



## **Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy**



### **THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:**

- All USA Swimming non-athlete members and adult athlete members;
- Participating non-members (e.g., meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- LSC and club adult staff and board members; and
- Any other adult authorized to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes.

Collectively "Applicable Adult(s)"

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENT**

USA Swimming member clubs and LSCs are required to implement this Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy in full. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy must be reviewed and agreed to in writing by all athletes, parents, coaches and other non-athlete members of member clubs on an annual basis with such written agreement to be retained by the club.

### **ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

#### **I. Observable and Interruptible**

One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) must occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult unless meeting with a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider (see below) or under emergency circumstances.

#### **II. Meetings**

- a. Meetings between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult may only occur if another adult is present and where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place, the door to the room must remain unlocked and open. If available, it must occur in a room that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- c. Meetings must not be conducted in an Applicable Adult or athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location during team travel.

#### **III. Meetings with Mental Health Care Professionals and/or Health Care Providers**

If a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider meets with a minor athlete in conjunction with participation, including at practice or competition sites, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:

- a. The door remains unlocked;
- b. Another adult is present at the facility;
- c. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and
- d. Written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider, with a copy provided to the club.

#### **IV. Individual Training Sessions [Recommended]**

Individual training sessions outside of the regular course of training and practice between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the training session.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **I. Content**

All electronic communication from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

#### **II. Open and Transparent**

Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), the minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult must



copy the minor athlete's legal guardian on any electronic communication response to the minor athlete.

When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult must copy another adult.

III. Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the club, LSC or by an Applicable Adult subject to this Policy. The organization must abide by any such request that the minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.

IV. Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such Applicable Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor athletes, unless the Applicable Adult has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with minor athletes must be discontinued. Minor athletes may "friend" the club and/or LSC's official page.

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes must not send private, instant or direct messages to a minor athlete through social media platforms.

**TRAVEL**

I. Local Travel

Local travel consists of travel to training, practice and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's legal guardian.

[Recommended]

Legal guardians must pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

II. Team Travel

Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks two-deep leadership (two Applicable Adults should be present) and observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.

When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete's legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each competition for the minor athlete to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.

Team Managers and Chaperones who travel with the club or LSC must be USA Swimming members in good standing.

- b. Unrelated non-athlete Applicable Adults must not share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with an athlete.



Minor athletes should be paired to share hotel rooms or other sleeping arrangements with other minor athletes of the same gender and of similar age. When a minor athlete and an adult athlete share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement, the minor athlete's legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each instance for the minor to share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with said adult athlete.

- c. Meetings during team travel must be conducted consistent with the One-on-One Interactions section of this Policy (i.e., any such meeting must be observable and interruptible). Meetings must not be conducted in an individual's hotel room or other overnight sleeping location.

#### **LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS**

##### **I. Requirement to Use Locker Room or Changing Area**

The designated locker room or changing area must be used when an athlete or Applicable Adult changes, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit (e.g., deck changing is prohibited).

##### **II. Use of Recording Devices**

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces by a minor athlete or an Applicable Adult is prohibited.

##### **III. Undress**

An unrelated Applicable Adult must not expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to a minor athlete under any circumstance. An unrelated Applicable Adult must not request an unrelated minor athlete to expose the minor athlete's breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to the unrelated Applicable Adult under any circumstance.

##### **IV. One-on-One Interactions**

Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area, except under emergency circumstances. If the organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by Applicable Adults must be designated.

##### **V. Monitoring**

The club must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- a. Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
- b. Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
- c. Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
- d. Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.

Every effort must be made to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the minor athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.

##### **VI. Legal Guardians in Locker Rooms or Changing Areas**

Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas. If a legal guardian does enter a locker room or changing area, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.



## **MESSAGES AND RUBDOWNS/ATHLETE TRAINING MODALITIES**

- I. Definition: In this section, the term “Massage” refers to any massage, rubdown, athletic training modality including physical modalities (e.g., stretching, physical manipulation, injury rehabilitation, etc.) and electronic or instrument assisted modalities (e.g., stim treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.).
  
- II. General Requirement  
Any Massage performed on an athlete must be conducted in an open and interruptible location and must be performed by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. However, even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach must not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstance.
  
- III. Additional Minor Athlete Requirements
  - a. Written consent by a legal guardian must be obtained in advance by the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional, with a copy provided to the club.
  - b. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the Massage.
  - c. Any Massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the Massage in the room.
  - d. [Recommended] Any Massage of a minor athlete must only occur after a proper diagnosis from a treating physician and be done in the course of care according to the physician’s treatment plan



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) applies to Applicable Adults. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Applicable Adults definition in the policy.

### **Applicable Adults**

- All USA Swimming non-athlete members and adult athlete members;
- Participating non-members (e.g. meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- LSC and club adult staff and board members; and
- Any other adult authorized to have regular contact with or authority over a minor athlete. Collectively “Applicable Adult(s)”

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** When am I an Applicable Adult?

**A:** Once you trigger any of the four descriptions of an Applicable Adult you are an Applicable Adult.

**Q:** How long do I retain Applicable Adult status?

**A:** An individual is an Applicable Adult for as long as one of the four descriptions applies to that individual.

**Q:** What if I am a USA Swimming coach member and also an NCAA coach, when am I an Applicable Adult?

**A:** A USA Swimming non-athlete member is an Applicable Adult. A USA Swimming non-athlete member remains Applicable Adult status for as long as the individual is a USA Swimming non-athlete member. The USA Swimming non-athlete member and the associated Applicable Adult statuses do not “turn off” when acting as an NCAA coach.

**Q:** How is “adult athlete” defined?

**A:** An adult athlete is an athlete member age 18 and over.

**Q:** Are chaperones Applicable Adults?

**A:** Yes. Chaperones are adults authorized to have regular contact with or authority over a minor athlete and therefore trigger Applicable Adult status.

**Q:** Are junior coaches Applicable Adults?

**A:** Yes. Junior coaches under the age of 18 are Applicable Adults because they are USA Swimming non-athlete members. Junior coaches are perceived to be in a position of power or authority over minor athletes. As a result, junior coaches must be educated on the importance of boundaries between adults and youth are important. This knowledge base will be important for junior coaches who become adult coaches.

**Q:** Are parent meet volunteers Applicable Adults?

**A:** Yes. A parent meet volunteer is an Applicable Adult if the parent triggers any of the four descriptions of an Applicable Adult. For example, if the volunteer is authorized to have regular contact or authority over minor athletes during the meet, that volunteer is an Applicable Adult.



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Social Media and Electronic Communications section of the policy.

### **Social Media and Electronic Communications**

Private electronic communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete present an opportunity for the Applicable Adult to initiate grooming behaviors that may lead to abuse. Just as one-on-one interactions between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must be observable and interruptible, any communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete should be open, transparent. Additionally, electronic communications between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must involve the minor's legal guardian and take place during reasonable hours.

Before MAAPP, USA Swimming rules required every team establish a social media/electronic communication policy. This section of MAAPP replaces that requirement. Members will note that this section of the MAAPP is similar to the USA Swimming's previous Model Policy on Electronic Communication and published Best Practice Guidelines.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** Can our team still use our Electronic Communication Policy instead of this one?

**A:** No, you cannot use the Electronic Communication Policy that you have had to this point. Every team is required to adopt this policy, including the Social Media and Electronic Communications section, in full.

**Q:** Are minor athletes still allowed to follow their favorite celebrity swimmer on a fan page?

**A:** Yes, under the policy, a minor athlete can follow or friend a celebrity swimmers fan page.

**Q:** What do I do about my pre-existing social media connections with minor athletes?

**A:** Applicable Adults are required to discontinue existing social media connections with minor athletes.

**Q:** When does a minor athlete's legal guardian need to be copied on an electronic communication to a minor athlete?

**A:** An Applicable Adult must not send a one-on-one communication to a minor athlete. A minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied on an electronic communication sent by an Applicable Adult to the minor athlete.

**Q:** How should an Applicable Adult communicate with the team or a group of minor athletes?

**A:** If an Applicable Adult sends a message to a group of minor athletes or an entire team, another adult must be copied on the communication. It is not required that each minor athlete's legal guardian be copied on an electronic communication sent by an Applicable Adult to a group of minor athletes or an entire team.

**Q:** What would be an emergency circumstance?

**A:** An emergency circumstance should be an isolated incident that is an objectively reasonable emergency in order to justify an electronic communication sent outside of 8:00a.m. – 8:00p.m. An example would be to notify the team that early morning practice is cancelled at the last minute.

**Q:** Is a telephone call considered to be an electronic communication?

**A:** A telephone call is similar to a one-on-one interaction. Therefore, a telephone call between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must be observable and interruptible by another adult. A duration of a telephone call made during an emergency circumstance must be consistent with the type of emergency.

**Q:** Can a team change the hours during which electronic communications can be sent to a time period other than 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Can an LSC send communications to a committee including an athlete representative outside of 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.?

**A:** No. LSC staff and board members are Applicable Adults. Electronic communications sent to minor athletes must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the One-on-One Interactions section of the policy.

### **One-on-One Interactions**

One-on-One Interactions present a risk for an Applicable Adult to abuse a minor athlete or initiate grooming behaviors to do so. This portion of the policy sets the expectation that if a one-on-one interaction occurs, it is done in a way that is observable and interruptible by another adult.

**Meetings:** In swimming, meetings between adults and minors are common. MAAPP requires that another adult be present AND that the meeting be in a location that is easily observed and interruptible. USA Swimming has recommended a similar concept, two-deep leadership, as a best practice for years. Now, two-deep leadership is not recommended, it is required.

**Private Instruction:** Legal guardians often hire coaches to give private lessons to their minor athlete. A private lesson is a one-on-one interaction between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete but it is not a one-on-one interaction occurring in the course of team practices or USA Swimming events and activities. USA Swimming recommends that individual training sessions be observable and interruptible by another adult and that the minor athlete's legal guardian be allowed to observe the session. This is the only piece of the One-on-One Interactions section that is recommended and not required.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** What does observable and interruptible mean?

**A:** Observable and interruptible means that the interaction takes place in such a way that another adult can see all the interactions that are happening AND another adult can interrupt the interaction if he or she observes a questionable behavior in the moment that it is occurring. That interruption could include a physical interruption and/or a vocal interruption.

**Q:** What does "except under emergency circumstances" mean?

**A:** An example of an emergency circumstance could include an individual experiencing a medical emergency leaving an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete without another adult in an observable and interruptible distance.

**Q:** Can a lifeguard serve as the second person within an observable and interruptible distance?

**A:** Yes, if the lifeguard is an adult and can completely observe the interaction and interrupt in the moment. However, remember that a lifeguard's responsibility is to those in the pool and accordingly likely will not be able to observe or interrupt a one-on-one interaction.

**Q:** Is a telephone call considered to be a one-on-one interaction?

**A:** Yes. Therefore, a telephone call between an Applicable Adult and a minor athlete must be observable and interruptible by another adult. A duration of a telephone call made during an emergency circumstance must be consistent with the type of emergency.



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Locker Rooms and Changing Areas section of the policy.

### **Locker Rooms and Changing Areas**

Locker rooms and changing areas are private and enclosed spaces in which abuse can occur. To prevent abuse of minor athletes in these private areas, this section of the MAAPP is intended to keep Applicable Adults from being present in a locker room or changing area at the same time as minor athletes.

Prior to MAAPP, a team locker room policy has been a strongly recommended best practice. This section of MAAPP is very closely aligned with USA Swimming rules, Model Policy on Locker Rooms and published Best Practice Guidelines. Now, rather than recommended practices, this is a USA Swimming requirement.

Please note that Adult Athletes are Applicable Adults. It is important for adult athletes to carefully read and understand their responsibilities under this section. Please read every point carefully to avoid confusion.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** What does the word “expose” mean in Section III?

**A:** Expose means a purposeful showing of private parts or being bare skinned for an abnormal amount of time while changing. Adult athletes should be thoughtful to turn their bodies away and shield their private parts from minor athletes while changing.

**Q:** Does this policy only apply to locker rooms at competitions?

**A:** No, this policy applies to any and all locker rooms or changing areas used by Applicable Adults and minor athletes in connection to practice, competition, camps, etc.

**Q:** Does this policy mean that athletes over the age of 18 cannot share a locker room or changing area with teammates under the age of 18?

**A:** No. Unrelated Applicable Adults must not be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area except for athletes on the same team and athletes attending the same competition.

**Q:** Can Masters swimmers use a locker room at the same time as minor athletes?

**A:** An unrelated Applicable Adult must not be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area. If a Masters swimmer meets the definition of an Applicable Adult, then the Applicable Adult must not be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area.

**Q:** Can an athlete deck change?

**A: NO.** Deck changing is prohibited under USA Swimming rules and by MAAPP.



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Massages, Rubdowns and Athletic Training Modalities section of the policy.

### **Massages, Rubdowns and Athletic Training Modalities**

Massages, rubdowns and athletic training modalities can present a risk for Applicable Adults to abuse minor athletes. As a result, all massages, rubdowns and athletic training modalities performed on a minor athlete must be conducted in an observable, interruptible environment by a non-coach licensed professional.

This section of MAAPP is very closely aligned with USA Swimming rules requiring massages and rubdowns be performed by a non-coach licensed professional. Now, this requirement extends to other forms of treatment.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** What is an athletic training modality?

**A:** Examples of an athletic training modality includes stretching, physical manipulation, injury rehabilitation, stim treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.

**Q:** Can a coach assist an athlete stretching a leg or working out a shoulder knot?

**A:** No. Under no circumstance is a coach permitted to perform a rubdown or massage even if the coach is a licensed massage therapist or athletic trainer.

**Q:** Is it permissible for a coach to use an applicator to help apply relief creams or work out a muscle?

**A:** No. The use of instrument assisted modalities by a coach is not allowed.

**Q:** Does a legal guardian have to give permission for a massage therapist to work on their minor athlete?

**A:** Yes. The legal guardian must provide advance, written consent to the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional, with a copy provided to the club.



The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) has five parts. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Travel: Local and Team section of the policy.

### **Travel: Local and Team**

Local and team travel occur frequently in our sport and presents a series of unique risk factors. The goal of this policy is to minimize the opportunity for an Applicable Adult to abuse a minor athlete during local and team travel.

Before MAAPP, USA Swimming rules required every team establish a travel policy. This section of MAAPP replaces that requirement. Members will note that this section of the MAAPP is similar to USA Swimming's previous Model Policy on Team Travel and published Best Practice Guidelines.

A legal guardian must consent in writing, in advance, for every instance in which their minor athlete travels alone with an Applicable Adult. Please note, it is the responsibility of the team to maintain parent consent forms covered in this section.

Teams often try to save money during team travel. For example, it has become a common practice for teams to rent a house which may be more cost effective than paying for hotel rooms. That practice is no longer permissible.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q:** Can Applicable Adults ride alone in a vehicle with a minor athlete?

**A:** Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's legal guardian.

**Q:** How is "overnight lodging location" in Section II(b) defined?

**A:** Overnight lodging location refers to a non-traditional lodging situation that teams might use. This includes, but is not limited to, non-traditional arrangements such as VRBO rentals, Air BNBs, campers, trailers, etc. All the travel rules apply to these locations as well.

**Q:** Can an adult athlete share a hotel or sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete?

**A:** Yes, an adult athlete can share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with a minor athlete only if the minor athlete's legal guardian provides written permission in advance and for each instance for the minor to share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with said adult athlete. No other Applicable Adult can share a hotel or sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete.