

St. Louis Park Girls Basketball Association Child Abuse Reporting Policy

1. Purpose and Statement of Commitment

St. Louis Park Girls Basketball Association (the "Association") exists to provide young people with a safe, positive, and healthy environment in which to learn and play basketball. The safety and well-being of every athlete is the Association's paramount concern and takes precedence over competitive success, convenience, or any coaches, volunteers, or staff member's personal interest.

The Association has a **ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY** for Child Abuse in any form, including physical abuse, sexual abuse or molestation, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and grooming behavior. This policy applies to all coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, officials, board members, volunteers, and any other individual who interacts with athletes on behalf of the Association (collectively, "Coaches") without exception.

Any substantiated violation will result in immediate and permanent removal from all coaching, volunteer, and other roles with the Association, in addition to any reporting obligations described below.

This policy does not require Coaches to determine whether abuse has actually occurred, investigate allegations, or confront a suspected abuser. That responsibility belongs to law enforcement and child protection authorities. A Coach's sole responsibility upon suspecting abuse is to protect the child and report promptly in accordance with Section 3 of this Policy.

2. Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all interactions involving athletes under the age of 18, whether occurring at practices, games, tournaments, tryouts, team travel, team social events, or through electronic or written communications.

For purposes of this policy:

- **Child Abuse** includes, without limitation: (a) physical abuse (any non-accidental physical injury); (b) sexual abuse or molestation (any sexual act, contact, or exploitation involving a minor); (c) emotional or psychological abuse (a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional or psychological development); (d) neglect (failure to provide necessary care, supervision, or protection); and (e) grooming behavior (conduct designed to build trust with a minor, or the minor's family, in order to lower defenses for future abuse).
- **Suspected Abuse** means any circumstance in which a Coach knows, suspects, or has reason to believe that a child has been or is being abused, whether the suspected conduct occurred within or outside of Association activities, and regardless of whether the suspected abuser is affiliated with the Association.
- **Reasonable Suspicion** does not require certainty or proof. It is triggered by any credible indication of abuse, including a child's disclosure, observed injuries or behavioral changes inconsistent with an innocent explanation, or a report from a third party (such as a parent, teammate, or bystander).

3. Reporting Requirements

3.1 Duty to Report. Every Coach must report suspected Child Abuse immediately. "Immediately" means as soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of the suspected abuse, and in every case, no later than twenty-four (24) hours from when the Coach first knew or had reason to suspect abuse.

3.2 Report to Authorities. All Coaches must report suspected abuse directly to:

- Local law enforcement (call 911 if the child is in immediate danger); and/or
- The Minnesota child protection agency serving the child's county of residence (Likely, Hennepin).

In addition, Paid Coaches ("Mandated Reporters") are mandated reporters under Minnesota law. Minnesota law requires that a report be made to local law enforcement and/or child protective services immediately and, in any event, no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the person knew or had reason to believe a child was abused or neglected. An oral report must be followed, within seventy-two (72) hours (excluding weekends and holidays), by a written report to the same agency. A Mandated Reporter and knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect is guilty of a misdemeanor, or a gross misdemeanor if two or more children were maltreated by the same offender, under Minnesota law.

3.3 Report to the Association. In addition to (not instead of) the report to law enforcement and/or child protection authorities, Coaches must also immediately notify the Association's Coaching Coordinator by email at oriole.girls.basketball@gmail.com or by phone at 773-307-8385 so that the Association can take appropriate protective and administrative action. Reporting to the Association does not satisfy, delay, or substitute for the legal obligation to report to law enforcement or child protection authorities described in Section 3.2, and a report to the Association must never be made in place of, or before, contacting the appropriate outside authority when a child may be in immediate danger.

3.4 No Internal Investigation First. Coaches must not delay reporting in order to gather additional information, verify the allegation, confront the suspected abuser, or await direction from the Association, a supervisor, or any other person. Suspicion alone is sufficient to trigger the reporting obligation.

3.5 Reporting Abuse Outside the Association. This reporting obligation applies equally where the suspected abuse occurs outside Association activities, including in the child's home, school, or another organization, if the Coach becomes aware of it in the course of their role with the Association.

4. How to Respond to a Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse. If a child discloses abuse or a Coach otherwise suspects abuse, the Coach should:

- Ensure the child's immediate safety. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911 without delay.
- Listen without judgment. Let the child speak in their own words. Do not interrupt, promise confidentiality, or ask leading questions.
- Avoid investigating. Do not question the suspected abuser, other witnesses, or attempt to verify the allegation. This is the role of law enforcement and child protection authorities, and premature questioning can compromise a future investigation.
- Document the facts. As soon as possible after the disclosure or observation, write down exactly what was said or observed, including dates, times, locations, and the names of anyone present, using the child's own words where possible.
- Report immediately. Follow the reporting requirements in Section 3, contacting the appropriate authority and the Association's Coaching Coordinator without unreasonable delay.

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- Maintain confidentiality. Share information about a report only with those who have a legitimate need to know (such as investigating authorities and the Association's Coaching Coordinator) in order to protect the privacy of the child and to avoid compromising any investigation.

5. Protections for Reporters.

5.1 Good Faith Reporting Protected. The Association will not retaliate against any Coach who makes a good faith report of suspected abuse, regardless of whether the report is later substantiated.

6. Prevention and Standards of Conduct. In addition to reporting obligations, all Coaches must adhere to the following child-safe practices at all times:

- Avoid one-on-one, unsupervised contact with a minor athlete, including in locker rooms, hotel rooms, vehicles, or private messaging, absent a documented and Association-approved exception (such as a parent/guardian's presence or consent).
- Never communicate with a minor athlete via personal social media, text, or direct message without copying a parent, guardian, or another adult Coach, except for routine team-wide communications through Association-approved channels.
- Never provide a minor athlete with gifts, favors, or preferential treatment intended to build a private or exclusive relationship outside the scope of normal team activities.
- Never use physical discipline, or any form of physical contact that a reasonable observer would consider inappropriate, to correct or punish a minor athlete.
- Complete all background screening, codes of conduct, and abuse-prevention training required by the Association prior to assuming or continuing in a coaching role, and complete any refresher training the Association requires thereafter.

7. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy, including failure to report suspected abuse within the timeframe required by Section 3, will result in immediate suspension pending review and may result in permanent removal from all coaching and volunteer roles with the Association.

The Association reserves the right to restrict a Coach's access to athletes and Association facilities, or take other protective measures immediately upon receipt of a report or complaint, and before any investigation is complete, whenever necessary to protect the safety of children.

8. Acknowledgment

I have read and understand this Child Abuse Reporting Policy.

Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____
Printed Name: _____

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Last Reviewed: August 6, 2026