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

On February 14th, 2018, the President signed the **Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017** (the "Law"), which is aimed at protecting amateur athletes* from sexual abuse. What exactly does the Law state?

The Law has a three-pronged approach:

1. Any adult interacting with amateur athletes in the program has a duty to report abuse and or suspected abuse within a 24 hour period. EVERY adult is a mandatory reporter.
2. The statute of limitations is extended for up to 10 years after a victim realizes he or she was abused.
3. Limits an athlete under the age of 18 from being alone with an adult who is not their parent.

**What is an amateur athlete?* Any child or minor under the age of 18. Legislation is available for download (click here).

What are the requirements for National Governing Body's (NGB) and NGB-Affiliated?

Reporting: A mechanism that allows a complaint to be easily reported for a reasonable suspicion of Sexual or Physical abuse/neglect, within a 24 hour period of awareness. Federal regulations state that reports should be made to a) local law enforcement and b) local/state child protective services c) US Soccer, and d) the US Center for SafeSport. **EVERYONE is a MANDATORY REPORTER.**

Mechanism for Reporting: Everyone listed below MUST be contacted when physical or sexual abuse is suspected

1) **Local Law Enforcement – Westport Police Department: (203) 341-6000 or https://www.westportct.gov/government/departments-a-z/police-department**
2) **State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF): 1-800-842-2288 (TDD: 1-800-624-5518)**
3) **WSA Risk Management Director Contact Information: Tara McCarthy taralisamccarthy@gmail.com; WSA President Contact Information: James Wolf president@westportsoccer.org**

4) **Connecticut Junior Soccer Association's Main Office: (860) 676-1161 or executivedirector@cjsa.org**
5) **National Governing Body (NGB)**
   a. **US Soccer Integrity Hotline Number: (312) 528 – 7004**
   b. **US Soccer: https://www.ussoccer.com/integrity-hotline**
   c. **US Center for SafeSport: https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern**

Other forms of misconduct such as emotional abuse, bullying, hazing, or harassment.

1. WSA Risk Management Director Contact Information: Tara McCarthy taralisamccarthy@gmail.com; WSA President Contact Information: James Wolf president@westportsoccer.org
2. Club or BOD Review/Hearing – There is a process in place to document and address this other misconduct. The decision of the WSA or BOD will be sent to the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association's Main Office.

CJSA member clubs and club personnel can access Mandated Reporters Training provided by Connecticut's DCF in two different ways, one for individuals and one for group sessions:

1) The first, for individuals, is through an on-line training video produced and provided by the DCF and available via the internet. Any interested individual can gain access to the approved DCF video training (it takes about 60-90 minutes to complete) simply by completing a required DCF Inquiry Form available at https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/Mandated-Reporter-Training/Home

A link embedded in the form will take you directly to the training video after completion of required information.

2) A second way that is open to clubs who would like to provide a group training session to its members is to invite certified DCF personnel available across the State of Connecticut who will provide Mandated Reporters Training to any size group. This service through Connecticut's DCF is available free of charge to CJSA club and district meetings upon request. To access this type of group training use https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/Mandated-Reporter-Training/Home

CJSA/DSA strongly encourages its member clubs to have ALL of its coaches, administrators and volunteers whether they are paid employees of the club or

volunteers to take the time to learn as much as possible about this important issue and to take the Mandated Reporter Training at their earliest convenience.

For more information about the work of DCF, please go to the DCF's website home at: https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/Mandated-Reporter-Training/Home

U.S. Center for SafeSport fact sheet: https://www.safesport.org/files/details/78

U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION

Communication from U.S. Soccer to our Members:

This is to flag a new piece of legislation that affects many of our members. We are sending it to our organizational member list because many of you may meet the definition of "covered individuals" in this new legislation, and could, therefore, impact your organization. Please read it carefully, and watch for additional updates, including at the upcoming April Member Meetings, for more information from U.S. Soccer on this important topic. This summary is not intended to supplant the need to review the statute and we urge our members to reach out with questions. In addition, you may also wish to consult your own counsel regarding how this new law will impact your organization.

On February 14, 2018, the **Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017** was signed into law and became effective immediately. The legislation is available for download HERE. The U.S. Center for SafeSport has released a fact sheet about the legislation which can be found HERE.
In addition to the U.S. Center for SafeSport's factsheet, which provides information regarding the entire law, we wanted to provide additional detail on the specific mandatory reporting of child abuse requirements included in the new legislation because these requirements may impact you immediately:

- The bill amends the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 **to extend the duty to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to all adults who are authorized to interact with minor or amateur athletes** by a national governing body, a member of a national governing body, or an amateur sports organization that participates in interstate or international amateur athletic competition. These individuals are called "covered individuals" in the new legislation.

- Child abuse is defined as physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or negligent treatment of a child.

- Per current federal regulations, reports of child abuse should be made to the local law enforcement agency or local child protective services agency that has jurisdiction to investigate reports of child abuse or to protect child abuse victims or to the FBI. These regulations have not yet been updated to reflect the recent change in the law. Until such time as the regulations are updated, U.S. Soccer will make reports to (1) local law enforcement where any alleged incident took place to the extent it can be determined and the incident occurred in the United States, (2) local law enforcement where the victim resides if different than (1), and (3) the FBI.

- An individual who is required, but fails, to report suspected child sexual abuse is subject to criminal penalties including fines and up to one (1) year in jail.

- These obligations are in addition to any State law requirements that an individual may have in a particular jurisdiction.

If you make a report of child abuse to law enforcement, please also communicate this report to the U.S. Soccer integrity hotline at https://www.ussoccer.com/integrity-hotline or (312) 528-7004 and the U.S. Center for SafeSport at https://safesport.org/response-resolution/report. As a reminder, as a member or affiliate of U.S. Soccer, you may be subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport under certain circumstances. The Center serves an important investigatory and remedial function where law enforcement may choose or be unable to act.