



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB

"The Strength of the Wolf is in the Pack"



Athlete and Participant Safety Policy



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, enabling 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

At the core of our commitment lies the well-being of our participants. Our members' health, safety, and overall welfare are paramount in Houston Wolves Soccer Club. From the initial registration of a young child to the culmination of their adult years, the club is dedicated to creating and maintaining an environment that consistently strives for excellence.

PURPOSE

In alignment with U.S. Soccer Bylaw 212, Organization Members, including the Houston Wolves Soccer Club, are mandated to fulfill several obligations. These include, among others:

1. Compliance with applicable law, particularly the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the "Sports Act").
2. Implementing a risk management program for organizations involved in recruiting, training, fielding, or funding soccer players to promote participant safety and welfare.
3. Adoption of policies prohibiting sexual abuse.

Effective February 14, 2018, Public Law 115-126, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (the "SafeSport Act"), amends the Sports Act. It requires applicable amateur sports organizations, such as the Houston Wolves Soccer Club, to:

- Comply with reporting requirements under the SafeSport Act and prevent retaliation against individuals making reports (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(1)).
- Establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between minor amateur athletes and non-legal guardian adults at the club's facilities (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(2)).
- Provide consistent training to adult members in regular contact with minor amateur athletes, and with parental consent, to minor members regarding the prevention and reporting of child abuse (36 U.S.C. § 220530(a)(3)).



The Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy is designed to enforce an Athlete and Participant Safety/Safe Soccer program as an integral component of the club's risk management program and to establish standards for such a program.

INITIAL TRAINING FOR ADULTS: CORE CENTER FOR SAFESPORT TRAINING

The Houston Wolves Soccer Club acknowledges various program options for awareness and prevention training of sexual abuse. In alignment with the SafeSport Act, the club mandates all individuals identified under this Policy to undergo the program provided by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

More details about this training will be included as part of your coaching staff registration and contact, and completion is a prerequisite before commencing work with the Houston Wolves Soccer Club. Stephen Williams, Technical Director for Houston Wolves Soccer Club, will provide additional information and guide you through the process.

Allocate up to 90 minutes for the initial training course. Upon completion, please print out your certificate and keep it on file.

IMPORTANT: For the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Adult Registration, it is imperative that you use your legal name and the email address associated with your registration.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club Risk Management and Athlete Safety Program Policies

ANNUAL REFRESHER HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING FOR ADULTS

The Houston Wolves Soccer Club mandates that all adults take the initial U.S. Center for SafeSport course and complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's official refresher course. The refresher course is required annually and should be completed by August 31 of the year following the year in which the initial course and subsequent refresher course were taken. Allocate up to 30 minutes to complete the refresher course.

For example, if an adult takes their initial course during 2023, they must complete their annual refresher by August 31, 2024. The refresher can be taken anytime between January 1 and August 31 of 2024; waiting until a year expires is unnecessary.

This is crucial as Houston Wolves Soccer Club requires all risk management credential requirements not to expire during the soccer year (August to May). Adults can take their annual refresher courses anytime between January 1 and August 15 to be ready to receive their credentials by the end of August, assuming all other requirements are met.



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Houston Wolves Soccer Club Reporting procedures establish a mechanism that facilitates the reporting of a complaint for reasonable suspicion of Sexual or Physical abuse/neglect. According to Texas law, EVERYONE IS A MANDATORY REPORTER.

MECHANISM FOR REPORTING

The list below outlines the appropriate contacts for reporting when physical, emotional, or sexual abuse is suspected. The report should include whatever information may be helpful, such as the alleged perpetrator, the names and addresses of the child and their parent or other guardian or caretaker, the child's age, and the nature and extent of the injury, abuse, or mistreatment if known. The person receiving the disclosure of abuse, neglect, or mistreatment is required to make a report using the following guidelines:

- Local Law Enforcement Number: May be posted on the club website and given to athletes and parents.
- Child Protective Services (C.P.S.): By phone: 1-800-252-5400 or Online: [Texas Abuse Hotline](#)
- U.S. Center for SafeSport. Report here: <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/report-a-concern/> or by calling (833) 587-7233 if you have reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct or harassment, child abuse (including child sexual abuse), or intimate relationships involving an imbalance of power.

AFTER receiving guidance and direction from law enforcement or Child Protective Services, consideration should be given to reporting incidents as follows:

- Club Risk Manager Contact Information: Angela Williams
admin@houstonwolvessoccerclub.com.
- U.S. Center for SafeSport: <https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern>

Houston Wolves Soccer Club does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. No individual who makes such a good-faith report will be subject to retaliation, including harassment, as a result of making a report. The SafeSport Act also includes qualified immunity for good faith reports. Houston Wolves Soccer Club urges all mandatory reporters to refrain from judging or evaluating the credibility of such allegations—leave that to law enforcement.

The obligation to report is not always satisfied by making an initial report. A Covered Adult is required to report supplemental information of which they become aware that may be relevant to a pending investigation.

Significantly, civil or criminal statutes of limitations do not affect or negate the obligation of a Covered Adult to report possible sexual misconduct. Misconduct should be reported, regardless of when it occurred. Failure to promptly report suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities may constitute a violation of federal law and, in any event, will be deemed a breach of Houston Wolves Soccer Club Policy.



HOUSTON WOLVES SOCCER CLUB ENFORCEMENT POLICY

All Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete & Participant Safety Policy violations will be subject to the current Houston Wolves Soccer Club Procedures for Disciplinary Actions.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT POLICY

The Houston Wolves Soccer Club's Prohibited Conduct Policy applies to all Houston Wolves Soccer Club Covered Adults and Minor Participants as defined in this Athlete and Participant Safety Program. This Policy also extends to conduct by any subcontractor, supplier, customer, or third party and their employees in their dealings with Houston Wolves Soccer Club employees. It applies to all Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions.

Harassment

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status. Houston Wolves Soccer Club will not tolerate harassing behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions. This Prohibited Conduct Policy forbids harassing conduct even when it does not rise to the level of a violation of the law.

Among the types of conduct prohibited by this Policy are epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or intimidating acts based on an individual's protected status and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward an individual because of their protected status.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Sexual harassment may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment. Examples of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment and are prohibited by this Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Unnecessary touching, patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against a person's body.
- Staring, ogling, leering, or whistling at a person.
- Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
- Sexually explicit statements, sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, subtle pressure for sexual activity, comments, questions, jokes, or anecdotes.
- Graphic or degrading comments about a person's clothing, body, or sexual activity.
- Sexually suggestive objects, cartoons, posters, calendars, or pictures in the workplace.
- Suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- Harassing electronic mail, electronic or instant messaging, or telephone communication systems.
- Other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature.



Racial, Religious, or National Origin Harassment

Racial, religious, or national origin harassment also deserves special mention and is expressly prohibited by Houston Wolves Soccer Club. This type of harassment includes any verbal, written, or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner that would make a reasonable person uncomfortable in the environment within Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions. Examples of race, religious, or national origin harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Jokes that contain references to race, religion, or national origin.
- The display or use of objects or pictures that adversely reflect on a person's race, religion, or national origin.
- Use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person's race, religion, or national origin.

Child Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity with a child is strictly prohibited. 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. All sexual interactions between an adult and a child are prohibited, irrespective of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

Sexual Misconduct

Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority is prohibited. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Emotional Misconduct

Emotional misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Emotional misconduct is a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support or any action or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improving athletic performance.

Physical Misconduct

Physical misconduct in all forms is prohibited. Physical misconduct is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in or reasonably threatens to cause bodily harm to another person. This includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault).



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

Bullying

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 bodily harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership, is strictly prohibited. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

Hazing

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 is strictly prohibited. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

Responsibility of Covered Adults

All Covered Adults are responsible for helping ensure that misconduct is avoided. They are obligated to cooperate in any investigation of a misconduct complaint, providing all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a violation of this Policy.

Any violation of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Covered Adults or Minor Participants may subject the individual(s) to disciplinary action. Houston Wolves Soccer Club prohibits retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct, including potential violations of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Covered Adults or Minor Participants.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is committed to maintaining an environment within its sanctioned activities and competitions free from discrimination, including harassment, based on any legally protected status. Protected status includes race, color, age, religion, marital status, sex, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, veteran's status, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, protected activity, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. The Policy also prohibits harassment based on the protected status of an individual's relatives, friends, or associates.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club is also committed to maintaining an environment within its sanctioned activities and competitions that is free from all forms of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, bullying, and hazing.



POLICY TO LIMIT ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between children and adults, the risk of child sexual abuse is minimized. However, a child's one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable.

Houston Wolves Soccer Club's Policy to Limit One-on-One Interactions Between Adults and Minors ("Policy to Limit One-on-One Interactions") protects children while allowing these beneficial relationships. These policies limit one-on-one interactions between Minor Participants and any Covered Adult who is not their legal guardian during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions.

Topics detailed within this Policy include:

- One-on-One Interactions: Including meetings and individual training sessions.
- Massages and Rubdowns
- Locker Rooms, Rest Rooms, and Changing Areas
- Social Media and Electronic Communications
- Local Travel
- Team Travel

A Minor Participant who reaches the age of majority may not be subject to this Policy in their capacity as an athlete when interacting with Minor Participants aged 16 or older. The Policy to Limit One-on-One Interactions is in effect when this now age of majority athlete interacts with Minor Participants aged 15 or younger.

Should a Minor Participant reach the age of majority and then obtain a position that presents a potential power imbalance, such as becoming a coach, the individual is subject to the Policy to Limit One-on-One Interactions.

One-on-One Interactions - Mandatory Components

a) **Application:** This Policy applies to all Covered Adults.

b) **Observable and Interruptible:**

- One-on-one interactions between a Minor Participant and a Covered Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
- Isolated, one-on-one interactions between a Minor Participant and a Covered Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions are prohibited except under emergencies.



c) Meetings:

- Meetings between a Covered Adult and a Minor Participant during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions should only occur if another adult is present, except in emergencies. Such meetings should occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office should remain unlocked and open. If available, it should occur in an office that (if available) has windows, with the windows, blinds, or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

d) Meetings with Mental Health Care Professionals:

- If a mental health care professional meets with a Minor Participant during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy – provided that (1) the door remains unlocked, (2) another adult is present at the Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activity or competition, (3) the other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring, and (4) written legal guardian consent is obtained by the mental health care professional, with a copy provided to Houston Wolves Soccer Club.

e) Individual Training Session:

- Individual training sessions between Covered Adults and Minor Participants are permitted during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. The Covered Adult should obtain the written permission of the Minor Participant's legal guardian before the individual training session. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers should be allowed to observe the training session. Permission for personal training sessions should be obtained at least every six months.

Recommended Components

a) Monitoring:

- When one-on-one interactions between Covered Adults and Minor Participants occur during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions, adults should monitor these interactions.
- Monitoring includes knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the exchange, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one.

b) Out-of-Program Contacts:

- Covered Adults are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated Minor Participants in settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home, restaurants, and individual transportation) unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact.
- Such arrangements are nonetheless strongly discouraged.



Massage and Rubdown - Mandatory Components

- a) **Application:** This Policy applies to all Covered Adults.
- b) **Licensed, Certified Professional:**
- Any massage or rubdown performed by a Covered Adult on a Minor Participant during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions is prohibited unless such Covered Adult is a licensed massage therapist.
 - Any massage or rubdown a licensed professional performs during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions should be conducted in open and interruptible locations. Any massage of a Minor Participant should be done with at least one other adult present and should never be done with only the Minor Participant and licensed massage therapist in the room.
 - Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach should not perform a rubdown or massage of a Minor Participant under any circumstances.

Recommended Components

- a) **Written Consent:**
- Written consent by a legal guardian should be provided before providing each massage or rubdown on a Minor Participant.
 - Parents should be permitted to be in the room as an observer.

LOCKER ROOMS, RESTROOMS, AND CHANGING AREAS - Mandatory Components

- a) **Application:** This Policy applies to all Covered Adults.
- b) **Use of Recording Devices:**
- Using any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras in locker rooms, restrooms, changing areas, or similar spaces during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions, is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by Houston Wolves Soccer Club and two or more adults are present.
- c) **Undress:**
- Under no circumstances should an unrelated Covered Adult during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions be undressed (disrobed or partial or full nudity where private body parts are exposed) in front of Minor Participants.



d) Isolated One-on-One Interactions:

- At no time are unrelated Covered Adults permitted to be alone with a Minor Participant in a locker room, restroom, or changing area during Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions, except under emergency circumstances.
- If any Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions require the use of a facility that has access to a single set of such facilities, the Houston Wolves Soccer Club, where applicable, or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, where applicable, should designate times for use by Covered Adults, if any.

e) Monitoring:

- The Houston Wolves Soccer Club, where applicable, or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, where applicable, regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms, restrooms, and changing areas at facilities at which Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions are taking place to ensure compliance with these policies.

f) Non-Exclusive Facility:

- If the Houston Wolves Soccer Club or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations use a facility for Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions and multiple constituents use that facility, Covered Adults must adhere to the rules set forth here.

Recommended Components

a) To Minimize the Risk of Bullying and Hazing:

- The Houston Wolves Soccer Club, where applicable, or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, where applicable, use locker room monitors to ensure that minors are not left unattended in locker rooms, restrooms, and changing areas.

b) Monitoring Athlete's Whereabouts:

- Adults try to recognize when an athlete enters the locker room or changing area during practice and competition. If they do not return promptly, the Houston Wolves Soccer Club, where applicable, or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, where applicable, should check on the athlete's whereabouts.

c) Discouragement of Parents' Entry:

- The Houston Wolves Soccer Club and Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations only allow parents to enter locker rooms and change areas if it is essential. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent. Parents should inform a coach or administrator about this in advance if necessary.



SOCIAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS - Mandatory Components

- a) **Application:** This Policy applies to all Covered Adults.
- b) **Content:**
- All electronic communication originating from Covered Adults to Minor Participants should be professional.
- c) **Open and Transparent:**
- If a Covered Adult needs to communicate directly with a Minor Participant via electronic communications, another Covered Adult or the minor's legal guardian should be copied.
 - If a Minor Participant communicates to the Covered Adult privately first, the Covered Adult should respond to the Minor Participant with a copy to another Covered Adult or the minor's legal guardian.
 - A Covered Adult communicating electronically to the entire team should copy another Covered Adult.
 - Minor Participants may "friend, follow, add" the Houston Wolves Soccer Club or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations' official page(s).
- d) **Prohibited Electronic Communications:**
- Covered Adults are not permitted to communicate privately via electronic communications with Minor Participants except in emergencies. Covered Adults are not allowed to send "private messages," "instant messages," "direct messages," or send photos privately via Snapchat or Instagram to a Minor Participant.
 - Covered Adults are not permitted to maintain social media connections with Minor Participants; such Covered Adults are not allowed to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from Minor Participants, and existing social media connections with Minor Participants should be discontinued.
- e) **Requests to Discontinue:**
- Legal guardians may request in writing that their child, a Minor Participant, not be contacted through electronic communication by the Houston Wolves Soccer Club, Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, or by specific Covered Adult(s). The respective organization(s) or Covered Adult(s) should abide by any such request that their child, a Minor Participant, not be contacted via electronic communication in the absence of emergency circumstances.

Recommended Components

- a) **Hours:**
- Electronic communications should only be sent between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.



b) Monitoring:

- The Houston Wolves Soccer Club, where applicable, or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, where applicable, should monitor their respective social media pages and remove any posts that violate the organization's policies and practices for appropriate behavior.
- The Houston Wolves Soccer Club, where applicable, or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations, where applicable, should inform the legal guardian of a Minor Participant of any prohibited posts, as well as the organization's administrator(s).

LOCAL TRAVEL - Mandatory Components

a) **Application:** This Policy applies to all Covered Adults.

b) Transportation:

- The Houston Wolves Soccer Club or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations do not arrange for local travel.
- Covered Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian should not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated Minor Participant, absent emergency circumstances, and may only drive with at least two other Minor Participants or another adult at all times unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minor Participant's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.

Recommended Components

a) Shared or Carpool Travel Arrangement:

- Houston Wolves Soccer Club encourages parents/legal guardians to pick up their child, a Minor Participant, first and drop off their child, a Minor Participant, last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

TEAM TRAVEL - Mandatory Components

a) **Application:** This Policy applies to all Covered Adults.

b) Team/Competition Travel:

- When only one Covered Adult and one Minor Participant travel to a competition, the Minor Participant should have their legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with the Covered Adult.

c) Hotel Rooms:

- Covered Adults should not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a Minor Participant (unless the Covered Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the Minor Participant).



d) Meetings:

- Meetings should be conducted consistently with the Houston Wolves Soccer Club's Policy for one-on-one interactions – i.e., any such meeting should be observable and interruptible.
- Meetings should not be conducted in a hotel room.

Recommended Components

a) Team Travel Policies:

- Team travel policies should be signed and agreed to by all Minor Participants, parents, and Covered Adults traveling with the Houston Wolves Soccer Club or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organization(s).

b) Background Checks:

- Covered Adults who travel with the Houston Wolves Soccer Club or Houston Wolves Soccer Club member organizations should successfully pass a criminal background check and other screening requirements consistent with the organization's policies.

c) Two-Deep Leadership:

- Two-deep leadership and observable and interruptible environments should be maintained during team travel, room checks, meetings, or other activities.

Establishing Boundaries: Avoiding Gifts - Mandatory Components

Individuals who groom children will often provide unique gifts or privileges as a strategy to gain the child's trust and fill a need in their life before sexually abusing the child. Accordingly, the Houston Wolves Soccer Club discourages Participants, including employees and volunteers, from giving gifts or granting special privileges to athletes and prohibits any such gift or privilege not available to the entire team.

Appropriate Physical Contact - Mandatory Components

Houston Wolves Soccer Club adheres to the following principles and guidelines regarding physical contact with athletes:

1. Standard Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact

- Physical contact with athletes, for safety, consolation, and celebration, has multiple standard criteria that make it safe and appropriate. These include:
 - The physical contact takes place in public.
 - There is no potential for, or actual, sexual contact during the physical contact.
 - The physical contact is for the athlete's benefit, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.



A. Safety

- The safety of athletes is paramount, and appropriate physical contact can make the athletic space safer. Examples include:
 - Spotting an athlete to prevent injuries from falls or equipment.
 - Positioning an athlete's body to improve skills, spatial awareness, balance, and coordination.
 - Making athletes aware of potential harm from other athletes or equipment in use.

B. Celebration

- Participants often express joy through physical acts in sports. Encouraged public expressions of celebration include:
 - Greeting gestures include high-fives, fist bumps, and brief "side hugs."
 - Congratulatory gestures like celebratory hugs, "jump-around," and pats on the back for athletic or personal accomplishments.

C. Consolation

- Appropriate consolation for emotionally distressed athletes (e.g., injured or defeated) includes public gestures:
 - Embracing a crying athlete (in a public place or circumstance).
 - Putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them to calm them down ("side hugs").
 - Assisting a fallen athlete to encourage them to continue competing.

D. Supervision Generally

- Each minor should be supervised at a training session or any other time until picked up by their parent, older sibling, or designated adult. The last adult, in addition to the coach or athletic trainer, is recommended to wait at the site until the minor is picked up.

POLICY ON MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

Houston Wolves Soccer Club's Policy on Monitoring and Enforcement is established to create procedures for monitoring and enforcing the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Program.

Additionally, it sets forth an appropriate grievance process to address misconduct allegations following the report or complaint of misconduct. Houston Wolves Soccer Club treats all reports of potential violations of this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy seriously, committing to confidentiality and investigating allegations. The Houston Wolves Soccer Club Risk Management (R.M.) Committee or Houston Wolves Soccer Club Legal Counsel may conduct or manage investigations.



Additionally, it sets forth an appropriate grievance process to address misconduct allegations following the report or complaint of misconduct. Houston Wolves Soccer Club treats all reports of potential violations of this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy seriously, committing to confidentiality and investigating allegations. The Houston Wolves Soccer Club Risk Management (R.M.) Committee or Houston Wolves Soccer Club Legal Counsel may conduct or manage investigations.

To monitor and enforce the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy, Houston Wolves Soccer Club reserves the right to, either directly or through a contracted third-party service provider, survey, audit, require certifications of compliance with, or otherwise review compliance with this Policy by direct member organizations or those organizations that are indirectly affiliated with Houston Wolves Soccer Club via membership or participation with any Houston Wolves Soccer Club direct member organization. Any Houston Wolves Soccer Club direct member organizations, or those organizations that are indirectly affiliated with Houston Wolves Soccer Club via membership or participation with any Houston Wolves Soccer Club direct member organization, that fail to maintain compliance with this Policy will be subject to review by the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors. This failure to maintain compliance with this Policy may constitute a violation of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Bylaws.

The grievance process for potential policy violations will be materially free of bias and conflicts of interest. Additionally, the grievance process will include the opportunity for review by disinterested and unbiased fact finders and a right to appeal under Houston Wolves Soccer Club or U.S. Soccer Bylaws, Rules, and Policies.

Should the Houston Wolves Soccer Club R.M. committee or Houston Wolves Soccer Club Legal Counsel deem that an alleged violation of any provision of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy is supported, the Covered Adult who is alleged to have violated the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy will receive written notification in the form of an adverse action letter. An adverse action letter may include a temporary or permanent disqualification, a suspension, removal from future assignments, or other remedial action (e.g., probation) that impacts participation. Notwithstanding the preceding, Houston Wolves Soccer Club reserves the right to require additional training (e.g., SafeSport-certified training) from any participant at any time.

The Covered Adult has the right to an appeal hearing before the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors. The adverse action letter from the Houston Wolves Soccer Club R.M. Committee will include instructions on how to appeal the decision made by the Houston Wolves Soccer Club R.M. Committee. The Covered Adult has ten (10) calendar days from receiving the adverse action letter to submit an appeal in writing to the Houston Wolves Soccer Club State Office.



Once the Covered Adult receives the adverse action letter from the R.M. Committee, that individual must submit a written notice of appeal to the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors addressed to the Houston Wolves Soccer Club State Office. The Houston Wolves Soccer Club State Office must receive the written notice of appeal within ten (10) calendar days of accepting the adverse action letter. The individual forfeits all rights to appeal if the Houston Wolves Soccer Club State Office does not receive a written appeal request within the allotted period.

The appeal hearing date will be established at the discretion of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors. No members of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors, except the Houston Wolves Soccer Club President, who serves as an ex-officio member, will serve on the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Risk Management Committee. The Covered Adult may send materials to the Houston Wolves Soccer Club State Office to be reviewed by the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors before their hearing date. All materials must be received 5 (five) business days before their hearing date. All Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors present at the meeting may vote. A vote will be taken by the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors in a private session, and the decision will be relayed to the individual in written form ten business days from the meeting date.

The Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors shall have the authority to determine if the individual should be permitted to participate further in Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions despite the individual's receipt of an adverse action letter. The Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors determines the terms of reinstatements and disqualifications, where applicable.

As stated in the Background Screening Policy of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy, U.S. Soccer Policy 601-10 does not provide for the appeal of risk management policy disqualifications to the USSF Appeals Committee, for those disqualifications about the Background Screening Policy.

The decision of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Board of Directors shall be final and binding on all parties. Under U.S. Soccer Bylaw 704, the individual has the right to appeal a final decision rendered by Houston Wolves Soccer Club's process for violations of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Policy, excluding those decisions rendered about the Background Screening Policy of the Houston Wolves Soccer Club Athlete and Participant Safety Program.



Definitions for Terms Included in Program

a) **Adult Applicant:**

For the Background Screening Policy within Houston Wolves Soccer Club's Athlete and Participant Safety Policy, an Adult Applicant includes any individual aged 18 or older who is a coach, assistant coach, team manager, assistant team manager, team trainer, team official, Houston Wolves Soccer Club employee, Houston Wolves Soccer Club board member, Houston Wolves Soccer Club committee member, Houston Wolves Soccer Club independent contractor, Club or League President, Club or League Delegate, Club or League Official, Club or League Representative, Club or League Administrator, Club or League Volunteer, or referee, or any other individual aged 18 or older seeking affiliation with Houston Wolves Soccer Club or Houston Wolves Soccer Club affiliated member organizations, who has regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor.

b) **U.S. Center for SafeSport:**

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is an independent 501(c)(3) authorized under the SafeSport Act, with jurisdiction over the USOC and NGBs about safeguarding amateur athletes against abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in sports, and which has been further tasked with specific duties in the areas of education and outreach, policy development, and response and resolution.

c) **Core SafeSport Training:**

The U.S. Center for SafeSport's online training, which consists of three modules:

1. Sexual Misconduct Awareness Education.
2. Mandatory Reporting.
3. Emotional & Physical Misconduct or the U.S. Center for SafeSport's in-person PPT-approved training.

d) **Covered Adults:**

This Policy uses the term "Covered Adults" to refer to those adults (aged 18 and older) to whom these policies apply. Covered Adults are required to follow all policies included in Houston Wolves Soccer Club's Athlete and Participant Safety Policy. Covered Adults include adult individuals (aged 18 and over) authorized directly by Houston Wolves Soccer Club or indirectly by a club/league directly affiliated with Houston Wolves Soccer Club to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor.

Examples of Covered Adults include but are not limited to:

- Houston Wolves Soccer Club board members;
- Houston Wolves Soccer Club committee members;
- Houston Wolves Soccer Club employees and independent contractors;
- Club and League Presidents, Club and League Delegates, Club and League Representatives, Club and League Administrators, and Club and League Volunteers;



- Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Managers, Assistant Team Managers, Team Officials, and Team Trainers; and
- Referees*

**While Referees, Referee Coaches, Referee Mentors, Referee Assignors, and other Referee Program-Affiliated Personnel are expected to adhere to these policies due to referee involvement in Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions, it is understood that these individuals are also subject to any policies set forth by the local Referee Committee or U.S. Soccer Policy.*

e) Minor Participants:

Any participant, whether athlete, referee, or otherwise, who is under the lesser of (1) 18 or (2) the age of majority in the applicable state and who is participating in Houston Wolves Soccer Club-sanctioned activities and competitions.

f) National Governing Body (NGB):

A U.S. Olympic National Governing Body, Pan American Sport Organization, or Paralympic Sport Organization recognized by the United States Olympic Committee under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. §§ 220501-220529. U.S. Soccer is a National Governing Body.

g) Routine or Regular Contact with an Amateur Athlete Who Is a Minor:

Recurring, repeated, or periodic contact between an adult and a minor.

h) Authority Over Those Adults Who Have Routine or Regular Contact with an Amateur Athlete Who Is a Minor:

Supervisory or decision-making authority over an adult who has recurring, repeated, or periodic contact with minors.

i) SafeSport Refresher Course:

The U.S. Center for SafeSport's online training course(s) is designed for those who have completed the initial "Core SafeSport Training" or the Center's in-person PPT-approved training designated as "refresher" courses.

j) The SafeSport Act:

Public Law 115-126, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017.

k) USOC:

The United States Olympic Committee.