



Youth Abuse Prevention Policy & Procedures

As a youth-serving organization, Humble Atascocita Area Baseball Association (HABA) considers the safety and well-being of the youth in our programs a top priority. We prohibit abuse and strive to proactively address reports of this type of conduct. We want to hear about problems or concerns, and we will strive to act on them in a fair way in accordance with our policies.

We will report suspected abuse to the proper law enforcement agencies.

Policy and Procedures:

HABA has adopted the following Policy and Procedures in an effort to provide a safe environment for our coaches, athletes, and their families.

1) The Volunteer Recruitment process shall include the following:

- a) Volunteer Application – Every coach and volunteer working with youth must complete our organization's written application that sets forth appropriate background information, requires disclosure of any prior claims or allegations of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct.
- b) Background Check – All current and potential volunteers will be subject to a criminal background check, including appropriate inquiries regarding any previous record of sexual abuse or other unlawful activity. This background check will be updated annually for each volunteer.
- c) Screening – A designated representative of the organization will review all applications and present them to the Board of Directors for approval.

2) Prohibited Behavior

- a) Use of degrading language or behavior.
 - Coaches are also responsible for stopping disrespectful behavior between team members, including sexual harassment.
- b) Threatening or intentionally inflicting physical injury upon anyone, especially a minor.
 - Coaches are also responsible for stopping threatening behavior by players.

- c) Committing any sexual offense against a minor, or engaging in any sexual contact with a minor.
- d) Making any sexual advance, or engaging in other verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a minor.
- e) Non-related one-adult/one-child interaction except in an emergency where following this policy would be dangerous to the child. In an emergency situation, the coach or volunteer must contact a representative of the organization to inform him or her of this contact and the reason for it.

If a child is receiving individual instruction or working with a private coach, this activity must be in a public setting rather than behind closed doors.

3) **Reporting of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse**

- a) A member of the Board of Directors or other official representative will be designated to receive reports of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct. This representative will promptly notify the proper law enforcement agencies.
 - b) All coaches, volunteers, parents and program participants are directed to report any incident of abuse or suspected abuse that they witness or that is reported to them to the designated representative of the Board of Directors within 24 hours.
Note: This does not preclude individuals from reporting abuse or suspected abuse to the proper law enforcement authorities.
 - c) The designated representative will keep other Board members fully informed.
 - d) Should a suspected incidence of abuse be reported, the coach/volunteer in question may be temporarily suspended from duties while an investigation takes place.
 - e) The Board of Directors, when appropriate, shall communicate reports of child abuse to the league members. The confidentiality of any who makes such a report will be protected.
- 4) This **Abuse Prevention Policy** shall be provided to coaches, volunteers and parents at the beginning of each season.

Protecting Youth Athletes from Sexual Abuse Key Actions for Parents and Coaches

You can't identify child predators by how they look. The key is to pay attention to behavior.

What can you do as a parent?

- Ask your organization's leadership for its policy on protecting athletes from abuse.
- A major key to child protection is "No secrets." Tell your children that any problems, favors, gifts, or touch should never be a secret.
- Give your children language to use if someone is making them feel uncomfortable. Teach them to say, *"Please stop! This makes me feel uncomfortable."*
- Encourage kids to tell you any time someone's behavior makes them feel unsafe. Even if you feel concerned about what a child has told you, act calm and ask open-ended questions like, *"Tell me more about this."*
- Tell your children you want them to tell you any time they have a safety problem even if it's uncomfortable to talk about, even if someone might get upset. Assure them you will do everything you can to keep them safe.
- If your child is receiving individual instruction or working with a private coach, make sure you can drop in any time, that your child knows personal safety skills, and that activities happen in public settings.
- If something makes you uncomfortable, address the coach calmly and respectfully. If you don't get a satisfactory response, take your concerns to organizational leadership, or perhaps the police if appropriate.
- Listen to your gut feelings. If anything seems wrong, even if you can't prove anything, have the courage to ask questions and to be persistent until you are satisfied. Potential abusers look for youth who do not have strong advocates, so your speaking up can help protect your child!

What can you do as a coach?

- Recognize that you are part of a network of people committed to protecting kids in youth sports!
- Avoid being alone with an athlete, except in the case of an emergency.