

# West Elk Soccer Association

## KIDSAFE Handbook

### INTRODUCTION

The West Elk Soccer Association (WESA) is a not-for-profit organization devoted to promoting and fostering the development of soccer for youth and adults living in, and visiting, the Gunnison Valley. We are dedicated to providing our participants with a fun, high-quality soccer experience that encourages sportsmanship and a love of the game through the development of player, coach, referee, and team.

We meet this mission by providing safe soccer programs through meeting and exceeding safety standards set forth by parks and the recreation industry, pertinent sports leagues and known best practices.

The WESA KIDSAFE Program contains guidelines to maintain the safety of minors while participating in and traveling for WESA events. This document cannot predict or prevent accidents; however these rules will help to protect participants and volunteers alike. The rules contained herein are intended for the safety of participants while involved in WESA programs. This document does not guarantee the safety of participants while not participating in WESA programs.

The **WESA KIDSAFE Program** meets or exceeds the requirements **Colorado Youth Soccer's KIDSAFE Program**. WESA has ZERO TOLERANCE for abuse and misconduct.

### DEFINITIONS

The follows terms and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed to them below wherever used in this KIDSAFE Handbook:

- “Child(ren), Player, Participant, Athlete, Minor and Youth” shall refer to anyone under the age of 18.
- “Department” shall refer to the West Elk Soccer Association.
- “Participant” or “participant” means and includes any person that is registered with WESA.
- “Knows or should know” is used in certain sections of this Handbook with reference to a responsible adult that has knowledge of certain prohibited activities or conduct or, had that adult been properly performing their responsibilities, would have had knowledge of the prohibited activities or conduct.
- “Responsible adult” shall mean and refer to a person within WESA that has either been assigned or has assumed certain duties within a local program or for a particular team.
- All references to a “parent” shall mean and refer to a parent and/or guardian, as appropriate.

- “KIDSAFE Program” The Olympic Community’s initiative to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport.
- “CYS KidSafe Program” Colorado Youth Soccer (CYS) KidSafe Program supports the USA Soccer Federation’s Bylaw 212, Section 1 (7), which mandate risk management programs within each National State Association.

## **COLORADO LEGISLATION**

The Department’s KIDSAFE Program was created to address this enacted Colorado Legislation. Specifically Section F 1) stipulates:

1. The reporting of abuse, neglect, or sexual assault on a child is a matter of public concern. Personnel who are employed by CYS or Member Clubs (Executive Directors, General Managers, coaches, assistant coaches or athletic program personnel) are required to report suspected abuse, neglect or sexual assault of a player. Persons who have reasonable cause to know or suspect that a player has been subjected to abuse, neglect or sexual assault or has observed a player being subject to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse, neglect, or sexual assault shall report his or her suspicion to the Risk Management Coordinator or the Board of their organization who shall then direct the proper Club official to forward the report to law enforcement with a copy sent to the CYS Risk Management Coordinator.
  - a. Child abuse or neglect means an act or omission of parental care that threatens the health or welfare of a child.
  - b. A child is neglected if a parent, guardian, or legal custodian has abandoned the child, has subjected him or her to mistreatment or abuse or has allowed another to mistreat or abuse the child.

## **CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Department will perform the following actions:

- Promote and implement WESA KIDSAFE Policy to safeguard the well-being of its players and to prevent abuse and misconduct from occurring.
- Require all screened volunteers to complete a coach / manager application.
- Conduct KIDSAFE Training for coaches, instructors and managers.
- Conduct KIDSAFE Training for parents and participants.
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by WESA KIDSAFE Policy.
- Respond to any allegations, disclosure or concern of misconduct or abuse of a participant.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of the KIDSAFE Program and make any necessary changes.
- Have open and regular communication with parents of a participant regarding any concerns or issues.
- Appoint a KIDSAFE Coordinator (KFC). A Kid Safe Coordinator for CYS sanctioned programs will be appointed.

- Require all coaches, instructors, volunteers, parents and participants to report any violations of policy contained within this document.
- Conduct a national background check on the following “screened” members involved with the program at a minimum, once every two years:
  - Members of the Board of Directors
  - Program Director
  - Coaches / Instructors
  - Team managers
  - Officials
  - Anyone with routine access to youth participants

The Department reserves the right for immediate denial of acceptance of volunteers under any of, but not limited to, the following conditions:

- Falsification of information on the application
- Falsification of information in the background check process
- Refusal to complete either the application or background check
- Failure of a screened member to report any alleged charge that falls under the KIDSAFE policy
- Reports of violations of guidelines contained within this document
- Conviction or accusations of any violent acts, acts against a minor, or other acts the Department views as possibly compromising the safety of participants.
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## **ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT**

The guidelines contained within this document address the following types of abuse and misconduct:

### **Misconduct**

Conduct which results in harm, the potential for harm, or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are seven types of misconduct in sport: emotional, physical, sexual, threats, bullying, harassment and hazing.

### **Sexual Abuse and Harassment**

Sexual abuse of a minor occurs when an adult employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant touches a minor for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either the minor or the employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant. Child sexual abuse includes all acts that are performed for the perpetrator’s sexual gratification.

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment prohibited by this Policy. It shall be a violation for any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant to harass a participant(s) through conduct or communications of a sexual nature or to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation. Any conduct of a sexual nature

directed by a minor toward an adult or by an adult to a minor is presumed to be unwelcome and shall constitute sexual harassment.

### **Grooming Behaviors**

Grooming is the process of desensitization that predators use on children to prepare and trick them into accepting sexual abuse. Grooming is a way for the perpetrator to gain trust and confidence and draws the victim into a secret sexual relationship. Grooming can include but is not limited to: targeting a victim; isolation; meeting the child's needs; giving a child special attention; buying gifts; and having power and control over a child.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse means physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse also includes physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit an athlete with objects or sports equipment.

In addition to physical contact or the threat of physical contact with a participant, physical abuse also includes the providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of consent and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant.

## **ELECTRONICS COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

As part of the Department's emphasis on participant safety, communications involving our minor participants should be appropriate, productive, and transparent. Effective communication concerning travel, practice or game schedules, and administrative issues among coaches, administrators, players and their families is critical. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media, and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and is understandings and also provides potential offenders with unsupervised and potentially inappropriate access to participants. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct. Adherence to the Electronic Policy helps reduce these risks.

- All electronic communication between coach and player must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.
- Coaches, players and all team personnel must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication.
- All content between coaches and players should be readily available to share with the public or families of the player or coach.
- Coaches and team representative's cell phone use with players should be minimal and only used for team business when it is necessary.
- If the player is under the age of 18, any email, text, social media, or similar communication must also copy or include the player's parents.

- Players should advise their parents of calls being received that are more than team related communications.
- Parents should occasionally check their player's cell phone records to identify the numbers and time of day called. Any calls after normal "team" events should be discussed with their player.

Many teams have initiated websites. Basic risk management of these sites should be practiced to minimize and hopefully prevent putting players at risk.

- Team rosters should NOT be posted on a website.
- No individually identifiable player photographs or information on address, interests, hobbies or siblings should be mentioned.
- No "contact lists" that includes each child's name, parent's business phone, home phone or household email.
- Clubs should consider Cyber-Situations within their Rules and Codes of Conduct.
- A code of conduct that explicitly includes dealing with negative public postings on Internet sites.
- Expectations of good behavior – including good on-line behavior – should be reviewed with players by coaches and/or team administrators.

### **Social Media**

Social media makes it easy to share ideas and experiences. WESA and CSA recognizes, however, that social media, mobile and other electronic communications can be especially concerning where minor participants are involved. Coaches are prohibited from having players joined to their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media application. To facilitate communication, an official organization or team page may be set up and players and parents may join (i.e., "friend") the official organization or team page and coaches can communicate to players through the site. All electronic communication of any kind between coach and player, including use of social media, must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team oriented motivational purposes.

### **Email, Text Messaging and Similar Electronic Communications**

Coaches, team managers and players may use email and text messaging to communicate. All email and text message content between coaches/team managers and players must be non-personal in nature and be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Emails and text messages from a coach to any minor participant must include a copy to parents. Where possible, a coach should be provided and use the organization web site email center (the coach's return email address will contain "@organization.com") for all communications with the team and players.

### **Request To Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery with Athlete**

Following receipt of a written request by the parents of a minor player that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by coaches or other adults, the local program, team, coaches and administrators shall immediately comply with such request without any repercussions for such request.

## **Abuse and Misconduct**

Social media and other means of electronic communication can be used to commit abuse and misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant of a WESA program will not be tolerated and are considered violations of CSA's KIDSAFE Program.

## **TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

A significant portion of the Department's participation involves travel, possibly overnight, for youth teams to practices, games and tournaments. Minor players are most vulnerable to abuse or misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a greater risk of player to player misconduct. The policy directs how minor players will be supervised between and during travel to and from practice and competitions. Adherence to travel policies helps to reduce the opportunities for misconduct.

The Department does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange travel. The parents of participants are responsible for making all travel arrangements.

### **Local Travel**

- The employees, coaches, and/or volunteers of a local program or team, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor and should only drive with at least two other players or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor's parent.
- Where an employee, coach and/or volunteer is involved in an unrelated minor player's local travel, efforts should be made to ensure that the adult personnel are not alone with the unrelated player, by, for example, picking up or dropping off the players in groups.
- Employees, coaches and volunteers who are also a player's parent or guardian may provide shared transportation for any player(s) if they pick up their player first and drop off their player last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
- It is recognized that in some limited instances it will be unavoidable for an employee, coach or volunteer of a local program or team to drive alone with an unrelated minor player. However, efforts should be made to minimize these occurrences and to mitigate any circumstances that could lead to allegations of abuse or misconduct.

### **Overnight Travel**

- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the player).
- The team shall provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones (for example, a recommended number would include at least one coach or adult chaperone for every five to eight players). If a team is composed of both male and female players, then it is recommended that chaperones are arranged of the same gender.

- Players should share rooms with other players of the same gender, with the appropriate number of players assigned per room depending on accommodations.
- Regular monitoring and curfew checks should be made of each room by at least two properly screened adults. All coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones travelling with a team shall be familiar with the KIDSAFE Program Handbook to monitor compliance with all KIDSAFE Policies.
- The team personnel shall ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels.
- Individual meetings between a player and coach may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms.
- All players shall be permitted to make regular check in phone calls to parents. Team personnel shall allow for any unscheduled check in phone calls initiated by either the player or parents.
- Family members who wish to stay in the team hotel shall be permitted and encouraged to do so.
- The team shall make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental requests when a child is away from home without a parent.
- Specific travel itineraries will be distributed to parents when they are available and will include a detailed itinerary as well as contact information for all team personnel and chaperones.
- If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, parents will be notified before any action is taken.
- No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.
- In all cases involving travel, parents have the right to transport their minor player and have the minor player stay in their hotel room.

## **BOUNDARIES / PHYSICAL CONTACT GUIDELINES**

It is sometimes appropriate and necessary to have direct physical contact with players in order to develop their skills. This policy has been created to provide practical guidance for the Department's coaches and instructors to keep participants safe and promote a safe environment for staff and members. Rules for physical contact must be set to reduce the potential for misconduct. Players, coaches, volunteers and organization members are required to follow this policy and to report immediately those who violate them.

### **Accepted Behaviors, within Boundaries**

- Physical Contact
  - Occurs in public or in the presence of others
  - For the purpose of developing skill or technique
  - No potential for physical or sexual intimacies during contact
  - Is for the benefit of the player

- Celebratory gestures such as: high-fives, fist bumps, pats on the back, shoulder and head
- Consolation gestures such as side hugs
- Assisting an injured player, preventing an injury, or treating an injury
- In a non-threatening, non-sexual manner
- One on One
  - Always work in open environments visible to others
  - Try to provide lessons with other coaches at the same time
  - Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance when working with participants to avoid any confusion
  - Have conversations in public view
  - If a sensitive conversation must take place, involve another coach or parent
- Extracurricular
  - Parents of participants are exempt from boundary violations between themselves and their child(ren)
  - Gift exchanges as part of a team activity with full participation

### **Unaccepted Behaviors, Boundary Violations**

- Obvious or inappropriate preferential treatment of a participant
- One on one time in private
- Excessive time spent outside of practice with a participant
- Repeated time spent in private space with a participant
- Befriending parents or making excessive home visits
- Acting as a particular participant's "confidante"
- Giving gifts
- Inappropriate calls or emails to participants and/or their families
- Direct communication between coaches and participants without involving parents
- Overly affectionate behavior with a participant
- Other athletes must report a suspected inappropriate relationship Does not follow or support the Department's rules and policies
- Tells participant that he/she needs the coach to succeed in sport or life
- Attempts to control athlete on and off the field
- Prohibited Physical Contact:
  - Lap sitting
  - Frontal hugs
  - Slapping, hitting, punching or kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from participant
  - Playful yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g. tickling, horseplay, wrestling)
  - Continued physical contact that makes a participant uncomfortable
  - Contact involving touching of genital area, buttocks or breasts



- Physical contact that intentionally causes or has the potential to cause the player to sustain bodily harm or injury
- Physical or sexual abuse or harassment
- Kissing

## **REPORTING POLICY**

WESA believes it is the responsibility of all members, staff, volunteers, parents and players to report concerns of abuse or misconduct.

It is NOT the organization's responsibility to decide the credibility or validity of a report of concern, only the responsibility to report it.

The organization should not attempt to evaluate or investigate the report or be concerned with false reporting, but to respond appropriately and swiftly to avoid further distress to the victim. Everyone at the Department is required to report any and all concerns regarding sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, hazing, coach misconduct, player misconduct and any other forms of inappropriate behavior immediately to the appropriate investigative agency and Department Program Director. KIDSAFE Program guidelines are to be followed when reporting and responding to abuse.

### **Reporting Policy**

It is the policy of the WESA KIDSAFE Program that every employee or volunteer of any WESA Program must report:

1. Suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse. They are to be reported to the appropriate agency, either law enforcement authorities or social services agency.
2. Actual or perceived violations of the WESA KIDSAFE Program. They are to be reported to the Department's KIDSAFE Coordinator.
3. Any violations of the KIDSAFE Program prohibiting emotional abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, threats and hazing. They are to be reported to the Department's KIDSAFE Coordinator.

Any report of misconduct or suspicions of child physical abuse or sexual abuse will be taken seriously and handled appropriately. All members are to take concerns of abuse or misconduct to the Department's KIDSAFE Coordinator who will take appropriate action. The actions of the KIDSAFE Coordinator will be documented and shared with the Department Director. A staff member or volunteer may contact law enforcement themselves and then notify the Department Director immediately.

A report must be made when the reporter suspects or has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, or when the reporter has knowledge of, or observes a child being subjected to, conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child.

Concerns, suspicions or suspected “grooming” behaviors are to be told immediately to the Department’s KIDSAFE Coordinator.

### **Responding to Concerns**

There are a number of reasons a person might need to report a concern:

- In response to something a young person has said to you - a disclosure
- In response to signs or suspicions of abuse
- In response to allegations made against an organization member, staff or volunteer
- In response to allegations made about a parent or someone not working within the organization
- In response to bullying or hazing
- In response to violating the Department’s KIDSAFE Procedures and Guidelines
- Observation of inappropriate behavior
- In response to anything that makes the reporter uncomfortable based on inappropriate behavior by an adult or player

It should be clear, even if the incident occurred outside of the Department’s program, it should still be reported to authorities. Know that authorities have professionals in interviewing child victims about abuse and it is not the Department’s job, so do not attempt to interview any child about a disclosure.

### **Always:**

- Stay calm
- Reassure the person reporting concerns, that they have done the right thing
- Don’t judge
- Listen carefully, take it seriously
- Write down exactly what the person reporting concerns says using his or her own words
- Ask open-ended questions only to clarify, who, what, where and when
- Let the person reporting concerns know you have to tell someone
- Report incident to appropriate authorities
- Let the person reporting concerns know what your next steps are and who you will be sharing the information with
- Fill out the appropriate forms

### **Never:**

- Panic
- Show disbelief
- Project your own reactions onto the child
- Leave the child alone
- Make promises you can’t keep or assure confidentiality
- Make the person reporting concerns repeat the information unnecessarily

- Delay in reporting to your supervisor and local authorities
- Make assumptions
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility for the information you have
- Try to investigate the allegations
- Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator
- Share personal information about you or your child
- Probe for more information

**Record:**

- Person reporting's full name, age, date of birth, home address and telephone number
- Any time, date or relevant information
- Who the concern is regarding
- Using the reporter's words, give an account of what happened
- Document any visible injuries
- Document your next steps
- Document date of time of informing the Department Director
- Document date, time and who you spoke to at the law enforcement or social service agency

**Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, the Department will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or people who made a report of physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

**Immediate Suspension or Termination**

When an allegation of abuse or misconduct is made against a staff member, player or coach, that individual will be removed from interaction with players immediately and the organization will cooperate with the investigation and conduct its own internal investigation, if necessary.

No one is assumed guilty based upon a reported concern, but player safety is paramount, therefore suspensions are appropriate until the investigation(s) is complete.

## RESOURCES

Child Abuse Information	<a href="http://www.childwelfare.gov">www.childwelfare.gov</a>
Local Police Number	970-349-5231 (911 after hours)
Local Social Services	970-641-3244 (911 after hours)
Crested Butte KIDSAFE Coordinator	970-349-5338
Sex Offender Registration Website	<a href="http://www.sor.state.co.us">www.sor.state.co.us</a>
Colorado Youth Soccer Risk Management Number	303-346-2777x115
Colorado Youth Soccer Risk Management Email	<a href="mailto:ajames@coloradosoccer.org">ajames@coloradosoccer.org</a>
Ralston House	<a href="http://www.ralstonhouse.net">www.ralstonhouse.net</a>

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