

Wisconsin Swimming will host a meeting on Sunday, September 26th

at UW Waukesha

1500 N. University Drive

Waukesha WI 53188

Northview Room 133 from 12:30-4:00 pm.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the new USA Swimming rules and guidelines to be finalized at the USA Swimming Convention on September 19th, and how they will affect our LSC, clubs, coaches and non athlete members.

Jane Foley, Advocate in the Sensitive Crimes Victims Services Unit of the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, will once again speak on what the State of Wisconsin laws are and how they impact on our clubs and coaches.

Please make every effort to have at least the Head Coach and Board President of your swim team attend this meeting. All are welcome to attend.

(The following is what will be presented at the USA Convention and if passed will go in to effect immediately.)

Policies & Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection

Protecting Athletes

We believe that the experience of children and young athletes in all organized sports should be guided by what is best for the safe and healthy development of the young person. Young athletes who participate in organized sports activities have a unique opportunity for learning. In working with each child, it is essential that we are mindful of their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. We must also be particularly diligent in recognizing the unique vulnerabilities that are an inherent part of childhood. It is the responsibility of all adults to not only recognize these vulnerabilities, but to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create and maintain a safe and child-centered sports environment.

We recognize the important role that USA Swimming plays in providing leadership and creating an organizational culture that is focused on the safety and wellbeing of young people. The protection of children requires that all adults work together to support young athletes. As the child's first and enduring resource for safety, parents and guardians play a critical role in athlete protection. When parents participate they are able to help educate other adults about the needs of the child, and help prepare the child to participate in sports programs in a way that promotes safety, enjoyment, and learning.

Adults, including coaches, officials, staff, volunteers, chaperones, and others who interact with children, are in also positions of great trust and influence. The ability to use this position of trust to support the well-being of children is critical. The overwhelming majority of these adults fulfill their roles in a positive and responsible manner. Nonetheless, we must also understand that a few adults may seek to use the trust and authority that comes with their access and status to take advantage of a child.

USA Swimming strives to continually improve the programs and services it offers to its members and among these some of the most important relate to the safeguards for protecting young athletes. Because we aspire to foster safe and positive environments within all our member clubs, we believe it is especially important to provide our member adult leaders with policies and best practice guidelines that help define elements of appropriate behavior and conduct.

Policies and Best Practice Guidelines for Athlete Protection

In order to provide a positive experience and a safe environment for athletes, all non-athlete adult members of USA Swimming should maintain professionalism and avoid any appearance of impropriety in their relationships with athletes. Coaches, in particular, should recognize the influence, power and position of trust they have with athletes and should use these only in an athlete's best interest.

This document provides specific mandatory policies and best practice guidelines that are strongly recommended.

Policies

The following policies for Athlete Protection are mandatory for all members and are incorporated by reference into Section 304.3.4 of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.

1. Inappropriate touching between athletes and non-athlete adult members is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, kissing, provocative games and athletes sitting on adults' laps.
2. No rubdowns or massage by any non-athlete adult member unless by a member who is a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. All massage by member licensed professionals must be done in open/public locations and must never be done with only the athlete and licensed massage therapist in the room. Even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach shall not give rubdowns and/or perform massage.
3. Coaches may not invite or have an athlete to their home without the permission of the athlete(s)'s parent (or legal guardian).
4. No audio or visual recording in changing areas, restrooms or locker rooms. This includes using a cell phone camera.
5. Travel Regardless of gender, coaches shall not share rooms or other sleeping arrangements with athletes. An exception would be if the coach is the parent of that particular athlete. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete shall have a parent's (or legal guardian's) written permission to travel alone with the coach. Clubs and LSCs shall develop their own travel

policies. USA Swimming will provide a model club travel policy as an example. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and adults associated with the club.

Best Practice Guidelines

The following Best Practice Guidelines are strongly recommended for all USA Swimming members.

1. Parents should be encouraged to appropriately support their children's swimming experience.
2. All swimming practices should be open to observation by parents.
3. Two-deep Leadership: One coach member and at least one other adult who is not in the water should be present at all practices and other sanctioned club activities whenever at least one athlete is present. Clubs and coaches should evaluate their seasonal plans and map out how to best accomplish this strongly recommended guideline.
4. Open and Observable Environment: An open and observable environment should be maintained for all interactions between adults and athletes. Private, or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.
5. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
6. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
7. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they should be of the same gender and similar age. Chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms.
8. When only one coach and one athlete travel to a competition, while at the competition, the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
9. Where a chaperone or team manager is included, the chaperone(s) or team manager(s) should be of the same gender as the athletes and written consent should be given by the athletes' parents (or legal guardian).
10. Communications between non-athlete adult members and athletes should not include any topic or language that is sexual or inappropriate in nature.
11. Non-athlete adult members should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Non-athlete adult members should protect their own privacy in similar situations.
12. Relationships of a peer-to-peer nature with any athletes should be avoided. For example, coaches should avoid sharing their own personal problems with athletes.
13. Coaches and other non-athlete adult members should avoid horseplay and roughhousing with athletes.
14. When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact. Touching athletes should be minimized outside the boundaries of what is considered normal instruction. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes.

15. Coaches should not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for athletes outside club programs and activities.

16. Coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with a former athlete for at least two years after the cessation or termination of professional services.

Because sexual intimacies with a former athlete are frequently harmful to the athlete, and because such intimacies undermine public confidence in the coaching profession and thereby deter the public's use of needed services, coaches should not engage in sexual intimacies with former athletes even after a two-year interval except in the most unusual circumstances. The coach who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of the coach-athlete relationship bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including:

1. The amount of time that has passed since the coach-athlete relationship terminated;
2. The circumstances of termination;
3. The athlete's personal history;
4. The athlete's current mental status;
5. The likelihood of adverse impact on the athlete and others; and
6. Any statements or actions made by the coach during the course of the athlete-coach relationship suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the athlete or coach.
7. Both the athlete and the coach must be 18 years of age or older.