



Arizona Cycling Association Athlete Abuse Prevention & Awareness Program

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Overview, Prohibitive Conduct, & Policies

The Arizona Cycling Association (ACA) is committed to building a safe environment for student-athletes, coaches, staff, and volunteers. Our Athlete Abuse Prevention & Awareness Program goes beyond what's required by law by the passage of the SafeSport Act of 2019 and Arizona statutes and requires all of our coaches and staff complete annual training on abuse prevention, adhere to protective policies, agree to a background check policy, and clearly understand their legal obligations as mandatory reporters. This program prioritizes a culture of abuse prevention to protect both student-athletes and coaches.

Abuse can take different forms within a youth sporting organization and include child sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, hazing, and harassment. In addition to child sexual abuse, the withholding of water during practices, public berating of a rider for failing to execute a skill, pressure to continue practice or an event while injured, or commenting on a rider's weight can all constitute forms of abuse. It is a coach's responsibility to understand different forms of abuse and to learn to recognize the signs. Likewise, it is our responsibility to adequately train and provide educational resources to our coaches so they can uphold theirs.

We have zero tolerance for any form of abuse as specified in our prohibitive conduct section below, and the consequences for any infractions are outlined in the ACA Rulebook.

This document further details the measures our organization takes to prevent child sexual abuse. The troubling facts are that only 10% of child sex abuse perpetrators have had contact with the criminal justice system and 90% of victims are abused by someone they know and trust (MinistrySafe, 2022). These facts along with the ease of electronic communications has made protective policies imperative so that we are positioned to prevent abuse before it happens.

This document covers each component of the program, provides additional resources and references, and outlines the steps to take if you suspect possible abuse.

References [[Safe Sport Act of 2019](#)]

Prohibitive Conduct

All Adult Participants (not limited to, but includes, all staff, volunteers, and coaches) and Student-Athletes of ACA's programming are subject to specific prohibited conduct as outlined below. All Adult Participants have an obligation to cooperate in any investigation of a complaint of misconduct, including providing all information concerning the complaint. Failure to do so may be a direct violation of this policy. Any violation of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Adult Participants or Student-Athletes may subject the individual to disciplinary action and the ACA prohibits any retaliation against individuals making good faith reports of misconduct, including potential violations of this Prohibited Conduct Policy by Adult Participants for Student-Athletes.

Harassment

Repeated and/or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance, offends, or degrades, creates a hostile environment, or reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Sexual Harassment

Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise. Sexual harassment can also include harassment related to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, which may include acts of aggression, intimidation, or hostility, whether verbal or non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise, even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Racial, Religious or National Origin Harassment

Includes any verbal, written or physical act in which race, religion, or national origin is used or implied in a manner which makes a reasonable person uncomfortable in the environment. Examples include but are not limited to jokes, which include reference to race, religion, or national origin, the display of objects or pictures which adversely reflect on a person's race, religion, or national origin, or use of pejorative or demeaning language regarding a person's race, religion, or national origin.

Child Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity with a child is prohibited. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force, or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

Sexual Misconduct

Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority is prohibited. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

Emotional Misconduct

A pattern of deliberate, non- contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or

psychological harm to another person. Non-contact behaviors include verbal acts, physical acts, or acts that deny attention or support; or any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect). Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

Physical Misconduct

Is defined as contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to another person; or any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect, assault). Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance. For example, hitting and punching are well regulated forms of contact in combat sports but have no place in soccer.

Bullying

Intentional, persistent, and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership are prohibited. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

Hazing

Coercing, requiring, forcing, or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group, or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members are prohibited. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.

Abuse Prevention & Awareness Training

Prevention begins with education and training. Therefore, all ACA coaches and staff are required to take an annual course by the NFHS called "Protecting Students from Abuse." The course provides a foundation of knowledge so that coaches are better prepared to prevent and identify different types of abuse, including non-physical forms of abuse and grooming behaviors.

[\[NFSF course link\]](#) – "Protecting Students from Abuse"

Training Substitutions

The ACA recognizes that many of our league coaches who are educators, or work in other youth sports organizations, may already hold training credentials in abuse prevention from other organizations. The ACA will accept the following certifications as substitutes for the NFSF course:

- **U.S. Center for SafeSport** – To access SafeSport training, you must receive an enrollment key through your sports organization (this is not offered through the ACA). All USA Cycling members are eligible for SafeSport training, and you can find more information about their program here: [SafeSport Training | USA Cycling](#)
- **MinistrySafe** – MinistrySafe partners with organizations, churches, and schools across the country and offer a 1-hour online training course to educate staff and volunteers on abuse prevention. Access to this training is granted through a partnering organization or through a one-time access code which can be purchased [here](#). Here's a link for more information about MinistrySafe training: [Awareness Training - MinistrySafe](#)
- **Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection Training** – This training is available to the public, and no official affiliation with the BSA is required. For additional information on how to take the training, visit: [Youth Protection | Boy Scouts of America \(scouting.org\)](#)

Background Checks

Background checks by Sterling Volunteers are required annually. These background checks are integrated through the CCN registration portal and are required for all levels of ACA coaches and all ACA staff.

Our Background Check information page on the website outlines disqualifying offenses and covers Frequently Asked Questions.

[\[Background Check Information\]](#)

1:1 Student-Athlete & Coach Interactions

The ACA has a strict policy limiting 1:1 interactions between Student-Athletes and Adult Participants, and also has guidelines in place to cover all forms of electronic and virtual communications. All ACA Coaches are trained on these specific policies and guidelines annually through our LMS course called, "Youth Development through Cycling: Philosophy & Safety." Additionally, we have developed a presentation to cover these topics at our Leadership Summit, which provides an opportunity for coaches to ask questions in-person.

Policy Overview

All 1:1 interactions between a Student-Athlete and Adult Participant must be observable & interruptible. That is, they must take place someplace where another adult can see what is happening and intervene if the interaction looks inappropriate. For example, unless a qualifying dual-role or relationship exception exists, ACA Adult Participants should never meet 1:1 with Student-Athletes for bike rides or other activities within or outside of the ACA season.

Examples of the 1:1 interaction policy in practice:

- Adult Participants may never be alone with a Student-Athlete in the car or otherwise.
- Never intentionally set-up a situation where Adult Participants may be 1:1 with a Student-Athlete
- Provide more than one licensed coach working at or overseeing every activity whenever possible to avoid 1:1 situations. If a Student-Athlete needs special attention, it will be handled with the assistance or presence of another licensed coach.
- Coaches are not allowed to give Student-Athletes massages or rubdowns, even if the coach is a licensed massage therapist.
- Procedures should be set-up at the beginning of the season with parents for coaches to follow if a Student-Athlete is stranded at an activity.

Dual-Role or Relationship Policy Exceptions

Adult Participants with a dual role or relationship with a minor creates an exception to certain policies set forth within this document. Some exceptions require written consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian at least annually.

Examples of a dual role relationship can include, but is not limited to:

- Adult Participant who is a Parent/Guardian of a Student-Athlete.
- Adult Participant who is an aunt/uncle or a grandparent of a Student-Athlete; or
- Adult Participant who is a family friend of a Student Athlete
- Adult Participant who is providing services as a PCA (Personal Care Assistant) to a Student-Athlete who requires such care for daily living or in preparation for an athletic event.

Electronic & Online Communications Guidelines

When using texting, email, social media, or other virtual communications, the 1:1 policy still applies, and is addressed in more depth through our document linked below. All communications must be transparent, accessible, professional "T.A.P." and only within your ACA role via your official ACA platforms.

Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporters have a legal (and ethical) obligation to report instances of suspected abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities. All coaches and staff within the Arizona Cycling Association qualify as mandatory reporters and must take the time to learn their legal responsibilities, and reporting processes for their respective jurisdiction(s). A myriad of federal, state, local, and district statutes and policies exist, and we cannot cover them all in-depth. What we've provided is an overview of what qualifies as a reportable event according to Arizona statute (A.R.S. § 13-3620), and what steps a coach should take to ensure the safety of the child first and foremost.

What is a Reportable Event?

According to Arizona statute, "Any person who **reasonably believes** that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor **by other than accidental means** or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature..."

For specific examples and a list of reportable offenses, please review this presentation by the Arizona Department of Child Safety: [Mandated Reporter Overview Presentation August 2020 \(az.gov\)](#).

Reasonable belief does not require hard evidence, nor should coaches investigate themselves. As a rule of thumb, when uncertain about a situation or event, immediately file a report with law enforcement.

Report to Law Enforcement

An immediate report shall be filed with local law enforcement for all instances when the reportable event occurred outside of the child's home or by someone who does not have custody of the child. When filing a report, prepare to provide the following information if known:

- name, age, and gender of child and other family members
- address, phone numbers, and/or directions to child's home
- parents' place of employment
- description of suspected abuse or neglect
- current condition of the child

Arizona Child Abuse Hotline

When abuse or neglect is reasonably believed to have occurred in the child's home or by a parent/guardian, an immediate report shall be filed with the Department of Child Safety through the following Hotline:

1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445)

Notify Player's Protect

Once reports are made to the agencies above, you must file a report with the Arizona Cycling Association Player's Protect portal. This service will alert Arizona Cycling Association staff of any reportable events that affect Student-Athletes, or Adult Participants and initiate a fully independent review process.

Additionally, if an event clearly does not meet the Mandatory Reporting threshold as outlined above and yet may still violate the ACA's Prohibitive Conduct Policy, Adult Participants are required to file a report with Player's Protect.

[\[The ACA Player's Protect Portal\]](#)

Notify Your School

You may be required to notify your school-based team of any reportable events that occur. It is a coach's responsibility to know of their school's policies and procedures, and it is recommended that they understand the requirements *before* an event occurs.

Related Communications & Resources

[ACA Rulebook](#)

[Codes of Conduct – Student-Athlete Code of Conduct \(Page 7\) and Adult Code of Conduct \(Page 29\)](#)

[Electronic & Online Communications Guidelines](#)

[Department of Child Safety: Additional Training](#)

[U.S. Center for SafeSport Code](#)