players are essential for athletic and personal development, isolated one-on-one interactions can increase the risk of abuse or misconduct.

This policy establishes clear expectations to protect participants while allowing appropriate coaching, mentoring, and player development.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to Adult Participants and Minor Athletes during club-related activities and other circumstances covered by the applicable US Club Soccer Prevention Policies.

The policy addresses:

- One-on-one interactions, meetings, and individual training sessions.
- Athletic training modalities, massages, and rubdowns.
- Locker rooms, restrooms, and changing areas.
- Social media and electronic communications.
- Local transportation and team travel.
- Overnight accommodation and lodging.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Observable and Interruptible

All one-on-one In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible unless an authorized exception applies.

Interactions must take place in locations where another person can observe and interrupt the interaction if necessary. Isolated one-on-one interactions are prohibited except in emergency circumstances or where an applicable governing-body exception is satisfied.

2. Professional Boundaries

Adult Participants must maintain appropriate professional relationships with Minor Athletes.

Coaches and staff must not create situations involving unnecessary isolation, secrecy, inappropriate personal relationships, or conduct that compromises player welfare.

3. Authorized Exceptions

Exceptions to the observable and interruptible requirements may apply under the governing-body policies, including:

- Recognized dual relationships.
- Applicable close-in-age exceptions.
- Approved personal care assistant arrangements meeting required consent, training, and screening conditions.
- Emergency circumstances where permitted.

All exceptions must satisfy the specific requirements established by US Club Soccer and the applicable MAAPP.

4. Adult Athletes Turning 18

Athletes who turn 18 and meet the applicable regular-contact threshold must comply with Adult Participant safeguarding requirements unless a recognized exception applies.

An athlete who becomes a coach or assumes authority over Minor Athletes must comply with the safeguarding requirements applicable to that role.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITY

All Adult Participants are responsible for ensuring their interactions with Minor Athletes remain appropriate, professional, and compliant with applicable safeguarding requirements.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will take appropriate action where these standards are breached.



MEETINGS WITH MINOR ATHLETES

Meetings between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes during Houston Wolves Soccer Club activities must comply with applicable safeguarding requirements.

All one-on-one In-Program Contact must be observable and interruptible unless an authorized exception applies. Meetings should take place in open, visible locations where another adult can observe and interrupt the interaction. When meetings take place in an office or enclosed space, doors should remain unlocked and open, and available windows should remain unobstructed, unless an applicable safeguarding exception permits otherwise.

MEETINGS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes that Minor Athletes may require confidential support from qualified mental health care professionals.

Such appointments must comply with applicable safeguarding policies, professional confidentiality requirements, and relevant laws.

Any permitted exception to observable and interruptible interaction requirements must satisfy the applicable governing-body conditions, including required parent or guardian consent.

Mental health professionals must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and comply with relevant reporting obligations.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING SESSIONS

Individual training sessions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes must be observable and interruptible unless an authorized exception applies.

Written consent from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained in advance and renewed at least annually in accordance with applicable MAAPP requirements.

Parents and legal guardians must be permitted to observe individual training sessions.

Coaches must ensure that individual sessions are conducted in an appropriate environment and maintain professional boundaries.

MONITORING ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club encourages appropriate oversight of interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes.

Coaches, administrators, and other authorized adults should remain aware of individual meetings and training activities occurring at club facilities.

Monitoring may include:

- Knowing when and where individual interactions are taking place.
- Ensuring interactions remain observable and interruptible.
- Checking that appropriate supervision is maintained.
- Addressing or reporting any safeguarding concerns.

OUT-OF-PROGRAM CONTACT

Adult Participants must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Minor Athletes outside official Houston Wolves Soccer Club activities.

Out-of-program contact must comply with applicable US Club Soccer and MAAPP requirements, including any relevant restrictions or recognized exceptions.

Adults must not use personal meetings or social arrangements to circumvent safeguarding procedures.

Any concern involving inappropriate adult-minor contact must be reported in accordance with the club's reporting policy.



MASSAGE, RUBDOWNS AND ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to ensuring that all physical treatment provided to Minor Athletes is conducted safely, professionally, and in accordance with applicable US Club Soccer safeguarding requirements.

Licensed or Certified Professionals

Any athletic training modality, massage, or rubdown performed on a Minor Athlete at a facility or venue covered by US Club Soccer's Prevention Policies is prohibited unless performed by a licensed massage therapist. Such treatment must be observable and interruptible. Any massage of a Minor Athlete must take place with at least one additional adult present. A Minor Athlete must never be alone in a room with the massage therapist.

Written Consent and Player Protection

Written consent from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained in advance and renewed at least annually, or more frequently where required by applicable safeguarding policies.

Parents or legal guardians must be permitted to observe treatment in accordance with applicable requirements. Minor Athletes must remain appropriately clothed, with private body areas covered throughout treatment. Treatment providers must explain procedures and respect the athlete's comfort, dignity, and right to withdraw consent.

LOCKER ROOMS, RESTROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to protecting the privacy, dignity, and safety of participants when using locker rooms, restrooms, changing areas, and similar facilities.

Use of Recording Devices

The use of cameras, mobile phones, video recording equipment, or other devices to photograph, film, or record participants in locker rooms, restrooms, or changing areas is prohibited, except where expressly permitted under applicable safeguarding policies and all required conditions are satisfied.

Adult and Minor Athlete Privacy

Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes or undress in their presence except where an authorized safeguarding exception applies.

All interactions must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and respect participant privacy.

Isolated One-on-One Interactions

Adult Participants must not engage in isolated one-on-one In-Program Contact with Minor Athletes in locker rooms, restrooms, changing areas, or similar facilities unless an exception expressly permitted by applicable safeguarding policies applies.

All such interactions must comply with the observable and interruptible requirements established by US Club Soccer and the applicable Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).



Monitoring and Supervision

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will ensure that locker rooms, restrooms, and changing areas used during club-sanctioned activities are appropriately monitored in accordance with applicable safeguarding requirements.

Monitoring must respect participant privacy and must not involve inappropriate observation, photography, or recording. Where applicable, monitoring should include regular and random checks to ensure safeguarding standards are maintained.

Shared and Non-Exclusive Facilities

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes that training and match facilities may be shared with schools, other sports organizations, and members of the public.

When using shared facilities, the club will take reasonable steps to:

- Identify potential safeguarding risks.
- Establish appropriate supervision arrangements.
- Ensure Adult Participants comply with applicable safeguarding requirements.
- Respect the privacy and safety of all facility users.
- Communicate relevant facility rules to coaches and participants.

Where facilities provide only one shared changing area, designated times for adult and minor use must be established when required by the applicable policy.

Prevention of Bullying and Hazing

Bullying, harassment, hazing, and other prohibited misconduct are not tolerated in locker rooms, restrooms, changing areas, or similar facilities.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will take appropriate steps to reduce the risk of misconduct through supervision, safeguarding awareness, and prompt reporting of concerns.

Monitoring Player Whereabouts

Coaches and designated adults should maintain appropriate awareness of player movements during training sessions, matches, and other organized activities.

If a Minor Athlete leaves an activity to use a restroom or changing area and does not return within a reasonable period, the responsible adult should take appropriate steps to establish the player's safety.

Any welfare check must comply with applicable adult-minor interaction requirements.

Parent and Guardian Access

Parents and legal guardians should avoid entering shared team changing areas unless assistance is necessary.

When assistance is required, parents should notify a coach or club administrator in advance whenever practicable.

Appropriate arrangements should consider the child's age, individual needs, disability-related accommodations, privacy, and the safeguarding requirements of other participants.

Privacy and Changing Arrangements

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will ensure that appropriate private or semi-private changing arrangements are available at club-sanctioned activities where changing facilities are provided, in accordance with applicable safeguarding requirements.

All participants must be treated with dignity and respect.

Safeguarding Responsibility

All Adult Participants are responsible for maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and protecting the privacy, safety, and dignity of Minor Athletes.

Any suspected breach of these requirements must be reported in accordance with the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Reporting Procedures.



SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes the importance of professional, appropriate, and transparent communication between coaches, players, parents, and club administrators.

All electronic communications involving Adult Participants and Minor Athletes must comply with applicable US Club Soccer Prevention Policies and Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).

Professional Communication

All electronic communication originating from Adult Participants to Minor Athletes must be professional, appropriate, and related to legitimate club activities or player welfare.

Electronic communication includes email, text messages, telephone calls, video calls, social media, TeamSnap, WhatsApp, and other digital communication platforms.

Open and Transparent Communication

All electronic communications between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes must be open and transparent unless an authorized safeguarding exception applies.

The following requirements must be observed:

1. When an Adult Participant communicates directly with a Minor Athlete, another Adult Participant or the Minor Athlete's parent or legal guardian must be copied or included.
2. If a Minor Athlete initiates a private message, the Adult Participant must include another Adult Participant or the parent or legal guardian in any response.
3. Communications sent to an entire team must include or copy another Adult Participant.
4. Only platforms that allow open and transparent communication may be used with Minor Athletes.

Approved Communication Platforms

Houston Wolves Soccer Club uses TeamSnap as its primary platform for team and parent communications.

WhatsApp, email, and other authorized communication platforms may be used for appropriate club purposes, provided all safeguarding requirements are followed.

Coaches and staff must not use private messaging features to communicate individually with Minor Athletes unless an authorized exception applies.

Prohibited Electronic Communications

Adult Participants must not:

- Send private direct messages to Minor Athletes outside permitted safeguarding exceptions.
- Exchange inappropriate photographs, videos, or messages.
- Engage in sexual, suggestive, intimidating, or otherwise inappropriate conversations.
- Use disappearing-message platforms or communication features to circumvent safeguarding requirements.
- Establish inappropriate personal or secret relationships with Minor Athletes.

Social Media Connections

Minor Athletes may follow official Houston Wolves Soccer Club social media accounts.

Adult Participants should not maintain private personal social media connections with Minor Athletes. Existing connections should be discontinued unless an authorized safeguarding exception applies.

Requests to Discontinue Communication

Parents or legal guardians may request in writing that electronic communication with their child be discontinued. Houston Wolves Soccer Club and relevant Adult Participants must respect such requests, except in emergency circumstances.

Recommended Communication Hours

Routine electronic communications should generally take place between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless a specific safety-related or soccer-related need requires communication outside these hours.



SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING — RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will take reasonable steps to monitor its official social media accounts and communication platforms to ensure compliance with club safeguarding standards.

Monitoring should include:

- Reviewing official club social media content and communications.
- Removing inappropriate, offensive, or prohibited material.
- Reporting suspected misconduct through the appropriate safeguarding channels.
- Informing parents or legal guardians and club administrators of prohibited posts involving Minor Athletes, where appropriate.
- Preserving relevant evidence when safeguarding concerns arise.

Where practicable, at least two authorized Adult Participants should oversee official club social media accounts.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club generally does not arrange transportation to or from training sessions, matches, or other local club activities. Parents and legal guardians are ordinarily responsible for arranging transportation for their children.

Transportation by Adult Participants

Transportation involving Adult Participants and Minor Athletes must comply with applicable US Club Soccer Prevention Policies and Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).

An Adult Participant must not transport a Minor Athlete alone during In-Program travel unless an authorized exception applies, such as:

- A recognized dual relationship or close-in-age exception; or
- Advance written parent or legal guardian consent obtained at least annually, where permitted; or
- An authorized personal care assistant arrangement that meets all applicable safeguarding requirements.

All exceptions must comply with the applicable US Club Soccer Prevention Policies and Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).

An Adult Participant may transport Minor Athletes when accompanied by at least one other Adult Participant or at least two Minor Athletes who are each at least eight years old, in accordance with applicable safeguarding requirements.

Any one-on-one transportation must satisfy an authorized exception, including applicable advance written parent or legal guardian consent requirements. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.

Parent and Guardian Consent

Written parent or legal guardian consent is required for transportation arranged or authorized by Houston Wolves Soccer Club. Consent must be obtained in accordance with applicable governing-body requirements and may be withdrawn at any time.

Recommended Carpool Arrangements

Parents and guardians are encouraged to collect their own child first and drop off their own child last when participating in shared or carpool travel arrangements.

All transportation arrangements must prioritize player safety, appropriate supervision, and professional boundaries.

TEAM TRAVEL — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club may participate in tournaments, competitions, and other activities requiring travel outside the local area.

When team travel is organized or authorized by the club, appropriate safeguarding standards must be maintained throughout the activity.

Team Travel Responsibilities

Adult Participants accompanying Minor Athletes during club-organized travel must:

- Meet applicable safeguarding and eligibility requirements.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Follow the club's adult-minor interaction policies.
- Ensure appropriate supervision and emergency contact arrangements.
- Obtain required parent or legal guardian consent.
- Comply with applicable transportation and lodging requirements.

Overnight Travel

Any club-organized overnight travel must comply with the applicable US Club Soccer lodging policies, including requirements concerning accommodation, supervision, consent, and adult eligibility.

Specific hotel room arrangements, room checks, and overnight safeguarding expectations are addressed in the following section of this policy.



OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION AND TEAM TRAVEL — CONTINUED

Hotel Rooms and Sleeping Arrangements

Adult Participants must not share a hotel room or sleeping arrangement with a Minor Athlete unless an exception permitted by applicable US Club Soccer safeguarding policies applies and all required conditions are satisfied. Written parent or legal guardian consent must be obtained where required.

Meetings and Room Checks

Meetings between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes during overnight travel must be observable and interruptible unless an authorized exception applies.

Team meetings should take place in open, appropriate locations rather than individual hotel rooms.

Where Houston Wolves Soccer Club conducts room checks during organized overnight travel, at least two Adult Participants must be present, and all checks must comply with applicable one-on-one interaction requirements. Written parent or legal guardian consent must be obtained for In-Program lodging at least annually, in accordance with applicable US Club Soccer safeguarding policies.

Adult Participants traveling on club-authorized or club-funded overnight trips must review and agree to the applicable lodging policy at least annually.

Background Screening and Supervision

Adults responsible for supervising Minor Athletes during club-organized travel must meet all applicable US Club Soccer registration, background screening, and SafeSport training requirements.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will seek to maintain two-deep adult leadership and appropriate supervision throughout organized team travel.

ESTABLISHING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES — GIFTS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes that inappropriate gifts or special privileges may be used to establish unhealthy relationships or manipulate Minor Athletes.

Adult Participants must not provide gifts, favors, or special privileges intended to isolate, influence, exploit, or create inappropriate relationships with players.

Any gifts, rewards, or recognition must be appropriate, transparent, and consistent with legitimate club activities.

Coaches and staff must avoid favoritism that compromises professional boundaries or participant welfare.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT — MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes that appropriate physical contact may occur during coaching, safety assistance, celebrations, and player support.

All physical contact must be appropriate, respectful, and consistent with safeguarding requirements.

Standards for Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact must:

1. Serve a legitimate coaching, safety, medical, or player welfare purpose.
2. Be appropriate to the player's age, circumstances, and individual needs.
3. Respect the player's dignity, comfort, and personal boundaries.
4. Take place in an appropriate and observable setting.
5. Never involve sexual contact, coercion, exploitation, or inappropriate touching.

Coaches should use verbal instruction and demonstration wherever reasonably possible before using physical guidance. Any physical contact that constitutes prohibited conduct under applicable safeguarding policies is strictly forbidden.



APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT — CONTINUED

A. Safety

Appropriate physical contact may be necessary to prevent injuries, assist players, or support safe participation in soccer activities. Examples include:

- Assisting a player who has fallen or is at risk of injury.
- Providing appropriate physical guidance when demonstrating a soccer technique.
- Helping players maintain balance, coordination, or safe positioning.
- Protecting a player from an immediate hazard.

Physical contact must be appropriate, necessary, respectful, and consistent with safeguarding standards.

B. Celebration

Positive celebrations are an important part of creating a supportive team environment.

Appropriate gestures may include:

- High-fives and fist bumps.
- Brief, appropriate side hugs.
- Pats on the back or shoulder.
- Other respectful, age-appropriate gestures of encouragement.

Coaches must respect each player's personal boundaries and avoid unwanted physical contact.

C. Consolation

Coaches may provide appropriate reassurance and support to players experiencing distress, disappointment, or injury.

Examples include:

- Offering verbal encouragement and reassurance.
- Providing appropriate public gestures of support.
- Assisting an injured player while arranging necessary medical attention.
- Supporting players following a difficult performance or emotional experience.

Physical reassurance must remain appropriate to the player's age, circumstances, preferences, and safeguarding needs.

D. Player Supervision

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to providing appropriate supervision during training sessions, matches, and other organized activities.

Coaches and designated adults must:

- Maintain reasonable supervision of players during activities.
- Follow appropriate player arrival and collection procedures.
- Avoid leaving Minor Athletes unattended in unsafe circumstances.
- Contact parents or guardians when a player has not been collected.
- Maintain appropriate adult-minor boundaries when supervising players.

Where a Minor Athlete remains at a facility after an activity, appropriate supervision should be maintained until a parent, legal guardian, or authorized individual assumes responsibility.

POLICY ON MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to ensuring that its Athlete and Participant Safety Policy is implemented, monitored, and enforced appropriately.

All safeguarding concerns, suspected misconduct, and alleged policy violations will be treated seriously and addressed in accordance with applicable law, club procedures, and governing-body requirements.

The club will take reasonable steps to:

1. Promote awareness of safeguarding policies.
2. Monitor appropriate staff registration, training, and eligibility requirements.
3. Address identified safeguarding risks.
4. Implement appropriate protective measures when concerns arise.
5. Cooperate with authorized external investigations.
6. Maintain appropriate confidentiality and safeguarding records.

Where required, allegations must be reported to law enforcement, child protective services, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, US Club Soccer, or other relevant authorities.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will not conduct internal investigations in a manner that interferes with the jurisdiction or procedures of authorized external bodies.



SAFEGUARDING INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to addressing all safeguarding concerns, allegations of misconduct, and violations of this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy promptly, fairly, and appropriately.

The safety and welfare of participants will remain the primary consideration throughout any safeguarding or disciplinary process.

Reporting and Initial Assessment

All suspected abuse, misconduct, or safeguarding concerns must be reported in accordance with the club's Reporting Procedures and applicable legal and governing-body requirements.

Upon receiving a safeguarding concern, Houston Wolves Soccer Club will assess whether immediate protective measures are necessary to safeguard participants.

The club will not delay any mandatory external report while conducting an internal assessment.

Interim Safeguarding Measures

Where a safeguarding concern arises, Houston Wolves Soccer Club may implement temporary protective measures while the matter is being assessed or investigated.

These measures may include:

- Temporary suspension from coaching or club activities.
- Restrictions on contact with Minor Athletes.
- Reassignment of coaching or administrative responsibilities.
- Additional supervision or safeguarding arrangements.
- Temporary removal from club communication platforms where appropriate.

Interim safeguarding measures are precautionary and do not, by themselves, constitute a finding of misconduct.

External Investigations and Governing-Body Authority

Where an allegation falls within the jurisdiction of law enforcement, child protective services, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, US Club Soccer, or another authorized organization, Houston Wolves Soccer Club will comply with applicable reporting obligations and cooperate with the relevant authority.

The club must not conduct an internal investigation that interferes with, compromises, or obstructs an authorized external investigation.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes that restrictions, suspensions, and disqualifications imposed by governing bodies must be respected and enforced in accordance with their terms.

Internal Disciplinary Procedures

Where Houston Wolves Soccer Club has authority to address an alleged policy violation, the matter will be reviewed by appropriate club leadership or an authorized independent representative.

Any internal review must be conducted fairly, with appropriate consideration of available information, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, participant welfare, and applicable governing-body requirements.

Where appropriate and permitted, the individual concerned will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations before a final club disciplinary decision is made.

Disciplinary Outcomes

Where a policy violation is established, Houston Wolves Soccer Club may impose appropriate disciplinary measures, including:

1. Formal written warnings.
2. Mandatory additional safeguarding education.
3. Restrictions on coaching or participation.
4. Temporary suspension from club activities.
5. Removal from coaching or administrative responsibilities.
6. Termination of employment, volunteer duties, or club affiliation, subject to applicable law and agreements.

Any disciplinary action must be proportionate to the circumstances and consistent with applicable legal and governing-body requirements.

Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will maintain appropriate confidential records of safeguarding reports, decisions, protective measures, and relevant correspondence.

Information will be shared only where necessary for safeguarding, legal compliance, authorized investigations, or appropriate club decision-making.

Non-Retaliation

Houston Wolves Soccer Club strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a good-faith safeguarding report, raises a concern, or cooperates with an authorized investigation.



ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS, APPEALS AND REINSTATEMENT

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes the authority of U.S. Soccer, US Club Soccer, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, and other applicable governing bodies to impose eligibility restrictions, suspensions, disqualifications, and disciplinary sanctions. All such restrictions must be respected and enforced in accordance with the requirements of the issuing organization.

Governing-Body Eligibility Restrictions

Any individual who is suspended, disqualified, or otherwise declared ineligible by an applicable governing body must not participate in activities prohibited by that restriction.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club cannot independently overturn, disregard, or authorize an exception to an eligibility restriction imposed by an external governing body.

The club will take appropriate steps to verify eligibility before allowing an individual to undertake coaching, administrative, or other duties requiring safeguarding clearance.

Club-Level Disciplinary Decisions

Houston Wolves Soccer Club retains the authority to make appropriate decisions concerning coaching assignments, employment, volunteer responsibilities, and participation in club activities, subject to applicable law, agreements, and governing-body requirements.

Club disciplinary decisions must be made fairly, consistently, and with appropriate consideration of participant safety, relevant evidence, and potential conflicts of interest.

Internal Review and Appeals

An individual affected by a formal club-level disciplinary decision may request an internal review, where such a review is available under the club's approved procedures.

Any review should be conducted by an appropriate individual or panel that was not materially involved in the original decision and is free from relevant conflicts of interest.

The individual should receive written notification of the outcome and any further review options available under applicable club rules.

An internal club review cannot overturn or modify an external governing-body restriction.

External Governing-Body Appeals

Where a suspension, disqualification, or other eligibility restriction has been imposed by US Club Soccer, the U.S. Center for SafeSport, or another governing body, any appeal must follow the procedures and deadlines established by that organization. Houston Wolves Soccer Club may provide appropriate factual information or supporting documentation when permitted but cannot guarantee the outcome of an external appeal.

Reinstatement and Return to Club Activities

Before an individual may return to a restricted role, Houston Wolves Soccer Club must confirm that:

1. Any applicable external suspension or eligibility restriction has been lifted, expired, or modified to permit the proposed participation.
2. Required SafeSport training is current.
3. Required background screening and staff registration have been completed and approved.
4. Any additional safeguarding or disciplinary conditions have been satisfied.
5. Appropriate club leadership has authorized the individual's return.

Reinstatement must not occur solely on the basis of an informal assurance or a pending appeal.

Recordkeeping and Confidentiality

Houston Wolves Soccer Club will maintain appropriate confidential records of eligibility decisions, appeals, disciplinary restrictions, and reinstatement authorizations.

Information will be disclosed only where necessary for safeguarding, legal compliance, authorized investigations, or appropriate club administration.

Final Safeguarding Responsibility

The safety and welfare of Minor Athletes remain the club's primary responsibility.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club reserves the right to maintain appropriate club-level protective measures, subject to applicable law and governing-body requirements, even where an individual is otherwise eligible for registration or participation.



DEFINITIONS FOR TERMS INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM

The following definitions apply throughout the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy. Where a governing-body policy provides a more specific definition, that definition shall apply.

A. Adult Participant

An Adult Participant is an individual aged 18 or older who falls within the scope of applicable U.S. Soccer, US Club Soccer, or U.S. Center for SafeSport safeguarding requirements.

Adult Participants may include:

- Club directors and board members.
- Coaches and assistant coaches.
- Team managers and administrators.
- Employees and independent contractors.
- Volunteers and authorized support personnel.
- Referees and other officials, where applicable.
- Other adults with regular contact with or authority over Minor Athletes.

Adult Participants must comply with applicable safeguarding, training, screening, and conduct requirements.

B. Minor Athlete

A Minor Athlete is any individual under 18 years of age who participates in activities within US Club Soccer's jurisdiction.

This includes, but is not limited to, players, coaches, referees, and other participants who are minors.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club applies safeguarding protections to all minor participants involved in club activities.

C. U.S. Center for SafeSport

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is an independent organization responsible for safeguarding education, abuse prevention, and responding to misconduct within its jurisdiction in the United States Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

The Center administers the SafeSport Code and establishes Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies.

D. SafeSport Trained Core

SafeSport Trained Core is the foundational safeguarding education course provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

The course addresses the recognition, prevention, and reporting of abuse and misconduct in sport.

Applicable Adult Participants must complete initial training and subsequent refresher courses in accordance with governing-body requirements.

E. Covered Adult

For the purposes of this policy, a Covered Adult is an adult subject to Houston Wolves Soccer Club safeguarding requirements because of their role, authority, responsibilities, or contact with Minor Participants.

Where the applicable governing-body policy uses the term Adult Participant, that term and its official definition shall govern.

F. Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP)

MAAPP establishes requirements intended to reduce the risk of abuse through safeguarding education, organizational responsibilities, and restrictions on certain adult-minor interactions.

These policies address one-on-one interactions, individual training, electronic communications, athletic treatment, changing areas, transportation, and lodging.

G. In-Program Contact

In-Program Contact means contact, communication, interaction, or activity between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete that is related to participation in sport.

This may include interactions occurring outside club facilities or scheduled activities when they are connected to sport participation.

H. Observable and Interruptible

Observable and interruptible means an interaction can be readily observed and interrupted by another person.

This safeguarding standard applies to adult-minor interactions as required by the applicable MAAPP and governing-body policies.



DEFINITIONS FOR TERMS INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM — CONTINUED

I. Regular Contact

Regular Contact refers to recurring, repeated, or periodic interactions between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete, as defined by the applicable governing-body safeguarding policies.

J. Authority Over Minor Athletes

Authority refers to a position or relationship in which an individual has responsibility for supervising, evaluating, directing, or making decisions affecting a Minor Athlete.

This may include coaches, directors, team managers, administrators, or other authorized personnel.

K. SafeSport Refresher Training

SafeSport Refresher Training consists of the approved annual safeguarding education courses completed following initial SafeSport Trained Core certification.

Applicable Adult Participants must maintain current training in accordance with US Club Soccer requirements.

L. National Governing Body (NGB)

A National Governing Body is an organization recognized under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to govern a particular sport within the United States.

The United States Soccer Federation (U.S. Soccer) is the National Governing Body for soccer.

M. United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC)

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee is the organization responsible for supporting and overseeing the United States Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

N. Safeguarding Concern

A Safeguarding Concern includes any allegation, disclosure, observation, or information suggesting that a participant may have experienced abuse, misconduct, exploitation, neglect, or another threat to their safety or welfare.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND ANNUAL REVIEW

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is responsible for implementing, communicating, monitoring, and reviewing this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy.

All applicable coaches, directors, administrators, employees, volunteers, and participants are expected to understand and comply with the safeguarding standards established within this policy.

Annual Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever significant changes occur to applicable legislation, U.S. Soccer requirements, US Club Soccer policies, or the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code and Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).

Any necessary amendments will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Houston Wolves Soccer Club leadership.

Designated Safeguarding Contact

Club Risk Manager: Angela Williams

Email: admin@houstonwolvessoccerclub.com

POLICY APPROVAL AND DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy Title: Athlete and Participant Safety Policy

Organization: Houston Wolves Soccer Club

Policy Version: 2.0

Applicable Season: 2026–2027

Policy Effective Date: August 1, 2026

Next Scheduled Review: August 1, 2027

Approval Status: Approved by Houston Wolves Soccer Club Leadership

Formal Approval and Signatures: See Policy Approval and Adoption Page.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club remains committed to protecting every participant and maintaining a safe, positive, inclusive, and player-centered environment.



POLICY APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive, and supportive environment for all players, coaches, staff, volunteers, and participants.

This Athlete and Participant Safety Policy establishes the club's safeguarding responsibilities, standards of conduct, reporting procedures, and commitment to protecting children and young people from abuse, harassment, exploitation, and misconduct. By signing below, the authorized representatives of Houston Wolves Soccer Club confirm that they have reviewed and formally approved this policy and accept responsibility for ensuring its implementation, communication, monitoring, and ongoing review. The club will continue to comply with applicable U.S. Soccer, US Club Soccer, U.S. Center for SafeSport, and Texas safeguarding requirements.

POLICY INFORMATION

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AUTHORIZED CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

Derek Williams

Chief Executive Officer

Signature: 

Date: 08/01/2026

Stephen Williams

Technical Director

Signature: 

Date: 08/01/2026

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Houston Wolves Soccer Club recognizes that safeguarding is a shared responsibility and remains committed to maintaining the highest appropriate standards of participant safety, welfare, accountability, and professional conduct.

The club will review this policy annually, respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns, and continually work to provide a safe environment in which every player can develop and enjoy soccer.

The Strength of the Wolf is in the Pack.