

Patriot FC Misconduct Policy

Introduction

At Patriot FC, the welfare and safety of all individuals involved in our programs are of paramount importance. This policy outlines our unwavering commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for every participant. "Participants" encompass players, coaches, volunteers, employees, and parents who engage in any event affiliated with Patriot FC Soccer.

Zero Tolerance for Abuse

Patriot FC stands united with a zero-tolerance stance against any form of abuse. We hold all participants responsible for actively contributing to the creation and maintenance of a secure environment.

Prohibited Activities and Misconduct: Sexual Misconduct

Patriot FC strictly prohibits any form of sexual misconduct. Such behavior violates our Risk Management Policy and is deemed unacceptable in any setting associated with Patriot FC, including off the field interactions.

Sexual misconduct is defined as follows

1. Any sexual interaction, whether physical or non-physical, that is forced, exploitative, harassing, aggressive, or threatening.
2. Any sexual interaction involving a participant and an individual with direct, indirect, or evaluative authority. Such relationships often involve power imbalances, age or developmental disparities, and potential exploitation, impairing sound judgment.
3. Any conduct or actions classified as sexual abuse or misconduct under state or federal law.

Sexual misconduct can occur among adults, adults and minors, or minors themselves. It's essential to recognize that minors lack the legal capacity to consent to adult-initiated sexual activity. Consequently, any form of sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Examples of sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to:

Inappropriate Physical Contact

- Prolonged or recurring embraces exceeding acceptable physical boundaries.
- Engaging in tickling, horseplay, or wrestling that crosses into discomfort.
- Persistently maintaining physical contact that distresses a participant.

Sharing Sexually Oriented Materials with Athletes

- Deliberately sharing explicit content with athletes.
- Engaging in sexually explicit conversations with athletes.

Exposure to Nudity

- Purposefully exposing athletes to nudity, except in shared changing areas.

Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse

- Child-to-child sexual interactions may be considered abuse depending on factors such as aggression, age differences, power imbalances, and intellectual capabilities. Any suspicions or allegations of such behavior must be reported.

Adult-Child Sexual Interaction

- Any sexual interactions between adults and minors are strictly prohibited.

Emotional Misconduct

Any behavior categorized as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law, such as child abuse or child neglect, is considered emotional misconduct. Emotional misconduct, in any form, is strictly prohibited within the Patriot FC community. Emotional misconduct is characterized by deliberate non-contact behaviors that possess the potential to inflict emotional or psychological harm on another individual. These behaviors encompass verbal or physical acts, as well as actions that withhold attention or support.

It is important to note that emotional misconduct excludes coaching methods recognized within the profession for enhancing skills, physical conditioning, team cohesion, employing appropriate discipline, or enhancing athletic performance.

Physical Misconduct

Any act or behavior that falls under the description of physical abuse or misconduct in accordance with federal or state law, such as child abuse, child neglect, or assault, is classified as physical misconduct. All forms of physical misconduct are expressly prohibited within Patriot FC. Physical misconduct, for example, may include conduct, whether involving contact or non-contact, that results in or reasonably threatens to cause physical harm to another person.

It is vital to understand that physical misconduct does not encompass coaching techniques that are well-regarded in the field, such as those employed for skill development, physical conditioning, team unity, appropriate discipline, or the enhancement of athletic performance. For example, while regulated contact is acceptable in combat sports, such contact has no place within soccer.

Bullying

Patriot FC vehemently opposes and forbids the intentional, persistent, and repetitive pattern of engaging in or tolerating physical or non-physical behaviors that are designed or could reasonably result in fear, humiliation, or physical harm. This is done with the intention of socially excluding, diminishing, or isolating targeted athletes as a condition of their membership.

It is important to differentiate between bullying and group or team behaviors that either (a) establish accepted norms within the team, or (b) foster team unity.

Hazing

Patriot FC strictly prohibits coercion, requirement, force, or the willful tolerance of any degrading, unwelcome, or hazardous activities that serve as prerequisites for (a) joining a group or (b) gaining social acceptance from the group's members.

This policy clarifies that hazing does not encompass group or team activities that (a) aim to establish customary team behaviors or (b) foster team unity.

Furthermore, tolerating any form of misconduct is considered a breach of this policy.

Participant Interactions: Volunteer Requirements

All volunteers are mandated to complete the necessary background checks as specified by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer's Risk Management Policy.

- Additionally, following EPYSA guidelines, all volunteers are required to undergo SafeSport Training. We reserve the right to decline volunteer participation based on the criteria outlined in the EPYSA risk management policy.
- All clearances must be fulfilled prior to the commencement of the new soccer year, which starts on August 1. Trainers, Coaches, and Volunteers will not be eligible to participate until their clearances are finalized and approved.

One-on-One Interactions at Patriot FC Facilities

Observable and Interruptible

One-on-one interactions involving a minor and an adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at our facility are permissible, provided that such interactions take place within view of and within immediate reach of another supervising adult. Isolated one-on-one interactions between minors and adults (who are not the minors' legal guardians) at our facility are not allowed, except in cases of emergency.

Meetings

Meetings between adults and minors at our facilities are only allowed when another adult is present, except in emergency situations. Such meetings must occur in areas where supervision is easy, and an intervening adult is nearby.

- If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open.
- Whenever possible, meetings should occur in offices with windows, ensuring that blinds and/or curtains remain open throughout the meeting.

Individual Training Sessions

Individual training sessions are private agreements between individual trainers and the respective player's family, separate from Patriot FC. At any facility, individual training sessions involving adults and minors are permitted only if they occur within view and immediate access of

another supervising adult. The adult must secure written consent from the minor's legal guardian prior to the session. Parents, guardians, and caregivers must be permitted to observe these sessions. Consent for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months.

Out-of-Program Contacts

In circumstances outside the official program, adults are prohibited from engaging one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes (including, but not limited to, situations at homes, restaurants, and in private transportation) unless explicit consent from the parent/legal guardian has been granted for each out-of-program interaction. However, such arrangements are strongly discouraged.

Locker Rooms, Restrooms, and Changing Areas

Use of Recording Devices

Recording devices, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras, are strictly prohibited in locker rooms, restrooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at any facility. Exceptions can be considered for media and championship celebrations, subject to approval by the Covered Organization and the presence of two or more adults.

Undress

Under no circumstances should an unrelated adult disrobe or expose themselves (partial or full nudity) in front of minor athletes at any facility.

Isolated One-on-One Interactions

Unrelated adults are prohibited from being alone with a minor in locker rooms, restrooms, or changing areas at any facility, unless it is an emergency situation.

Social Media & Electronic Communications

Content

All electronic communications from participating adults to minor amateur athletes must maintain a professional tone.

Open and Transparent

- When participating adults need to communicate with minor amateur athletes through electronic means, another participating adult or the minor's legal guardian should be included in the communication.
- If a minor athlete initiates private communication, the participating adult's response should be copied to another participating adult or the minor's legal guardian.
- When a participating adult communicates to the entire team, another participating adult should be copied.

Amateur Athletes' Access to Official Social Media Pages

Minor amateur athletes are permitted to connect with the organization's official social media pages.

Prohibited Electronic Communications

- Participating adults cannot engage in private electronic communication with minor amateur athletes, except during emergencies.
- "Private messaging," "instant messaging," "direct messaging," and sending photos privately to minor athletes via any electronic platform or social media is not allowed.
- Participating adults are not permitted to establish or maintain social media connections with minor amateur athletes. Existing connections should be terminated, and participating adults should not accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor amateur athletes.

Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians have the right to request in writing that their child not be contacted through electronic communication by the organization or participating adults. Patriot FC will honor such requests unless there are emergency circumstances.

Reporting Responsibilities

In alignment with Patriot FC's uncompromising stance against abuse, we ask that the Patriot FC community alert the club to any situation that places an athlete or member at risk as it relates to Patriot FC activities. Parents and players are urged to report any concerns involving inappropriate conduct to any Patriot FC representative, including coaches, trainers, employees, or volunteers directly to the Patriot FC Risk Management Officer and the Patriot FC President.

All individuals acting as Patriot FC representatives, including coaches, volunteers, trainers, and employees, who supervise Patriot FC athletes and members, are entrusted with ensuring the rigorous enforcement of policies dedicated to the safety and safeguarding of our athletes. They are obligated to promptly report any suspicions of misconduct.

Again, all potential violations of this policy must be reported to the Patriot FC Risk Management Officer and the Patriot FC President.

Child Abuse Mandated Reporting

In cases involving child abuse, Patriot FC participants are bound by the Child Protective Services Laws and procedures as detailed at <http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov>.

- Instances of child abuse must be reported within 24 hours through Childline at 800.932.0313 or via <http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov>.
- All Patriot FC coaches, trainers, employees, and volunteers are considered mandated reporters, in accordance with [keepkidssafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov)'s definition. Mandated reporters are individuals—whether compensated or not—who, owing to their integral role within a consistent program, activity, or service, bear responsibility for the child's well-being or have direct interaction with children.

Enforcement of Policies

- Any individual accused of engaging in a prohibited act or any act that jeopardizes a child's well-being will be promptly suspended from all Patriot FC activities. This suspension remains in effect throughout any inquiry by Patriot FC, law enforcement, or child protective agencies.
- A breach of these policies may lead to immediate and indefinite exclusion from Patriot FC activities.
- The final determination concerning policy infringements and ongoing participation rests with Patriot FC's Board, encompassing the Patriot FC Risk Management Officer and the Patriot FC President.
- Failing to report a prohibited act, as defined in this policy, constitutes a violation of Patriot FC's Risk Management Policy itself and warrants dismissal or removal.
- Coaches, trainers, employees, or volunteers who neglect to report a prohibited act could face limitations on their participation in future Patriot FC activities.

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017

On February 14, 2018, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 was signed into law, coming into immediate effect. The full legislation can be reviewed [here](#), and the following outlines the mandatory reporting of child abuse requirements:

24 Hour Mandate

All adults authorized to engage with minor or amateur athletes are obligated to report any suspicions of child abuse, including sexual abuse, within a 24-hour timeframe.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse, as defined by this legislation, encompasses physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, and negligent treatment of a child.

Reports to Proper Agencies

Reports of child abuse must be directed to the appropriate local law enforcement agency, local child protective services agency with jurisdiction over investigating child abuse, protecting child abuse victims, or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Failure to Report

Individuals mandated to report suspected child sexual abuse are subject to criminal penalties, which may include fines and imprisonment for up to one year if they fail to fulfill their reporting duty.

Additional State Law Requirements

These obligations augment any state law requirements that an individual may have within a specific jurisdiction.

Sources

- [Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Risk Management Policy](#)
- [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)
- [Parent/Guardian Handbook for Safer Sport](#)
- [KeepKidsSafe PA](#)